

As the Lord's ministry gradually shifts from Galilee to Judea, we read in 9:51 that He has set His face to go to Jerusalem. But first He must pass through Samaria.

The territory of Samaria sat in the center of Israel with Galilee to the north and Judea to the south. The city of Samaria dates its founding back to King Omri after the split of the ten northern tribes (1 Kings 16:24). After the conquest of Israel by the Assyrians, the land was likely occupied by a Jewish remnant mixed with Assyrian colonizers (2 Kings 17:6, 24-26).

The time of our Lord saw ongoing tension between Samaria and Judea/Galilee. Each side regarded itself as the true heir of Moses and the patriarchs. Samaritans rejected the history in the Bible after Joshua and developed their own writings. They even altered the Ten Commandments. The Samaritan tenth commandment says to worship the Lord on Mount Gerizim. This rivalry between the temple on Gerizim

and the one in Jerusalem is apparent in Jesus' encounter with the woman in John 4.

So Jesus was traversing unfriendly territory. That His face is “set toward Jerusalem” marks Him as unwelcome in Samaria. We should note that the Lord elsewhere shows love and concern for the Samaritans, and here rebukes His disciples’ wild overreaction to their cold reception.

Do we feel that we too are surrounded by opposition on our journey? Are we to join battle with the “unfriendlies” like the disciples? Or are we to show that our face is set toward Jerusalem? What would that look like? How would people see my destination in my face?

“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul” (1 Peter 2:11).

Questions:

1. What wrong perception about the Kingdom is Jesus correcting in 9:46-48?
2. How do the disciples act in a fleshly way in this passage? Can I do the same?

3. In verse 57 a man says to Jesus, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Does this statement come from faith, or from self confidence? Is there a danger we might make similar presumptuous promises, possibly in the songs we sing?
4. For a man to neglect burying his father would be a shocking violation of Jewish custom. What do the Lord’s strong statements in verses 9:59-62 tell us about following Him?
5. Verse 10:8 says “Eat what is set before you.” Do you think this connects with 1 Corinthians 10:27?
6. For what are the towns being judged in verses 10:12-15? When will this happen?
7. Read verse 10:16. What does it say about our relationship to our Lord?