

Jesus is Rejected in Samaria

Old Testament:- Daniel 7v13-14 ¹³ *"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Also Isaiah 53v1-4 which includes He is despised and rejected of Men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*

New Testament Luke 9v20-23- *"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "God's Messiah." Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me*

Luke 9v51-58.

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village. As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

Intro – What do they really think?

What do your non-Christian work colleagues, friends, family and acquaintances really think of you for believing in Jesus and following him. Not what they say to you, but they really think. Deluded. Sad case. Fanatical. Religious nutter etc. Culturally they will stay polite, but many have rejected what you believe, and in some way have also rejected at least part of you for what you believe. Does it bother you? How much do you wish to avoid being rejected by others. How big a deal is that for you. For me, I want to be liked by everyone, and it upsets me if I'm not, but if you feel like that, then rejection is a bigger cost to you.

Resolute for Jerusalem

Today's Passage from Luke 9 gives us a window into the rejection faced by Jesus, from which we can learn about our own rejection.

There are two times in the Jesus story where the voice of Father God was audibly heard. When Jesus was baptised, we heard God say this is my Son with whom I am well pleased. Then Jesus retreats into the wilderness before advancing into his ministry. The second occasion is when Jesus again goes on a retreat, this time up a mountain, a cloud descends upon him, and the voice of God is heard by his disciples to say 'This is my son, who I have chosen, listen to him'. We call this the Mount of Transfiguration because the appearance of Jesus was changed by a bright light and images of Moses and Elijah appeared with him. After this retreat we see Jesus advance into the final stages of his ministry. There's a message for us here that in key moments of our lives before advancing we need to retreat and have those special times with God. After the mountain retreat we read that Jesus set off resolutely for Jerusalem. Whatever was said between Father & the Son he came down with a determination to set South for Jerusalem, and was not going to be distracted or tempted away from fulfilling the mission.

This was a turning point in his ministry. Up until now the Spirit had led him here and there, he would stop have meals, do miracles, and generally hang out with the those that others shunned. I think he enjoyed his life, but now the Spirit was pressing him to go to Jerusalem and he knew what that meant. He knew no-one must stop him or convince him otherwise. He was resolute, but was probably in a darker mood at times as he contemplated what lay ahead. I think before he understood his death as a concept of what needed to happen, but now he had the agenda, the timescales, and he was going to deliver.

Rejected in Samaria

To go South, he was taking the harder but safer route through Samaria to avoid the Roman outposts along the Jordan Valley. There were many pilgrims going down from the North to the South via this route, but the Samaritans had their own place of worship at Gerezim, on a mountain where their ancestor Jacob and his family had worshipped God. They were descended from the Northern tribes who had split from the Southern tribes when King David's grandsons had messed up their governance 700 years previously. They had been denied access to worship in Jerusalem at the temple, the border was closed, so they set up their own place of worship at Gerezim. The Jews and Samaritans generally hated each other, and the place of worship was at the centre of the dispute, so when Jesus wants to set up overnight accommodation for him and his disciples they are not welcomed because they are on their way to worship in Jerusalem. They reject Jesus. The disciples take the rejection well and suggest they call down fire from heaven to destroy them all.

The Samaritans reject Jesus. He is on his way to Jerusalem where the religious authorities who have already rejected him, will set out to kill him. He has already told his disciples *"The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."* His fellow Jews rejecting him. Even some that saw miracles, or received miracles rejected him. On one later occasion, he heals ten lepers but only one wants to follow him.

The Mood in the camp.

The disciples seem to be getting told off a lot since Jesus came down from the mountain. The disciples had done some great miracles and had been on a high, but Following the transfiguration there is a series of 'telling offs' of the disciples, so the mood in the camp was probably not as great as it could be. He got annoyed with his disciples for not believing enough to drive demons out of a boy – "How much longer have I got to put up with you", he speaks about his death again but they don't understand; they argue about which disciple was the greatest so Jesus tells them the one that's most like a child; they stopped a man they didn't know driving out demons in the name of Jesus, and got told off for that. Then they headed off for Samaria and the brothers get rebuked for the 'burn em up' comment. Jesus has a more intense look on his face as he head South to Jerusalem.

A glum Son of Man?

So they are trekking southwards through Samaria, having left one unwelcoming village in search of another, when a man on the road who may have been travelling with them for a while, makes a bold statement to Jesus. "I will follow you, wherever you go". This is great news, isn't it. Acceptance, encouragement. Some-one who accepts Jesus and wants to follow him – anywhere. What would you expect the response of Jesus to be - a big broad smile – Yes- follow me – I will make you a Fisher of Men. But no, he looks a little glum, and says something about having nowhere to lay his head. So what's all that about?

Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man, which he likes doing. However the image Jesus has of the 'Son of Man' is not the imagery given in Daniel, one of Dominion, Glory and Kingship - *He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him.* This is a future Jesus, an ascended Jesus, this is not the one stood in front of the would-be follower. The image Jesus gives for the Son of Man is of a rejected leader, a suffering servant.

Politically Oppressed.

If you live in a country where you are being oppressed, it is rare that you have the freedom of speech to declare publicly that you are being oppressed. Jesus lived in a politically charged world of Roman rule with Herodian

support, an alliance keen to put down any hint of rebellion in a severe manner, with spies everywhere. [Examples of recent slaughters]. No one dared criticize Rome. So often they would talk in symbols. Herod himself descended from mixed races so was never accepted as a truly Jewish King – he had foreign blood.

Foxes have holes and Birds have roosts?

'Birds of the Air' was a symbol used in the era between the Old & New Testament to refer to the Gentile Nations. The Fox was a term used for a tribe called the Ammonites, who were racially similar to Israel but were their enemies. The term Fox is also a term Jesus used for the Jewish King Herod Antipas. Herods family, though Jewish Kings were of mixed race, and therefore still viewed as 'foreigners'. They held the balance of power under roman rule. This wasn't a Jewish country run by Torah loving Jews.

If you want power and influence, get in with the interloping foreigners than feather their own nests, follow the Fox into his hole. Side with Herod, help Rome, this is where the authority, glory, and sovereign power lies today – not with this Son of Man.

Birds always have roosts to go back to, Foxes have their dens. Not this 'Son of Man' – I have no place of any permanence to go back to. This 'Son of Man' is a rejected leader, one who is persecuted, and will suffer.

He turns to the would be follower (probably sensing a shallowness in understanding of what it takes to follow him) - Is that what you are expecting – to follow a rejected leader, wherever he will go, even unto suffering, even unto death. If it is glory and power you want, (Daneil's version of the Son of Man) then look elsewhere.

It was a shocking concept for the Jews to think about their Messiah as a rejected leader.

The Cross – Suffering and Rejection

To fulfil the prophecies Jesus had to both suffer and be rejected. Had he only suffered, then there could have been crowds hailing him as Messiah as he hung on the cross. There could have been glory at Golgotha. Sympathy and admiration of the world might have been focussed on his passion. It could have been viewed as a tragedy but one with value, dignity and honour, hailed a noble glorious death which would inspire the people. But the rejection of Jesus takes any glory out of the passion scene. It must be a passion without honour. To be the Christ, to fulfil the scriptures, to bring salvation he must be despised and rejected of men. How else could he stand alongside us in our rejection for his sake.

Here is Jesus, with his face set resolutely to Jerusalem, to the Cross on Golgotha to be despised, rejected and to suffer. He knows that most of his disciples will deny him or run away when the hour comes. Not even they

will follow him upto the Cross. And here appears a bright faced young man, saying that he will follow Jesus anywhere.

What is the response?

Is the young man put off by the response, or does he follow anyway? We are not told, as is so often the case in Jesus' parables (e.g. older son in the Prodigal). In not knowing, we are drawn into the story and forced to ask, how would I respond.

If I am going to Follow Jesus, what path is acceptable to me?

Think of those that share the gospel with you and led you to faith. Think of them for a moment as your travel agent for this life expedition! What package did they sell you. Make new friends, feel the presence of a loving God, help with your pain and problems in this life, and an eternity with God where there is no pain and suffering. It is the truth. Wow, who wouldn't want that travel package?

So you are expecting to fly out on a complimentary first class ticket with British Airways, and when your plane arrives on the runway you see the Irish Harp on the tail of a Ryanair jet. You think your flight was all arranged for you but because you have not checked in on-line, you are fined £50. You check in your main suitcase which cost £50, but your hand luggage whilst underweight won't fit into their bag checker – slightly too wide, rejected, it must go in the hold –another £50. Now you're at the end of the queue, and you are split up from your travelling companions, and have to squeeze in between the overweight gentleman and the lady with the crying baby. Neither speak English. The destination is still the same, but you haven't even taken off yet, and already it is not the package you expected. How do you feel about your travel agent now?

On our journey we will face rejection but not just from strangers like the Samaritans, but it may come from those closes to us. Just before Jesus was rejected and betrayed by one of his inner circle, Judas, he told the disciples to expect betrayal, to expect rejection and it could come from those closes to them i.e. from parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends. Luke 21 v16-18.

Three years ago I helped my friend Jason to faith, and during the last 3 years he has lost his close friends and faced significant rejection. In one sense I was his travel agent and didn't warn him of this?

The Good News is..

However though rejection is part of life following Jesus, what is important is how we respond to rejection. Do we get angry and want to bring down fire on those who have upset us, do we shrug it off and move on, or do we get so worried about what people think of us, it tifies our faith.

The most common instruction in the Bible is 'Do not be afraid' / 'Fear Not' , The opposite of fear is to trust in God.

We are on a journey with Jesus, one in which he has promised he will be with us and never leave us. Nothing will separate us from his love, and we are promised an eternity with him. This is the truth, and the example he has given us in how to live, is one we should follow. So we have the right destination, and we are on the right path.. but there are many who whilst accepting us as people will reject what we say about Jesus, and others that will reject us because of what we believe. We might simply not get invited out anymore. We soon find that our only close friends are Christian friends and there may not be many of those. It can seem a much

lonelier path than we expected. We are off the beaten track. But is also true that some of the best views are on this narrow path, some of the best views and experiences of God.

Luke tells us that Jesus had resolutely set out for Jerusalem. He knew what awaited him there. More rejection and suffering. It is no wonder, he challenged the young man that said he would follow him anywhere. But you are the young man, you are the young woman, it is still your decision. You can feather your own nest and stay in a comfort zone of political correctness and non-commitment, or you could get up and follow a Jesus that is frequently rejected. As we step out and share the gospel with others, there will be much hard ground where these Gospel seeds will be snatched away by the birds of the air, so look for the fertile soil, look for those that will accept your message, but don't sell them a soft gospel, be honest. It's a great road to be on, but its not an easy one, and Jesus never promised us that it would be.

Ending

We will be rejected for His sake, but he will accept us for our own sake (for our own good). Being rejected is part of what it means to take up your own cross and carry it. When you are serious for Jesus , you will get those that come against you. If you are not getting any criticism, then you are probably not doing anything for Jesus. We will face criticism, opposition and rejection, but every ounce of rejection we get from the World, is met with a ton of acceptance from Jesus – no matter who we are, where we are in our relationship with him., what we've done or continue to do. He accepts us lovingly, he woud like us to change to me more like him, but he accepts us just as we are.

Don't let words or criticism or rejection bind you up and become your focus... and don't be the person that criticises the ministries of others. Laugh it off and be free from it. [The Joy of the Lord is my strength]. Every day above ground is a good day. Never get tired in saying thanks to God for the good things he has done in your life. His love, his peace, his grace, his salvation, his joy, .. what he has done and what he will do you in your life. Focus on the good works that God is doing in your life and the lives of others. Keep the focus on his love and his acceptance.

It is this deep love and acceptance from Jesus, that we must carry along with the rejection we get from others because of our love for Jesus.

Supporting material

Similarly racially to the Jews Lot, Abraham's nephew, was the progenitor of the Ammonites. After Abraham and Lot separated (Genesis 13), Lot settled in the city of Sodom. When God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wickedness, Lot and his daughters fled to the hill country on the southern end of the Dead Sea. Probably thinking they were the only people left on the earth, Lot's daughters got him drunk and had incestuous relations with him to produce children ([Genesis 19:37-38](#)). The older daughter had a son named Moab ("from father"), and the **younger daughter of Lot gave birth to Ben-Ammi** ("son of my people"). **The Ammonites, descendants of Ben-Ammi**, were a nomadic people who lived in the territory of modern-day Jordan, and the name of the capital city, Amman, reflects the name of those ancient inhabitants.

The Ammonites were a **pagan people who worshiped the gods Milcom and Molech**. God commanded the Israelites not to marry these pagans, because intermarriage would lead the Israelites to worship false gods. Solomon disobeyed and married Naamah the Ammonite ([1 Kings 14:21](#)), and, as God had warned, he was drawn into idolatry ([1 Kings 11:1-8](#)). Molech was a fire-god with the face of a calf; his images had arms outstretched to receive the **babies who were sacrificed to him. Like their god, the Ammonites were cruel**. When Nahash the Ammonite was asked for terms of a treaty ([1 Samuel 11:2](#)), he proposed gouging out the right eye of each Israelite man. [Amos 1:13](#) says that the Ammonites would rip open pregnant women in the territories they conquered.

God speaks out loud to Jesus – 2 occurrences which sandwich his ministry prior to heading for Jerusalem.

1. Baptism :- "You are my own dear Son' – I am pleased with you".
2. Transfiguration: 'This is my Son, whom I have chosen – listen to him.

Note Transfiguration details – Peter, James & John heard the voice coming from a dark cloud which had descended upon them, frightening them. Prior to that Jesus had been praying to God (disciples sleeping!) and he was joined by Moses & Elijah dressed in "heavenly glory.

Luke 21:16-18: You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷ Everyone will hate you because of me. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish. By standing firm you will gain life. [Talking in the context of the end times but still relevant]