

Stage V. Jesus Withdraws to the Gentile Regions Surrounding Galilee

C. Jesus End His Withdrawal With Discipleship Training

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #134

1. Jesus Teaches His Disciples About His Death for the 2nd Time MK 9.30-32 (Parallel Texts: MT 17.22-23; LK 9.43B-45)

30 ^MThey left that place and travelled to Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were,
31 because he was teaching his disciples. ^{MT}When they came together in Galilee, ^Mhe said to them,

^L*"I command you to listen carefully to what I am about to tell you. ^MThe Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will be raised ^{MT}to life."*

32 ^MBut they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it. ^LIt was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it. ^{MT}And the disciples were filled with grief.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are in red italics*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	On the Journey South From Caesarea Philippi to Capernaum
Timeline	September (Month 33)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage V: Jesus Withdraws to the Gentile Regions Surrounding Galilee
	C. Jesus End His Withdrawal With Discipleship Training
Title	I. Jesus Teaches His Disciples About His Cross the Second Time

COMMENT:

Jesus had spent the last four and a half months in "withdrawal mode" from Galilee, as he made two major trips northward, and one circuit to the Southeast of Galilee into the Decapolis. These were Gentile areas. The Lord had been concentrating on training his disciples over the months on the road, and in retreat in secluded areas. Now he was returning to Galilee one last time before departing South to Judea, Perea, and Jerusalem--where he would spend the last eight months of his earthly life.

Today's reading begins a series of seven texts that constitute Jesus' final discipleship teaching during the withdrawal period. His ministry was no longer to the great crowds that had flocked to him in Galilee. He was pouring himself now into the twelve, and the larger fellowship of his disciples. His remaining days in Galilee were spent teaching his disciples crucial lessons that would prepare them to serve him after his death and resurrection.

Jesus began his discipleship training on the journey by highlighting his Messianic death and resurrection the second time. He had first taught the twelve about his cross several months earlier, at Peter's "great confession" near Caesarea Philippi. They were not able to receive his teaching then. Now, when he repeated the same information for the second time, they still could not understand or believe it. Jesus knew that, but it did not keep him from reminding them of the fact that he was going to die and rise again. The repetition was important for them to be able to ultimately embrace the meaning of his death and resurrection, after it had happened.

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Every christian since Pentecost believes in Jesus as LORD and Savior on the basis of his death and resurrection. The cross is central to our Biblical and historical understanding of Jesus, and our relationship with him. This was not so for the original disciples who believed in him as Messiah during his earthly ministry.

What we take for granted today was too shocking and incompatible with their understanding of God's nature, and the role of the Messiah for these disciples to be able to take it in. That did not keep Jesus from preparing them to accept the truth of it over time, for he knew it was inevitable that they would come face to face with the reality of his death and resurrection in just eight months.

Just as Jesus prepared his disciples in advance for what they could not believe or comprehend at the time, he prepares and teaches us in advance to accept future realities. All spiritual training and growth is like that.

We cannot imagine or conceive the things that God has prepared for us. So he tell us about them in Scripture, and uses our life experiences and the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit to open us up to eventually believe and experience things that we cannot originally comprehend.

APPLICATION:

Jesus' example of teaching his disciples about his death and resurrection when they could not yet believe it is a powerful encouragement for each of us. He is graciously working in each of our lives right now in the same way. He is preparing us to believe and experience things that we cannot presently imagine. He is growing our faith and understanding as HE knows best.

Struggling to understand what confuses or baffles us is evidence that God is growing us in the knowledge of him. It is not cause for despair, but hope. He WILL make it clear to us as he grows our capacity to see everything from HIS perspective, with his perfect understanding. We can trust him to do that.