

I. Read Luke 18:31-34

- A. In the passage, Jesus (for the third time) tells His disciples what will happen to Him in Jerusalem. Why did He repeat himself?
First, He knew that they did not really understand what lay ahead. Secondly, He wanted to emphasize what lay ahead because, apart from His crucifixion, it was impossible to understand His earthly mission. Thirdly, He knew that merely having the information and truly understanding it were not the same. It often takes time to process and assimilate significant truths. Consequently, repetition is helpful. In other words, He continued to tell them that He must suffer and die in Jerusalem so that when it actually occurred, they would recall and understand.
- B. In verse 31, Jesus says that “all things written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.” To what was He referring? (See Isaiah 53.)
Specifically, He was referring to the Messianic prophecies, in which the Old Testament prophets had foretold His crucifixion (such as the Isaiah 53 passage).
- C. How did Christ reveal the gospel to His disciples in Luke 18:31-33? (See 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4.)
He told of His death, burial and resurrection and made it clear that this would indeed be the fulfillment of all Old Testament promises, prophecies, and types regarding the way of salvation (the gospel). Remember that the disciples were practicing Jews and would have been very familiar with the ceremonial law and Old Testament Scriptures already. They had yet to make the connection between the Old Testament and Jesus, though.
- D. Do you think that most of the disciples had a clear understanding of who Jesus was and what He came to do at this point?
According to Luke 18:34, they did not understand these things yet.
- E. How does the inability of the disciples to understand what Jesus came to do compare to the world's understanding of the gospel? (See 1 Corinthians 2:6-14.)
The unbeliever cannot comprehend or apprehend the gospel. Being spiritually dead means the unbeliever is insensible to the significance of the gospel. The natural man is certainly capable of knowing the facts of the gospel but cannot understand and apply the gospel personally. Consequently, you have folks who have been in church most of their lives, taught Sunday School, held office, etc., who one day realize they have never been truly converted and subsequently trust Christ and the gospel! The situation of the disciples was very analogous to a person in this kind of state. The bottom line is that the mind and heart of man must be quickened by the Holy Spirit to really understand the gospel!
- F. What is it that makes the natural man obtuse regarding the gospel message? (See Romans 3:10-18; Ephesians 2:1.)
The Romans 3 passage describes the effect of depravity — inability to obey the law, inability to understand God, refusal to see the God of Scripture, going our own way, wasting our lives, doing evil continually, living lives filled with deceit, speaking untruths, cursing, antagonistic toward the sanctity of life, destructive, divisive and the refusal to fear God. The Ephesians 2:1 verse explains that our sinful state makes us spiritually dead — insensible to spiritual truth — unable to walk and live in spiritual light while imprisoned in spiritual darkness.
- G. What must happen in the heart and life of a person before he or she can truly understand the full import of the gospel? (See John 3:1-16.)

All must be *born again* in order to truly understand spiritual truth. The theological term for this is *regeneration*. The Holy Spirit must convict, enlighten, persuade, convince and convert us.

- H. Why would it be beneficial for someone sharing the gospel with an unbeliever to repeat the gospel message many times over a period of time?

Because one never knows what is going on in another's heart or when that person might be receptive to the gospel. This means that, in witnessing to those God places in our lives, we should not be discouraged if they do not immediately respond but should anticipate a positive response in God's time. Parents should especially continue to reiterate and reinforce the gospel message to their children even after the child has made a profession of faith. It is possible for someone to think they have been converted when they truly have not.

- I. Is it possible that one who has truly believed the gospel might still not be ready to receive deeper truths from Scripture? (See 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:12-14.)

The bible uses *milk* and *solid food* to illustrate the difference between those scriptural truths that are simple and those truths which tend to be more complex. Understanding scriptural truth is closely associated with one's sanctification. Hence, things we cannot comprehend or receive at one point in our walk may become clearer at a later time. Once again, Jesus' example of repetitive teaching is important for preachers and teachers to grasp. The fact that a believer cannot or will not receive a teaching at one point doesn't mean he/she will not do so in the future. The scriptural truth of election/predestination is an example of the kind of teaching which a believer might initially reject but receive at a later time. It is also true that we grow and mature at different rates and folks must be given space in which to grow to maturity.

- J. What is the *ordo salutis*?

The order of salvation. This is simply a term to describe the application of redemption to man by God the Holy Spirit. It is intended as a logical order rather than a chronological order. Universal call, effectual call, regeneration, faith and repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance of the saints, glorification.

- K. Place the disciples where they seem to be in their understanding of Jesus with respect to the *ordo salutis*.

While we can only infer the disciples' progress from the passage in Luke 18:31-34, it is clear that they did not fully comprehend the gospel at this point, nor did they truly understand who Jesus was. They had bits and pieces of truth about Jesus, and some had greater understanding than others. (See Peter's confession in Matthew 16:15-17.) In Luke 24:13-35, *The Road to Emmaus* incident describes the process in which two of the disciples came to an understanding of who the resurrected Christ truly was. With this in mind, it appears they had not yet been regenerated or converted (conversion corresponds to faith and repentance in the *ordo salutis*) in the Luke 18 passage. This is, of course, speculation.