

Two Year Bible Trek

Week 83

Luke 9:51 – 19:48

Key Concepts: The key concept in this book is that Jesus the Christ is the completion of God's work with Israel and also the beginning of God's work with the Gentile world.

Central Concepts: The second central concept in Luke has to do with Luke's use of the Old Testament. Unlike Matthew, who makes sure to refer to the idea of "fulfillment", Luke either simply uses entire passages of Old Testament scripture without referencing the concept of fulfillment, or he tells stories which are based upon Old Testament stories. Examples of these can be found in the birth and childhood narratives with Simeon and Anna quoting scripture as if it is their own words and Elizabeth becoming pregnant after being barren just as did Hannah and Sarah.

Brief Summary: In the last lesson we focused on Jesus' birth, childhood and early ministry in Galilee. We now shift to Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. This is made clear with the opening line, "When the days drew near for him (Jesus) to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem."

Jesus' journey to Jerusalem begins with two great themes of Luke-Acts and those are opposition and commission. We will watch as Jesus and his followers begin to encounter opposition, both from Jews and Gentiles alike. At the same time we will see that Jesus commissions seventy of his followers to go out, heal the sick and proclaim that the Kingdom is breaking into the world. We will also see the continuing education of his disciples. All of them are to understand they are going out as lambs among the wolves.

We next read some of Jesus's best known stories. The first is the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a foreigner, a Samaritan, takes pity on and cares for a Jew, who has been beaten and robbed. Jesus tells the story in response to a question about what it means to love our neighbors. Since Samaritans and Jews are enemies, Jesus teaches that our neighbor is anyone in need. This is followed by the Mary and Martha story in which Jesus declares that listening to him is more important than the niceties of hosting guests. Jesus then teaches on prayer, including what we refer to as The Lord's Prayer. Opposition to Jesus becomes more pronounced when Jesus is accused of being possessed by Satan, of not following the Law and when after a dinner confrontation with some Pharisees many of them plot to catch Jesus in some religious misstep.

The crowds however continue to grow around Jesus. He teaches them and encourages the disciples at the same time. One of the main foci of his teaching is that of watchfulness. The disciples and the crowds are warned to always be prepared for the return of God's Kingdom and its ensuing judgment. This is followed by more oft-referred to stories including the Prodigal Son, the dishonest steward, Lazarus and the rich man, the dishonest judge and the Pharisee and the tax collector. Luke includes here Jesus blessing the children, a call to serve the poor and Jesus' eating with Zacchaeus, the tax collector.

The last leg of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem focuses on his triumphal entry. Jesus commands a couple of his disciples to go and find a colt that had not yet been ridden upon and bring it to him. Jesus rides this colt into Jerusalem while his disciples and the crowds call him the King who comes in the name of the Lord. The Pharisees object to this proclamation and Jesus tells them that if the people did not say it, the very stones would. We conclude with Jesus' pronouncement of the pending destruction of Jerusalem, his overturning the money changers tables in the Temple yet teaching there afterwards.

1. Which of the stories in this section is your favorite?
2. How might we be watchful?
3. Why do you suppose Jesus overturns the money changers' tables?