

# Explore the Bible: Serves

October 10, 2023

- *The Explore the Bible lesson for Oct. 22 focuses on Mark 10:32-45.*

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Bible lessons like this one have been an important part of the Baptist Standard for many years. Each has a cost of at least **\$50** to produce. To ensure these lessons continue to be provided the rest of 2023 and into 2024, you can **make a donation** in any amount by visiting [our donation page](#). In the comments field, note your donation is toward the cost of Bible studies.*

## Jesus Predicts His Death (Mark 8:31-33, 9:30-32, 10:32-34)

Jesus has three conversations with his disciples in which he predicts his death. With each new conversation, he adds details but keeps a focus on his death—and resurrection.

Jesus' stark news is a crisis for disciples, who coast along with daydreams of inevitable victory and thrones for themselves. The disciples do not yet know just how splendid their future will be. But first, they will serve in the place to which they are called.

Jesus' mission includes being servant and savior. The disciples see Jesus as an incomparable preacher, teacher, healer and friend. He is the Messiah, too but they were not expecting Israel's king to be so meek, kind and merciful—a servant of all, humbly taking the last place.

The disciples struggle with news of Jesus' upcoming death, as might be expected. The disciples are in denial and bargaining that this will all just go

away. Their association with Jesus is arousing fears for their own safety.

In the three conversations about his death, Jesus talks about himself in the third person: The Son of Man must go up to Jerusalem where he will:

- suffer many things.
- be rejected by elders, chief priest, and teachers of the law.
- be condemned to death by Jewish leaders.
- be delivered into the hands of Gentiles who will mock him, spit on him and flog him.
- be killed.
- after three days rise again.

## **Responses from the disciples are not surprising:**

- Peter takes Jesus aside and begins to rebuke him.
- The disciples do not understand what Jesus means.
- They are afraid to ask Jesus to explain.
- They argue about which disciple is greatest (Mark 9:33-35).
- James and John ask to be seated on thrones next to Jesus in glory. (Mark 10:35-37).
- They never acknowledge resurrection.

Luke 9:45 says, “They did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.”

“It was hidden from them” but Jesus is not hiding it. Maybe the disciples’ established beliefs are hiding it. Maybe the disciples think the Messiah will be more like King David? How can they reconcile a passive, suffering and dying servant ushering in God’s kingdom of light, power, justice, victory,

peace and love? Shouldn't Jesus at least be a fighter?

Jesus says, "I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe" (John 14:29).

## **Isaiah's Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53)**

Biblical literacy was high in Judea and Galilee during Jesus' day. Why couldn't the Pharisees, teachers of the law and rabbis, see in Jesus these unforgettable descriptions of the Messiah as suffering servant and savior in Isaiah 53? The disciples could not see Jesus as the suffering servant who was:

- despised and rejected by men.
- a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
- one from whom men hide their faces.
- one who has borne our griefs.
- one who carried our sorrows.
- one whom we esteemed stricken, smitten by God.

This suffering servant was "pierced for our transgressions" and "crushed for our iniquities." Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and "with his wounds we are healed."

He was oppressed, he did not open his mouth, and "like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, like a sheep that before its shearers is silent by oppression and judgment, he was taken away.

## **The suffering servant was:**

- cut off out of the land of the living.
- stricken for the transgression of my people.

Furthermore:

- His grave was with the wicked with a rich man in his death.
- He had done no violence.
- There was no deceit in his mouth.

Isaiah 52:13-15 said: “My servant will act wisely. He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him—his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness—so he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.” Do Isaiah’s words describe Jesus? Yes.

In Mark 9:35, Jesus says “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.” Does “servant of all” describe Jesus? Yes.

In Mark 10:43-45, Jesus says: “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Does this describe Jesus? Yes. Does Jesus want us to be servants? Yes.

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