

51-54 When it came close to the time for his Ascension, he gathered up his courage and steeled himself for the journey to Jerusalem. He sent messengers on ahead. They came to a Samaritan village to make arrangements for his hospitality. But when the Samaritans learned that his destination was Jerusalem, they refused hospitality. When the disciples James and John learned of it, they said, "Master, do you want us to call a bolt of lightning down out of the sky and incinerate them?"

55-56 Jesus turned on them: "Of course not!" And they traveled on to another village.

57 On the road someone asked if he could go along. "I'll go with you, wherever," he said.

58 Jesus was curt: "Are you ready to rough it? We're not staying in the best inns, you know."

Jesus said to another, "Follow me."

59 He said, "Certainly, but first excuse me for a couple of days, please. I have to make arrangements for my father's funeral."

60 Jesus refused. "First things first. Your business is life, not death. And life is urgent: Announce God's kingdom!"

61 Then another said, "I'm ready to follow you, Master, but first excuse me while I get things straightened out at home."

62 Jesus said, "No procrastination. No backward looks. You can't put God's kingdom off till tomorrow. Seize the day."