**Matthew 17:22-23**

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-17/matthew-1722-23/>

Jesus tells His disciples that He will be handed over, killed, and raised from the dead as He and His disciples gather together in Galilee. His comment deeply troubles the disciples.

 The parallel gospel accounts of this event are found in Mark 9:30-32 and Luke 9:43-45.

Jesus returned to Galilee after He was revealed to be the Messiah and Son of God to His disciples in Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16:13-28), was transfigured on the high mountain (Matthew 17:1-13), and cast out the demon from the man’s son (Matthew 17:14-21).

Matthew used an interesting expression to report His return. He wrote they were gathering together. This expression suggests that they who were gathering had previously been scattered about and were now reassembling together. This suggests that while Jesus was with Peter, James and John, the others were doing something else, perhaps ministering in the countryside.

The they in the phrase they were gathering together refers to Jesus and His group of followers. We know that Peter, James, and John were with Jesus during His transfiguration. But we are not told of the whereabouts of the other nine disciples in the unit of twelve. Nor do we know the larger group of Jesus’s followers during that event or the ones that immediately followed it. At least some of them were present (Mark 9:14).

It is possible that Jesus had sent them on kingdom errands to preach and proclaim the gospel during some or all of His venture in Caesarea Philippi and told them to gather together in Galilee at an appointed time. Jesus appears to have done something like this at least twice before, and probably three or more times (Matthew 10:5-42; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6; Luke 10:1-16). The Matthew 10 account seems to have occurred relatively early in His ministry. The Mark 6 and Luke 9 accounts may have been the same because they are mentioned just before the feeding of the five thousand men. But the mission to minister in the countryside described in Luke 10 is definitely a separate event from the previous three. It may have been that the remaining disciples were gathering together in Galilee after a mission like the ones described in these passages.

It is also possible that Jesus may have given His disciples separate routes by which to return to Galilee in order to better mask His whereabouts. Mark reports that as they began to enter Galilee, Jesus did not “want anyone to know about it” (Mark 9:30).

While they were gathering Jesus said to them a troubling statement:

The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.

Jesus had recently plainly told at least some of His disciples that “He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day” (Matthew 16:21). At that time Peter rebuked Jesus for saying such things. Now Jesus was telling them plainly again. Similarly, after He was transfigured, Jesus mentioned to Peter, James, and John about the Son of Man’s resurrection (Matthew 17:9) and of His suffering (Matthew 17:12). But it appears that they were unable to understand what He was talking about at that time. They would not understand until Jesus appeared to them after He was raised from the dead.

The Son of Man is a reference to the Messiah, who the disciples understood to be Jesus. Jesus said three specific things would happen to Him.

The first thing was that He is going to be delivered into the hands of men. Examining this statement closer we see that Jesus was not only foretelling His disciples that He would be arrested by men, but also that He would be delivered into their hands. To deliver means to hand over. This deliverance does not explicitly specify betrayal, but it suggests it. Jesus would be delivered into the hands of the Sadducees and Pharisees and be betrayed by one of His twelve disciples—Judas (Matthew 26:14-16, 47-50).

The second thing Jesus foretold would happen to Him was that He would be killed. The chief priests and elders held an illegal trial of Jesus once He was their prisoner and condemned Him to death (Matthew 26:57-66). They then delivered Jesus into the hands of the Romans who executed Him by means of crucifixion (Matthew 27:11-50). After Jesus was dead, His body was buried, sealed and guarded in a tomb (Matthew 27:57-66).

The third thing Jesus foretold of Himself was that He will be raised on the third day. Even though He would be killed, Jesus would not remain dead. He would come back to life! Three days after He was crucified, Jesus was raised back to life (Matthew 28:1-10).

Matthew described the disciples’ reaction to what Jesus was telling them. And they were deeply grieved. The disciples were exceedingly sorrowful and disturbed when they heard Jesus say this.

In addition to being grieved by what Jesus said, the disciples were also “afraid” to ask Him what He meant.

“But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.”
(Mark 9:32)

The disciples’ fear to ask Jesus what He meant suggests that not only did they not understand Him, they did not want to understand Him. They did not want the thing they were hearing Him say to be true. Instead of seeking clarity they wallowed in their grief over it.

To them what Jesus said would happen was horrible. To them it would signify defeat and failure. It was incomprehensible to them that God would allow His Son as the Messiah to be killed at the hands of His enemies. They were hurt and confused by what Jesus meant.

Luke reports that the disciples did not understand what Jesus meant when He said something similar to them after exorcising the demon from the desperate man’s son, because it was concealed from them, so that they were unable to perceive it.

“‘Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.’ But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.”
(Luke 9:44-45)

Part of the disciples’ confusion about what Jesus meant by these statements was the result of His meaning being concealed from them at this time. Luke does not name the cause of this concealment, whether it was God, their unbelief, or something else.

The disciples did understand Jesus’s meaning of these statements after He had risen from the dead.

**Biblical Text**

**17:22-23 And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.” And they were deeply grieved.**