

Luke 9:45

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

Analysis

But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying. The disciples' incomprehension is threefold:

1. ouk egnōsan (οὐκ ἔγνωσαν, "they understood not")—intellectual failure
2. ēn parakekalymmenon ap' autōn (ἢν παρακεκαλυμμένον ἀπ' αὐτῶν, "it was veiled from them")—divine concealment
3. hina mē aisthōntai auto (ἴνα μὴ αἴσθωνται αὐτό, "that they might not perceive it")—purposeful hiddenness.

The passive voice "it was hid" indicates God temporarily withheld full understanding—they couldn't grasp it yet.

Additionally, **they feared to ask him** (ephobounto erōtēsai auton, ἐφοβοῦντο ἐρωτῆσαι αὐτόν)—they were afraid to seek clarification. This fear stemmed from Peter's earlier rebuke (Matthew 16:22-23) and Jesus' sharp response. They sensed the topic was ominous but couldn't reconcile a suffering Messiah with their kingdom expectations. This divine hiddenness was mercy—had they fully understood before Pentecost, they might have abandoned Jesus or attempted to prevent the cross. God revealed truth progressively, preparing them incrementally for the incomprehensible—Messiah must die.

Historical Context

Jewish Messianic expectation, shaped by prophecies of David's eternal throne and kingdom glory, anticipated a conquering king who would defeat Israel's enemies and establish worldwide reign. Isaiah's Suffering Servant passages (Isaiah 53) were typically not applied to Messiah but to Israel corporately or the prophets. The idea that Messiah would be 'delivered into the hands of men' and killed was scandalous and incomprehensible. Even after the resurrection, disciples asked, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?' (Acts 1:6). Only after Pentecost did the Spirit illuminate Scripture, showing Messiah must suffer before glory (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47). The disciples' confusion was not stupidity but theological paradigm clash.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Why did God temporarily veil the disciples' understanding of Jesus' passion prediction, and what does this teach about progressive revelation?
2. How does the disciples' fear of asking clarifying questions warn against avoiding difficult or uncomfortable biblical truths?
3. In what ways do contemporary believers struggle to reconcile Jesus' call to suffering with expectations of blessing and success?

Interlinear Text

οἱ δὲ οὐ γνόουν τὸ ὡρίματος τοῦτο καὶ ἦν
G3588 But they understood not G3588 saying this and it was
G1161 G50 G4487 G5124 G2532 G2258

παρακεκαλυμμένον ἀπ' αὐτὸν ἵνα μὴ αἴσθωνται αὐτὸν
hid from him G2443 G3361 they perceived him
G3871 G575 G846 G143 G846

καὶ ἐφοβοῦντο ἐρωτῆσαι αὐτὸν περὶ τοῦ ὡρίματος
and they feared to ask him of saying
G2532 G5399 G2065 G846 G4012 G3588 G4487

τούτου
that
G5127

Additional Cross-References

Mark 9:32 (Parallel theme): But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

Luke 18:34 (Parallel theme): And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

John 12:16 (Parallel theme): These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

Luke 2:50 (Parallel theme): And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.