

# Luke 9:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

## Analysis

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**Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest** (διαλογισμὸς, dialogismos)—the disciples engage in a deliberative debate about rank and status. The Greek term suggests calculated, self-interested argumentation, not innocent curiosity. This dispute erupts immediately after Jesus predicts His suffering (9:44), revealing how completely they misunderstood the nature of Messiah's kingdom.

Their question **which of them should be greatest** (τίς εἰη μείζων, tis eiē meizōn) assumes a hierarchy of honor in the coming kingdom. They debate who deserves first rank—Peter for his confession? James and John for witnessing the Transfiguration? Judas for managing finances? Jesus will answer by redefining greatness itself: true megas (greatness) means becoming the least, servant of all (9:48). The disciples sought crowns; Jesus offered a cross.

## Historical Context

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This dispute reflects first-century Palestinian culture where honor and social rank were fiercely contested. Disciples of rabbis often jockeyed for position, expecting their master's elevation would mean their own advancement. The Twelve expected Jesus to establish an earthly Davidic kingdom imminently, complete with cabinet positions and governmental authority. Jesus's teaching would radically invert these expectations.

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. When have you found yourself mentally calculating your rank or importance compared to other believers, and what does this reveal about your understanding of kingdom values?
2. How does the disciples' concern for greatness immediately after Jesus predicts His suffering expose the fundamental conflict between worldly ambition and cross-bearing discipleship?

## Interlinear Text

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Εἰσῆλθεν δὲ διαλογισμὸς ἐν αὐτῶν τὸ τίς ἀν  
there arose Then a reasoning among of them which G302  
G1525 G1161 G1261 G1722 G846 G5101

εἴη μείζων αὐτῶν  
should be greatest of them  
G1498 G3187 G846

## Additional Cross-References

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**Philippians 2:3** (Parallel theme): Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

**3 John 1:9** (Parallel theme): I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.