

DAY 37

Scriptural Background: Lk 9

"When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem."

Lk 9:51

The Gospel writers are very clear that the events of Jesus' crucifixion and death did not just happen to Him; He rather was directing them, in charge, and moving through those developments absolutely purposefully. One example of this is seen in John 18 when Jesus goes out to meet His persecutors (18:4), they fall back at His glory (veiled though it was, 18:5), and He reinitiates with them to keep the process moving forward (18:6–11). Another example is found in the passage quoted above.

Here, in Luke 9, Luke has deliberately presented the majority of Jesus' teaching (ch's 9–18) in the context of Jesus' making His way to Jerusalem (Lk 9:31, 51, 53; 13:22, 33; 17:11; 18:31), where He would die. The prophet Isaiah had foretold of an obedient servant who would amazingly be called upon to suffer for disobedient people who would mock and beat him—who would strike him on the back, pull out his beard, and spit upon him (Isa 50:4–9). Nevertheless, this servant would "set his face like flint" (Isa 50:7)—that is, he would not be deterred from his purpose of suffering vicariously for the very ones seeking to disgrace him. Therefore, when we read in Luke of Jesus' "setting His face" toward Jerusalem, we realize this is not just a casual turn of phrase or even just some isolated instance of remarkable determination; it is, in fact, Luke's way of showing us that Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction. Everything Isaiah prophesied would happen to Jesus (see Lk 23:63–65 and parallels). He is the suffering, sinless Servant who would give His life for the very ones—you and me!—who had rejected Him. Let that melt your heart this day. And let what He has done with joy for you (Heb 12:2) give you the fortitude to face pain and suffering for others with joy as well.

Prayer:

LORD Jesus, oh how my sinful rejection of You is the most shameful and disgraceful thing imaginable. Words are not enough, but thank You and praise You for willingly—joyfully!—bearing that shame and disgrace to take it off me. May Your work be brought more fully to completion in me today by leading me to receive what You have done for me as evidenced by my going and doing likewise for others. For the Glory You so richly deserve. Amen.