

### **30 - ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM**

#### **Luke 9:51-56**

From Luke 9:51 to 19:27 the Gospel follows Jesus along the journey Matthew and Mark agree was the only one he took to Jerusalem. Far from being a travel narrative, Luke used the journey only as a framework for extensive instruction to the disciples for their future mission as apostles after the resurrection.

Sharon Ringe suggested that Luke may also have had in mind the travels of the Israelites under Moses from Egypt to the Promised Land, especially as that journey was summarized in the Book of Deuteronomy. Some of Luke's material contained in these chapters came from Mark. Other stories are exclusive to this gospel alone. Most of the material Luke shared with Matthew from an unknown source known to scholars as Q(ueile).

The general theme of discipleship runs through the whole narrative requiring a complete change of behaviour and understanding on the part of those accompanying Jesus. Gone are the usual kernels of ordinary folk wisdom. Very much to the fore is the life required of those seeking the reign of God in this world. These teachings were designed to prepare the disciples for the traumatic events of the Passion and the apostolic mission beyond Resurrection Day.

First, along the way was a brief stopover in Samaria (9:51-56). It didn't turn out so well. Learning that Jesus and his company were bound for Jerusalem, the Samaritans refused to provide them with hospitality. The cause of that rejection had to do with the traditional

hostility that had existed between the Samaritans and the Judeans since the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

After the capture of Samaria in 722 BCE, the Assyrians had exiled a great many of the leading citizens of the Northern Kingdom of Israel which had been separated from Judea since the civil war after death of King Solomon in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The Assyrians then replaced those Jews with other tribes imported from other territories they controlled. Over the succeeding centuries, natural intermarriage had produced a mixed population with a unique culture and religious traditions different from the Judean Jews in the Southern Kingdom.

As reported in John's Gospel (4:8-15) due to these cultural differences there was much suspicion to the point of open hostility between Samaritans and Jews. The story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 was based on this premise.

James and John, always impulsive and somewhat crude in their discipleship, wanted to call down a thunderbolt from heaven to destroy the inhospitable village. Jesus would have none of that. He just did as he had earlier advised the twelve when he sent them out on their first tour of mission duty. He shook the dust off his sandals and went on to another village.

This was the disciples' first lesson in behavioural change. Love doesn't react negatively when people reject you. Jesus believed in his mission and wanted them to do likewise.