

THE SON OF MAN'S MISSION: JESUS' MISSION MISUNDERSTOOD

LUKE 09: 51–56

DIVISION OVERVIEW: Jesus' Purpose (Luke 09:51–19:28)

This passage marks a significant turning point in Jesus' ministry. Chapters 9:51-19:28 have no parallel in the other Gospels. Most of the events are recorded by Luke alone. The thrust of the passage is that Jesus set his face, resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Luke divides this journey of Jesus into three stages. Each stage begins by strongly emphasizing Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem (Lk. 9:51, 53; 13:22; 17:11). There are also several passages that hint or mention the journey (Lk. 9:53, 57; 10:1, 38; 13:33; 14:25; 18:31; 19:11, 28).

Introduction: Luke 09:51–56

Jesus turned and set His face, resolutely set out for Jerusalem and death. This was one of the turning points of His life. As He launched forth in this new direction, the first subject covered is His mission. The mission of the Son of Man is seen in clear terms – terms so clear that the follower of the Lord cannot miss the meaning.

- I. His mission: to secure salvation (v. 51).
- II. His mission misunderstood (vv. 52-54).
- III. His mission explained (vv. 55-56).

I. Luke 09:51 Mission of Jesus Christ: Salvation of Men

Jesus' mission upon earth was to secure salvation. Jesus knew His mission; He knew why He had come to earth. He also knew that the time for Him to die for the salvation of men was at hand. Note the words, "as the time approached." He was fully aware that the time had come (Lk. 9:22, 27, 31). Therefore, He turned around and "resolutely set out for Jerusalem."

What is so significant about Jerusalem? Very simply, it was in Jerusalem that Jesus was to die for the salvation of men and be received up, that is, ascend into heaven. When Jesus "resolutely set out for Jerusalem," Jerusalem symbolized the death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord.

It was in Jerusalem that He secured salvation for man through His death, resurrection and ascension.

1. Jesus Christ secured salvation by His ascension (See *Ascension*, Lk. 9:51).
 2. Jesus Christ secured salvation by His death.
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Rom 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Gal 3:13 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

Col 1:13-14 *For [God] he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

1 Tim 2:3-6 *This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.*

Heb 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

Heb 9:28 *So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. (see 1 Pet 3:18)*

Isa 53:5 *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

LUKE 09: 51 THE ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST

*As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. **Luke 09:51***

The words *taken up* (analempseos) mean received. They refer to the ascension of Christ (see Acts 1:2, 11, 22; 1 Tim. 3:16). Salvation was to be secured by the ascension of Christ. How? The Ascended Lord means at least four things.

1. It means *the Risen Lord*. The ascension means that Christ arose from the dead. If He had remained in the grave, He would still be there in the form of dust. He could not have ascended. If He were to be "taken up," He had to be *raised up — quickened — made alive — taken up*. No one can be *taken up* without first being raised up. Therefore, to speak of the ascension is to mean that Christ is risen. Death is conquered; man can now be saved from death.

1 Cor 15:12-24 *But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.*

Rom 4:23-25 *The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness — for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*

2. It means *the Advocate or Representative Lord*. On earth Christ lived a perfect life; He was without sin (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22; Jn. 8:46). He was "obedient to death, even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted Him" (Phil. 2:8-9). He is "seated at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). He is "Jesus Christ the Righteous One," therefore, He is our "advocate with the Father," the "One who speaks to the Father in our defence" (1 Jn. 2:1). He is able to represent us before God because He has lived upon earth and secured a perfect righteousness. He is the Ideal Man (Mt. 5:17-18), our advocate, the One who is qualified to plead our case before God and see to it that we are saved.

Heb 7:25 *Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.*

3. It means *the Priestly or Intercessory Lord*. Every man suffers while on earth: suffers pain, trial, need, want, temptation, loss, illness and eventually death. We are incapable of even knowing how to pray as we ought in order to secure the help we need. But Christ knows and understands. He has been to earth and suffered just as we suffer. Therefore, He knows how to intercede for us and how to deliver us.

Heb 4:14-16 *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.*

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Heb 2:16-18 *For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Rom 8:33-34 *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

4. It means *the exalted Lord*. Christ has ascended to be exalted, to rule and reign over the universe for God. There is a great day of judgment coming upon the world, a day when all men shall bow the knee and acknowledge that Jesus is Lord, the Son of the living God.

Phil 2:9-11 *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Eph 1:19-23 *And his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

1 Cor 15:24-26 *Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. □*

II. Luke 09:52–54 Mission of Jesus Christ Misunderstood

Jesus' mission upon earth was misunderstood. Note three things of vital importance.

1. Jesus sent some disciples to run ahead of Him, to prepare the way for His coming. Apparently, this was the *method* Christ used to let the people of an area know He was soon to enter their city. Those who had interest could thereby be prepared for His coming.

2. Jesus was rejected by the Samaritans. Why? Because He was heading for Jerusalem, going to a place they despised. The Jews were unacceptable to them; therefore, they would have nothing to do with Jesus if He were going to minister in Jerusalem. Jerusalem had its own worship and priests, and the Samaritans had theirs. If Jesus would be theirs alone, they would gladly receive Him; if not, then He was not welcomed in their circles. (See *Samaritans*, Lk. 10:33.)
3. James and John were upset, fiery and angry over such rejection. They asked Jesus if they should destroy the village by calling fire from heaven to consume the people. Note two crucial points.
 - a. The faith of James and John in Jesus was strong. They believed without question that Jesus had the authority to control the power of heaven, either through Himself or through them.
 - b. The wrong understanding of Jesus' mission that James and John had was also strong. They thought in terms of a Messianic Ruler on earth, subjecting men and forcing them to worship and serve God. They saw the Messiah's judging those who rejected Him.

Note that James and John were guilty of the very same error that the Samaritans had just committed. They were full of bitterness, wrath, and vengeance, reacting against the Samaritans just as the Samaritans had reacted against the Jews and Jesus. They wanted to destroy the Samaritans because the Samaritans were not willing to worship (Jesus) and live as James and John wished.

John 3:17 "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

John 12:47 "As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it."

LUKE 10:33 SAMARITANS

Samaria was the central part of Palestine. Palestine was a small country, stretching only 120 miles north to south. The country was divided into three sections:

=> Judea, the southern section

=> Galilee, the northern section

=> Samaria, the central section, lying right between the two

There was bitter hatred between the Jews and Samaritans. Two things in particular caused this hatred.

1. The Samaritans were mongrel or half Jews, a mixed breed *by birth*. Centuries before (about 720 B.C.), the King of Assyria had captured the ten tribes of Israel

and deported a large number of the people, scattering them all throughout the Media empire (see 2 Kng. 17:6-41). He then took people from all over the Assyrian empire to transplant them into Samaria to repopulate the land. The result was only natural. Intermarriage took place and the people became a mixed breed, a breed including...

- the transplanted people
- the weak of the land who had been left behind
- the outcast and irreligious who had intermarried with the original Samaritans

The fact of a mixed breed, of course, infuriated the strict Jews who held to a pure race.

2. The Samaritans were mongrel or half Jews, a mixed breed *by religion*. The transplanted heathen, of course, brought their gods with them. Eventually the God of Israel won out, but the Samaritan religion never became pure Judaism. Three things happened to cause this.
 - a. When Ezra led the Jews back from exile in Babylon, the first thing the Jews did was to start rebuilding their temple. The Samaritans offered to help them, but the Jews rejected their help, declaring that the Samaritans – through intermarriage and worship of false gods had lost their purity and forfeited their right to worship the only true God. This severe denunciation embittered the Samaritans against the Jews in Jerusalem.
 - b. The Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim to stand in competition with the Jewish temple at Jerusalem.
 - c. The Samaritans twisted both the Scripture and history to favour their own people and nation.
 - => They twisted Scripture in that they accepted only five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch. (Just imagine! They missed all the richness and depth of the Psalms and prophets.)
 - => They twisted history in that they claimed three great events took place on Mt. Gerizim that set it apart as a place of worship. They claimed it was the place where Abraham offered Isaac, where Melchizedek met Abraham, and where Moses built his first altar after leading Israel out from Egyptian bondage. □

III. *Luke 09:55–56 The Mission of Jesus Explained*

Jesus' mission explained. Jesus' mission was not to destroy life, but to save it. This is repeated time and time again.

Luke 19:10 *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”*

John 5:24 *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

John 10:10 *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

Rom 8:1 *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Rom 8:34 *Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

1 Tim 1:15 *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst.*

Thought 1. Note several facts.

1) Christ proclaimed that today is the day of salvation, and He proclaimed it loudly and clearly.

2 Cor 6:2 *For he says, “In the time of my favour I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favour, now is the day of salvation.*

Rev 3:20 *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

Luke 19:10 *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”*

2) Scripture pronounces that judgment is *to come*. There is a day “when man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”

Heb 9:27 *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment. ■*