

# Mark 9:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

## Analysis

**What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?** Jesus' question (τί ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ διελογίζεσθε, *ti en tē hodō dielogizesthe*) probes the disciples' hearts with penetrating omniscience. The verb διελογίζεσθε (*dielogizesthe*) means "to reason, debate, dispute"—they engaged in serious argument, not casual conversation. Jesus knows exactly what they discussed but asks to draw out confession and expose their worldly ambition.

The phrase "by the way" (ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, *en tē hodō*) has deeper meaning—όδός (*hodos*) throughout Mark represents the journey to the cross (8:27; 9:33-34; 10:32, 52). While Jesus walks toward crucifixion, explaining His coming suffering (9:30-32), the disciples quarrel about earthly greatness. This devastating irony exposes how completely they misunderstand messianic mission. Their silence in verse 34 reveals shame—they know their ambition contradicts Jesus' teaching about servant leadership.

## Historical Context

This scene occurs in Capernaum, Peter's hometown and Jesus' ministry headquarters in Galilee (1:21; 2:1). The disciples had just witnessed the Transfiguration (9:2-13) and Jesus' second passion prediction (9:30-32). First-century Jewish messianic expectations centered on political restoration and earthly kingdom. The disciples' dispute about greatness reflects contemporary

assumptions that Messiah's kingdom meant positions of power and honor, similar to Roman or Jewish hierarchies.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does Jesus' question technique—asking what He already knows—model pastoral wisdom for drawing out confession rather than accusation?
2. What does the disciples' argument 'by the way' to the cross reveal about how worldly ambition blinds us to Christ's suffering and call to servanthood?
3. When have you been preoccupied with status or recognition while Jesus calls you to embrace sacrifice and humility?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς Καπερναούμ· καὶ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ  
And he came to Capernaum And by G3588 the house  
G2532 G2064 G1519 G2584 G2532 G1722 G3614

γενόμενος ἐπηρώτα αὐτούς Τί ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ πρὸς  
being he asked them What by G3588 the way among  
G1096 G1905 G846 G5101 G1722 G3598 G4314

ἐαυτοὺς διελογίζεσθε  
yourselves was it that ye disputed  
G1438 G1260

## Additional Cross-References

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**Hebrews 4:13** (Parallel theme): Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

**Revelation 2:23** (Parallel theme): And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

**Mark 2:8** (Parallel theme): And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

**Matthew 17:24** (Parallel theme): And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

**John 21:17** (Parallel theme): He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

**John 2:25** (Parallel theme): And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.