

That responsibility has passed down through the generations to our day and age. The echoes from the times of Elijah and Elisha in the lives of John and Jesus sound loudly in our ears, for we live in similar times. At the transfiguration of Jesus, Elisha was not present, as he foreshadowed the life of Christ and Christ was present himself in, as it were, the glory of immortality. Elijah was there, representing the prophets but also speaking as one who had directed the nation to the Law, the Word of God. Moses was alongside him, the one through whom the Law was delivered, and a prophet also, who prefigured the greater Prophet to come. Thus they were both representatives of the Law and the prophets.

Another idea that has been suggested is that Moses represents those that have died and been buried, whilst Elijah represents those who will not taste death before the Lord comes, for he was taken away in the whirlwind with the angelic host. The time may not be too far distant from us when the angelic host gather not just the lonely figure of one servant of God, but all those sons and daughters who strive every day to acknowledge the Lord of hosts, before whom we stand.

For more on the parallels with Elijah/Elisha see the Martha and Mary section of ["The women of Luke's Gospel"](#) (p. 266).

The journey to Jerusalem

David Burges

A large part of Luke's Gospel, running from chapters 9 to 19, presents Jesus as making a journey up to Jerusalem. This article gives an outline of the incidents occurring and the teaching given on the way, and brings out lessons for ourselves as we journey to the Kingdom.

THE CONCEPT of the disciple's spiritual life as a journey towards the desired haven of the Kingdom of God is a familiar one. The Bible features a number of journeys that are endowed with symbolic significance beyond their simple narrative. The pilgrimage of Abraham from Mesopotamia to Canaan, re-enacted by both Ezra and Nehemiah, and the wilderness journey of the children of Israel, are prime examples, each of them ending in the Land of Promise.

Less familiar in this context is the final progress of the Lord Jesus Christ through the Land, up to Jerusalem, there to offer himself as the sacrifice for our sins. It is Luke's record that clearly presents the final six months of the Master's ministry in the form of the journey to Jerusalem. It should not be seen as a single, uninterrupted passage to the destination, for we have to fit other events into this period, such as John's account of the visit to Bethany and the raising of Lazarus (11:7,17,54). Rather, Luke, under inspiration, is assembling his material to present the final stages of the Lord's ministry in the form of a pilgrimage to the city of God.

"He steadfastly set his face"

Luke announces the journey with the memorable words, "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (9:51).

Knowing the shame and rejection that awaited him, the Lord could not be deflected from the path set before him by his heavenly Father, placing all his confidence in Him.

There is here an allusion to the third 'Servant Song' of Isaiah's prophecy, in which the Messiah/Servant determines to pursue his destiny, even knowing the suffering that awaits him: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: *therefore have I set my face like a flint*, and I know that I shall not be ashamed" (50:6,7). This determination, this 'setting of Jesus' face', must have been apparent to all who encountered him, for in the very first incident, recorded in the following verses in Luke, he is rejected by a group of Samaritans, precisely because "his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem" (9:53).

Significantly, Luke places this "time" to be "received up" immediately after his account of the transfiguration (vv. 28-36), in which Jesus was seen in glory, anticipating his ascension to heaven, and speaking with Moses and Elijah "of



PICTURE: Tony Benson

Looking across the fields of Kibbutz Kfar Blum towards Mount Hermon, the likely site of the transfiguration. It was following this event, in Luke's Gospel, that Jesus began his journey to Jerusalem.

his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (v. 31). We can be sure that this dramatic experience was intended to strengthen and reassure the Lord for that which was to come.

Journeying toward Jerusalem

Luke's account of the journey of Jesus includes some ten chapters (9–19), a substantial proportion of his Gospel, and covers approximately the six month period from the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month (there are hints that the transfiguration took place at this time, such as Peter's proposal to make three tabernacles, 9:33) to the final Passover, at which Jesus himself was to be offered as the Paschal Lamb.

As a prelude to the journey, it is at this time that the Lord appoints seventy disciples and sends them out before him (10:1). It is as though they are the advance guard for a monarch on a royal progress, so that Jesus instructs them:

"into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh

unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (vv. 8-11).

Thus the terms of the Master's final appeal to the nation are set out in stark detail. The people of Israel were to be left in no doubt as to the seriousness of the choice before them. For this is the culminating preaching campaign of the ministry, the final appeal to the obdurate nation to turn back to God.

So that we are prompted to remember that these chapters are the record of the final journey, Luke drops intermittent reminders into the text, often using the word 'way' (Gr. *hodos*):

- "And it came to pass, that, as they went *in the way*, a certain man said unto him . . ." (9:57)
- "When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art *in the way*, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him" (12:58)

- “Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, *these three years* I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none” (13:7)
- “And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and *journeying toward Jerusalem*” (v. 22)
- “And it came to pass, *as he went to Jerusalem*, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee” (17:11)
- “Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, *we go up to Jerusalem*, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished” (18:31)
- “And when he had thus spoken, he went before, *ascending up to Jerusalem*” (19:28)
- “And as he went, they spread their clothes *in the way*” (v. 36).

We notice that in the two references prior to the last there is an emphasis on going *up* to Jerusalem. It is noteworthy that the city of the great King sits at an elevation of around 2,600 feet, and that the ways to it run steeply uphill, which in itself is symbolic of ascending to the presence of the God of Israel: “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD . . . Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: *whither the tribes go up . . . to give thanks unto the name of the LORD*” (Ps. 122:1-4).

The conclusion was, of course, the end of Jesus’ journey, marked by the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, riding upon the ass’s colt and acclaimed by his disciples as “the King that cometh in the name of the Lord”, but also, ominously, warned by the scribes and Pharisees, “Master, rebuke thy disciples” (Lk. 19:38,39). Here was the coming to the Holy City of the one “whose right it is” (Ezek. 21:27), yet he was to be rejected and killed. And so it follows that he must come again to receive the throne that is rightfully his.

“As they went in the way”

What does Luke tell us of Jesus’ activities during this six-month journey? There is a remarkable contrast with the early stages of the ministry in Galilee, when large numbers of healing miracles were performed, as well as such spectacular demonstrations of Divine power as the feeding of the multitudes and the stilling of the storm. Now the great crowds that once followed him have mostly

Parables exclusive to Luke

Of the fifty-eight parables recorded in the Gospel of Luke, twenty of them are exclusive to the Luke record. Altogether some eighty parables are recorded in the synoptic Gospels, and twenty-two are omitted from the Luke record.

1	The Two Debtors.....	7:41-43
2	The Good Samaritan.....	10:25-37
3	The Friend at Midnight.....	11:5-13
4	The Rich Fool.....	12:16-21
5	The Lord who Serves.....	12:35-38
6	Fire and Water.....	12:49,50
7	Ass or Ox in the Pit.....	14:5
8	The Lowest Place.....	14:7-11
9	Rules for Hosts.....	14:12-14
10	The Great Supper.....	14:16-24
11	Tower and War.....	14:28-33
12	The Lost Sheep.....	15:3-7
13	The Lost Coin.....	15:8-10
14	The Lost Son.....	15:11-32
15	The Unjust Steward.....	16:1-12
16	The Rich Man and Lazarus.....	16:19-31
17	Unprofitable Servants.....	17:7-10
18	The Unjust Judge.....	18:1-8
19	The Pharisee and the Publican.....	18:9-14
20	The Pounds.....	19:12-27

Taken from *Parables of the Messiah*, John Carter, pp. 6-7. Published by the Christadelphian.

dwindled away, and even many disciples have left him (*cf.* Jno. 6:66). And so, although the seventy return elated by their ability to cast out demons (10:17), of Jesus himself only five healing miracles are recorded on the whole of the journey:

- casting out a demon (11:14)
- the healing of the woman with a spirit of infirmity (13:11-17)
- the curing of the man with dropsy (14:1-4)
- the healing of the ten lepers (17:12-19)
- the giving of sight to the blind beggar (18:35-43).

The overwhelming emphasis now is upon teaching and instruction for the disciples, as well as on the inevitable conflicts with Jesus’ enemies, intent on frustrating his message of repentance. The teaching ‘along the way’ includes some of the Master’s most memorable parables, such as the Good Samaritan, the Wedding Feast, the Prodigal Son, the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Pharisee and the Publican, and the Pounds, all in one way or another emphasising the choice facing men and

women between the standards of the world and the way of Christ, the way of humility and self-sacrifice.

It must be significant that the first of these parables, the Good Samaritan, features three men who are taking the reverse journey, going *down*¹ from Jerusalem, the city of blessing (Ps. 133:3), to Jericho, the city of the curse (Josh. 6:26). In contrast, the Samaritan (representing Jesus) came upon the dying man “as he journeyed” (Gr. *hodeuō*); by implication, going *up* to Jerusalem. Jesus seems to set the parable deliberately in the context of his own journey up to Zion. Interestingly, the next parable too, that of the Importunate Friend, also involves a man on a journey (*hodos*), arriving unexpectedly at midnight and needing bread (Lk.11:5,6). Perhaps this too might reflect a situation that the Lord had experienced on his travelling.

Challenging teaching

But, as well as the parables, these chapters contain some of Jesus’ most challenging words for disciples, in the form of direct teaching. In particular, chapter 12 contains those serious warnings of the dangers of materialism that are so relevant to the lives of believers today:

- “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (v. 15)
- “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment” (vv. 22,23)
- “And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you” (vv. 29-31)
- “Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (vv. 33,34)
- “Be ye therefore ready . . . for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not” (v. 40).

These injunctions can all be seen as particularly appropriate for disciples on a *journey*. For it is important in those circumstances to travel light, unencumbered with the ‘excess baggage’ of un-

necessary possessions. The whole economy of the modern world is based upon producing a constant stream of new consumer goods and gadgets for people to buy and clutter their lives with. Present-day followers of the man from Nazareth need to remember that these things will all have to be abandoned anyway in that day when the angel calls them to leave all and go to meet him. It is sobering to ponder in our hearts how easy that will be for us to do.

Jesus returns to the topic of possessions when confronted by the Pharisees, who were notably covetous (16:14, Gr. *philarguroi*, literally, ‘lovers of silver’): “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (v. 13). For these words, Luke informs us, the Pharisees “derided him” (literally, ‘held up the nose’), but they serve as a stern warning to us. In personifying money as though it is a god, Mammon, Jesus is drawing on Old Testament scriptures, reminding us that the hearts of the faithful must be undivided in serving the true God: “when thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the LORD, Which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and *serve Him*” (Deut. 6:11-13). And Samuel reiterates the teaching: “If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods . . . from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and *serve Him only*” (1 Sam. 7:3).

Following the Master

In presenting Jesus’ final appeal to the children of Israel as a journey, steadfastly completed by the Lord, even to laying down his life on the cross, Luke makes clear that the true disciple must *follow* him in the same spiritual pilgrimage. In chapter 9, which launches the journey, the word ‘follow’ occurs six times (vv. 11,23,49,57,59,61). Immediately after Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Christ of God, the Lord warns the twelve of his forthcoming passion, and tells them: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and *follow*² me” (v. 23). There

1. The man who fell among thieves, the priest and the Levite are all described, in the original Greek, as going *down*, that is, away from Jerusalem.
2. According to *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*, the verb ‘follow’, Greek *akoloutheō*, expresses the ideas of both ‘union’ and ‘a way’, hence ‘one going the same way’.

is an echo here of the example of Caleb on the wilderness journey, about whom God declares: "My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath *followed Me fully*, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it" (Num. 14:24).

Luke precludes the journey to Jerusalem with the words, "as they went in the way", and then gives three short cameos of what following Jesus really entails (9:57-62):

- "A certain man said . . . Lord, I will *follow* thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him . . . The Son of man hath not where to lay his head"
- "He said unto another, *Follow* me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God"
- "Another also said, Lord, I will *follow* thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him,

No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God".

In these encounters, Jesus is presenting the true call to pilgrimage, to lay aside the ambitions and allures of this world and travel hopefully with him to the glorious future which is promised to all who complete the journey: "Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and *followed* thee. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (18:28-30).

The Lord Jesus Christ, our Master, has completed his journey. For us he made the ultimate sacrifice to free us from sin, and now sits in glory at the Father's right hand. He travels with us as we follow in the way of discipleship. And his is the supreme example that inspires and guides us on our journey to his glorious Kingdom.

Luke's record of the Sermon on the Mount *

David Budden

Much of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is recorded at intervals in Luke 11-14. There appears to have been a concentrated effort by Jesus to get the people of Jerusalem to receive the teaching given originally on the mount to the people of Galilee.

JOHAN RECORDS that, between the Feast of Tabernacles (that is, October; 7:2,14) and the Feast of Dedication (late December; 10:22,40), Jesus was staying in or near Jerusalem. During those weeks he became the centre of a storm of controversy among the Jews (7:40-44), and, while many of the common people heard him gladly, the rulers became more and more menacing. They accused him of being in league with the devil (Lk. 11:15); they cast aspersions on his parentage (Jno. 8:41); they attempted to throw doubt on his sanity (10:20); they even attempted to assassinate him (v. 31). This hostility was brought to a climax by the healing of the blind man (9:39-41), and, immediately after that, Jesus left Jerusalem for a final

tour of the nation before returning to face arrest and crucifixion some three months later.

Luke, in 10:38-42, speaks of Jesus arriving at the home of Mary and Martha in Bethany, only a few miles from Jerusalem. It seems likely that chapters 11 to 14 inclusive cover those few weeks in Jerusalem recorded by John. Though Luke also records that Jesus was "journeying toward Jerusalem" (13:22), this does not necessarily invalidate the suggestion, since it is not to be supposed that Jesus spent every single day of over two months in the city. Undoubtedly he would visit many other nearby towns and villages too, and this verse may well be an allusion to the constant activity being undertaken.

Distributed throughout Luke 11-14 are many references to subject matter recorded by Matthew

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