

1st Century Trail Riders; Luke 22:36, Policy Change

2. Land Travel

Other than the dangers involved there were other considerations which discouraged taking long trips.

Roman roads were excellent and spanned over 50,000 miles throughout the Empire but if you were not a Roman citizen you couldn't use them. Other roads were more like paths which would fade out and fade in dependent upon the lay of the land. Psalm 107:4-7 describes a caravan crossing a Middle-Eastern Jornada and losing its way. The Lord ultimately leads them to the safety of a city.

You can visualize in this passage a wagon train lost in the prairie Jornada but through God's grace being led ultimately to Fort Union.

Psalm 107:4 - They wandered in the wilderness in a desert wheel-track [**derek**]; they could find no populated city.

Psalm 107:5 - Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

Psalm 107:6 - They cried out to the Lord in their anguish and He delivered them from their distresses.

Psalm 107:7 - And the Lord guided them in the right way [**yashar: straight, plus derek: wheel-track**], to go to an inhabited city.

Since roads could not be consistently maintained they were filled with holes and strewn with rocks. When dignitaries or important people approached a city, its citizens would busy themselves in "*preparing a way*."

This is used figuratively for John the Baptist whose task it was to prepare the people for the arrival of the Messiah. Clearing a path of rocks and holes is how Isaiah introduces his prophecy of John's ministry.

Isaiah 40:3 - A voice is calling, Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a superhighway for our God.

Isaiah 40:4 - Let every valley be lifted up [**fill in the holes**], let every mountain and hill be made low [**eliminate the bumps**], and let the rough ground become level, and the rugged terrain a broad valley [**describes the construction of a raised causeway for the arrival of a king**].

Isaiah 40:5 - Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all flesh will see it together.

Several passages of Scripture document the dangers of ancient travel:

Judges 9:25 - The men of Shechem set men in ambush against him on the tops of the mountains and they robbed all who might pass by them along the road.

Luke 10:30 - Jesus said, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and he fell among robbers and they stripped him and beat him and went off leaving him half dead."

3. Accommodations

As one traveled on long journeys it obviously became necessary to rest for the night. Several words describe the types of rest stops that were common along the trails.

- a. *Malon*: A place to lodge; includes tents, caves, and structures.
- b. *kataluma*: An inn. Means literally to lose down [*kata*: down + *luo*: to lose]. Used for a place where man and beast could relax from the day's travel. It also refers to a room in a private house where the traveler is invited in for the night. It was in the *kataluma* of John Mark's father that the Last Supper was held:

Luke 22:11 - You shall say to the owner of the house, The Teacher says to you, 'Where is the guest room [*kataluma*] in which I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'

Luke 22:12 - And he will show you a large, furnished, upper room; prepare it there.

- c. *pandocheion*: A public establishment where literally all are received. Also called a *caravansari* or a *khan*, these hostels were originally developed for those who traveled popular routes. It was staffed by an innkeeper who supplied food and provisions. The layout consisted of large stone buildings arranged in a square which enclosed an open courtyard. The buildings were often two stories. The lower level contained food and provisions and stalls for cattle while the upper ones accommodated the guests. There was always a water supply nearby. Another service which became a staple at most of these operations was the availability of what we might call "*in-house entertainment*" complete with a staff of damsels on call. This is why the apostles were instructed by the Lord to seek lodging in private homes.

Luke 10:7 - Stay in the house of the man of peace, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.

This need for a tranquil place to rest was recognized and incorporated into the Royal Family Honor Code with mandates for hospitality toward traveling believers.

Romans 12:13 - Contribute to the needs of fellow believers, practicing hospitality.

With all these various difficulties typical of first-century travel, it is obvious why those who did take road trips customarily took along money, food, and changes of clothes. But instead, our Lord instructed the disciples and the seventy in:

Matthew 10:9 - Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts,

Matthew 10:10 - or a bag for your journey, or even two tunics or sandals, or a staff ...

In other words, what the Lord was actually saying to the disciples was, "*Why don't we just forget the luggage?*"

4. The Staff

One final, very interesting thing we need to see in this Matthew passage before we move on to Luke 22:36 is the word “*staff*.” Among the things the disciples are instructed not to take on their missions is a staff.

The word is *rhabdos* and refers to any kind of substantial branch or stick used as a weapon.

The shepherds used its straight end as a club to drive away predators and its crooked end to guide sheep. It was also used to goad animals, assist a person as a cane to maneuver in rough country, and it was available for use as a weapon against man or beast.

When the Lord was a part of the traveling party, He insured the logistical supply of daily essentials for His disciples plus all the physical protection they needed. As a result, there was no need for any luggage—be it money, food, clothes, or sandals. No need for a swag, a tucker-bag, or a matilda. And there was no need for a staff by which one would defend himself on the dangerous roads and around the rowdy hostels common to first-century Israel.

Now that the Lord is about to be taken away, the situation changes dramatically. Thus, the Lord states a new policy in Luke 22:36.

III. Analysis of Luke 22:36

Luke 22:36 [NAS] - And He said to them, “But now, let him who has a purse take it along, likewise also a bag, and let him who has no sword sell his robe and buy one.”

Not much exegesis is needed here but some is necessary to arrive at our conclusion. The verse begins with a post positive adversative conjunction: *gar* - “*But*.”

The adversative conjunction indicates that what is said next will be in contrast to that which has been stated before.

After their response in agreement with the evaluation stated in Luke 22:35, Luke indicates that what the Lord says next will be contrary with the policy of Plan A.

In Luke 22:35 the Lord begins His statement with the words, “*When I sent you out ...*”

In Luke 22:36 He begins His new policy statement with the adversative conjunction of direct discourse plus the adverb of time: *alla + nun* - “*But now*.”

“*But now*” means that the following statement establishes a new policy which goes into effect at that moment and continues on indefinitely.

What indicates that this is a new policy statement is the presence of four imperative moods which follow.

CTL Luke 22:36 - But He said to them, “But now, let the one who has a purse, take it ...”

The first verb in the Lord’s policy statement is the present active participle of: *echo* - “*owns*.” This verb means “*to have in one’s own possession*” and indicates ownership. If a disciple owned a swag for his money—a *ballantion*—then he was ordered to take it with him on his missionary trips.

present: Progressive; denotes the continuation of existing results. Refers to a fact which has come to be in the past and is emphasized as a present reality.

active: Those who own a swag produce the action of ownership.

participle: Dependent upon whether or not you own a swag. If you do then the next verb applies, the aorist active imperative of: *airo* - “take.”

aorist: Indicates action which has not yet started but is commanded to occur at the next opportunity as a matter of policy.

active: The one who owns a swag is to produce the action of the verb by taking it with him.

imperative: Command; Jesus Christ issues a direct, positive mandate: disciples who own swags should as a matter of policy take them on road trips.

Now the swag in question—the *ballantion*—was used exclusively for money and valuables. Therefore, if you had money, you were to take it with you.

The next item mentioned is the second associated with the imperative mood. It is one of our friends from Luke 22:35, the noun: *pera* - “scrip.” This is the bag carried along over the shoulder which contained a day's supply of food. This is the first-century evangelist's tucker-bag.

The Lord has changed policy regarding logistics. Under Plan A, He instructed his disciples and the seventy to go without any accessories for money, food, or a change of clothes. Now He is commanding them to take all these things with them as they travel.

Also included in this 180-degree change of policy is a counter mandate regarding the staff mentioned in Matthew 10:10.

The third item associated with an imperative mood is the double-edged sword popular in the Roman Empire, called the: *machaira* - “sword.”

Sugg, Ike C. “Flies Before People.” Wall Street Journal. 11 Feb. 1997.