

Message #32**Mark 9:30-37**

This is one fascinating election year to follow. There is one thing of which you may be absolutely certain, God is still sovereign. God has a sovereign plan that is moving everything in accordance with His Word and will. One of the topics that has been brought up is the topic of NATO. I doubt seriously that very many people on this earth realize the eschatological ramifications of this subject. However, for those who know eschatology and know the books of Daniel and Revelation, these are exciting things to see.

What we know from Scripture is at some point the number of European nations that will form a coalition will be ten. That point is clearly predicted by Daniel (Dan. 2:42; 7:23-24) and it is clearly predicted by John in Revelation (Rev. 12:3; 17:12). Now ultimately these ten nations will unite with the Antichrist in a European Union to try and destroy Israel. Now since there are 28 nations involved in NATO now, we believe something needs to happen to whittle that down to ten key nations. So when the topic of re-adjusting NATO surfaces, it is thrilling for those who know the Word of God because it indicates we are nearing the Rapture of the Church. The problem is most people don't know the Word of God or the program of God because they have never been carefully taught.

That was not the problem with these disciples. These disciples were clearly told and carefully taught and they still did not get it. Their understanding was dull at this point and Jesus was explaining to them just exactly what would happen in the Program of God concerning Himself.

Now Jesus had been up on top of a mountain in all of His glory, but as He comes back down, it is time to get heading to Jerusalem to fulfill the program and plan of God. He needed to die on a cross and He needed these disciples to understand this point. So in this part of Mark's account, He needed to instruct them about what would happen in the near future. He wanted them to know the program of God. Everything that would happen was controlled by God and they needed the faith and stability that comes from knowing that. So in this text what happens is this:

JESUS CHRIST TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES ABOUT HIS SUFFERING AND DEATH AND RESURRECTION AND ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GREAT DISCIPLE.

Mark is writing this and he is getting much of the data from Peter. So you have to give Peter great credit. He tells the truth about himself and the rest of the apostles. They don't have a clue.

Now **verse 30** reveals to us that Jesus and His disciples are in the process of leaving the area. They are leaving the Caesarea Philippi area (8:27) and they are in the process of "passing through Galilee." They are on their way to Judea (10:1) and to get there, they needed to make one final pass through Galilee.

The participle "go through" or "passing" indicates He does not intend to stop and tarry anywhere in Galilee anymore. He was not going to go to more major populated areas, but He was now, as it were, traveling the back roads and fields.

Now Jesus did not want anyone to know He was passing through the area. His reason is at least twofold: 1) His Galilean ministry is over; 2) He did not want the Galilean crowd to forcefully go to Jerusalem and try to make Him King by force. There is no doubt they would have done this, just as John said (John 6:15).

Jesus is trying to “keep a lid” on the messianic truth that He was the God/Savior/Messiah/King. There is no doubt that He could have caused a major revolt; but that revolt would have kept Him off the cross.

Now before we move on, I want to make an important observation here and that is as great a ministry as Jesus Christ had in Galilee, it was now ending. God’s people need to realize this. Sooner or later the greatest ministries in existence will come to an end. So God’s people need to cherish those ministries and protect those ministries while they have them. Does the work of God go on? Yes. But it isn’t the same. Jesus was leaving Galilee.

Now from here on out, there will be a shift in the teaching ministry of Jesus Christ. He changes from a lot of public teaching and miracles to a lot of private instruction for the twelve. This does not mean he never teaches publicly again because He does, but there is a major emphasis on instruction to His disciples.

Now in these verses there are two main topics about which Christ teaches:

TOPIC #1 – Christ teaches His disciples about His future sufferings. 9:31-32

When Jesus Christ came down that mountain after His transfiguration, He was starting to move to the cross. It was critical that His disciples understand where this was going and what was going to happen. Jesus is beginning to get very specific in His suffering instruction. He teaches them three futuristic predictions. The imperfect tense of the verb “telling” indicates Jesus was continually teaching on this subject over and over again:

Futuristic Prediction #1 - The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men. 9:31a

Now remember Peter, James and John had just seen Christ in all of His glory. They knew He was the God/Savior/Messiah/King. They also knew what the title “Son of man” meant.

The Divine title “Son of man” was a key Daniel term and it is one that refers to the fact that Jesus is the God/man King of Kings who one day will reign forever over all peoples, all nations and all political powers (Dan. 7:13-14).

Now the prediction that Jesus makes here is that this Divine God-King Person will be delivered into the hands of men. It is interesting that by referring to the “hands of men” **He is alluding to the fact that Perfect Deity will be turned over to sinful humanity to accomplish the will of God.** Just think about this for a moment. This is a moment in history when Almighty God willingly turns Himself over to the hands of sinful, finite men.

Now Jesus does not specifically name the specific men at this point, who actually will be involved in delivering Him. However, the present passive tense of the verb “delivered” means that there would be a continual process to this suffering and Jesus would passively go through the process.

We know that this process would include Judas, the religious leaders like the chief priest and scribes, Pilate, Herod, Gentiles, and a bunch of Roman thugs.

Think of this; Jesus is telling His disciples that the God/man, Savior, Messiah, and King of Kings will be delivered into the hands of these evil and corrupt men. We learn from Mark 10:33-34 that when He is delivered over they will mock Him, spit on Him, scourge Him and kill Him.

Futuristic Prediction #2 - The Son of man will be killed. **9:31b**

Of the three passion predictions that Christ makes in Mark, this is the briefest but it is potent. Now Jesus says the Son of man will be killed. Jesus is telling His disciples that He, the One who is the King of Kings, is going to die. He is going to be literally killed. He is going to permit sinful men to execute Him.

Now of course this was clearly predicted by Isaiah. Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would die. He said that He would be like a “lamb that is led to slaughter” (Is. 53:7). He said that He would be “cut off out of the land of the living” (Is. 53:8).

But this is the problem; most people do not carefully study the Scriptures to understand the prophetic plan of God. **This death of Jesus Christ is critical to the salvation of sinners.** It is critical to Israel and it is critical to us.

Futuristic Prediction #3 - The Son of man will rise three days later. **9:31c**

Now Jesus says that three days after He has been killed, He will rise again. The verb “rise” means that Jesus is predicting that He will literally and physically rise back up from the dead and will once again appear three days after being killed (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 38). These are very specific predictions.

Now in **verse 32**, we get the two initial responses of the disciples:

(Response #1) - They did not understand. **9:32a**

The Greek literally reads “they were ignorant of the words.” They did not have a clue what He was talking about. Peter is relaying this to Mark, so Peter is telling him we were so dull we had no idea what He was even discussing.

You cannot help but see that these guys are spiritually dull. The words are as plain as they can be. The only thing we can think is that they could not understand two realities:

Reality #1 - They did not understand why He would have to die.

Now you would think they would have at least said, “Why do you have to die?” “Why will you allow men to kill you?” Had they asked Him we know what His answer would have been.

He would say I have to die for the sins of people. I have to die for your transgressions and iniquities (Is. 53:5-6, 8). He would have said, “I am your guilt offering” (Is. 53:10) and I am bearing your iniquities (Is. 53:11).

Do you want to know what is so sad? Most people today still don’t understand this. Most today don’t have a clue why Jesus Christ had to die. This is why most think they can save themselves by their works or religion.

Reality #2 - They did not understand why He would have a resurrection.

They were aware of the fact that there would be a resurrection at the end of the age. They certainly knew of Daniel’s prediction of a resurrection of national Israel (Dan. 12:1-2). Apparently they could not figure out a resurrection that would happen to Him after He was killed.

They could not connect the dots of the program of God. **This resurrection proves that Jesus Christ is the only way to a relationship with God.**

(Response #2) - They were afraid to ask Him what He meant. **9:32b**

Instead of them asking Christ about this, they were afraid to ask Him. Frankly, we aren’t sure why they were afraid. Jesus had not done one thing to make them afraid to ask Him a question.

We may remember that they asked Him a question about why they could not cast out a demon and He answered them that this demanded prayer (Mark 9:28-29). He certainly would answer them if they asked Him, but they didn’t ask Him.

They apparently were too intimidated to ask Him.

TOPIC #2 – Christ teaches His disciples about the key to greatness. **9:33-37**

According to **verse 33**, Christ arrives at the Capernaum house one more time. It is possible that it was Peter’s house (Mark 1:29). Now when they got to the house, Jesus asks them what they had been discussing.

Now what they should have been discussing was what Jesus had just revealed to them that He would be delivered into the hands of men, killed, and would rise again.

They should have been trying to “process” that data. That would have been the logical subject to discuss. But that is not what these disciples were discussing.

According to **verse 34**, they kept silent. In other words, they didn't tell Jesus what they had been discussing. They probably were too embarrassed.

Well Jesus knew what they had been discussing so He will inform them. We know from **verse 34** that what they had been discussing is which one of them would be the greatest disciple.

Let's remember that Peter, James and John had been up on that mountain and had seen the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ. They probably felt good about that and they felt special. There apparently was a little jealousy among the disciples and they got into some "Muhammed Ali" discussion about who is the greatest.

Instead of discussing the critical theme of Jesus Christ and His sufferings and death and resurrection, they are discussing which one of them will be the greatest disciple.

So in **verse 35**, Jesus sits down and decides to teach them the answer to their question.

Great Disciple Fact #1 - If anyone wants to be first, he shall make himself last of all. **9:35a**

There is a drive in most people to be first and be the best. There is a sense in which that kind of drive is legitimate. But there is also a sense where that is dangerous. When it comes to eternity, those who drove themselves to be first over people will be last.

Great Disciple Fact #2 - If anyone wants to be first, he shall make himself a servant of all.
9:35b

In most people there is an innate desire to have people serve them. Most people are not real interested in serving others. But in eternity, those who will be honored the most will have served the most.

Jesus would say in Mark 10:43-45 that this is the reason He came to this earth the first time, not to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many.

Now Jesus decided to follow that up with a visual illustration. According to **verse 36**, He took a child into His arms. This may have been one of Peter's children.

Great Disciple Fact #3 - If anyone wants to be first, he must receive individual children for the name of Jesus Christ. **9:37**

The religious leaders wanted the pomp and glory. They strutted around in their religious garb and people admired them and honored them. Jesus says the one great in the sight of God does not operate like that. They are interested in pointing people to me.

Great disciples care about the people of God, including the children. Great disciples are interested in pointing people to the arms of Jesus Christ for salvation. They are not interested in self-acclamation. They are interested in people coming into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

In fact, Jesus says at the end of **verse 37** that one who receives Him has a relationship with God. Do you see this? You must receive Jesus Christ as your Personal Savior.