

Cæsar. Afterward it was known as Neronias, in honor of Nero. It is now a paltry confusion of insignificant dwellings.

Verse 18. He asked them. A method Jesus had of teaching. He draws out and then fills in. Truth is not to be mixed with error. **Whom say the people?** In Matthew and Mark, "men." Our Lord knew that the thousands had formed some opinion of him, as the millions at the present day have, and he would throw what influence popular belief or opinion had upon the disciples.

19. The works and teachings of Jesus had evidently awakened intense interest in Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. But since the manner of Christ's appearance did not correspond to their materialistic interpretation of the Messianic passages, they concluded that he was **John the Baptist** risen from the dead, the Messenger, or, what was the same idea, Elias, who should prepare the way of the Royal Deliverer, the military Messiah of Israel.

20. But whom say ye that I am? This was of more importance than what the multitude thought or said. These disciples had been admitted to the closest intimacy with the Lord; they had seen his miracles, heard his words, and had been given an insight, not granted the people, of the real character of their Master. They were to be his witnesses; to them would he commit the spread of the kingdom of God, and it was necessary that they should know the Christ, for without a conviction of his Messianic character their mission would be a failure, they would have no mission. **Peter . . . said.** Peter had the gift of leadership. Unconscious of any sense of presumption in taking the initiative, for his perception of what ought to be done was impelling and keen, he answers, voicing the belief of all the others. **The Christ of God.** In Matthew it is of the living God. From the generally held belief that Jesus was an extraordinary man, the disciples gradually grew, under the influence of the Spirit, into the belief that he was the Anointed One, the foretold Messiah. But belief did not stop there. The conviction developed within them that he was not only the Messiah according to Jewish notions, but that he was the revelation of the living God, however they might be able to define or explain their belief, if they ever tried to. He was the Christ of, from, out of, God, and was therefore a divine being.

21. Tell no man. Among themselves they might hold and discourse on their belief of him, for they knew him; but the time had not yet come for them to announce the fact of his Messiahship or of their belief in him to the public. Many things are yet to be accomplished before the proofs are all in, his sufferings, death, and glorious resurrection. When these events shall have come to pass, and when the apostles themselves are endued with power that will give the declaration heavenly force, then,

but not till then, will it be in harmony with the will of God that the Messianism and divinity of the Redeemer should be publicly and officially made known. God has his own time for doing his own work.

22. Jesus foretells the events to come. It is not at all likely that we have in this verse anything more than a short summary of what he told the disciples concerning his death and resurrection. But he was to be **rejected** by the leaders of Israel, and that one word is full of meaning. Of the closest kin to it is the word which signifies an examination of magistrates concerning their legal qualifications for office. This word means the rejection of a candidate as disqualified. The character and purpose of Jesus would not answer the earthly conceptions of the Messiah fostered by the elders of Israel. But over against their rejection of him he puts his resurrection. **Raised the third day.** Thus will he be demonstrated to be the Messiah, the Son of God, by the very power of God in raising him from the dead the third day.

23. Will come after me. That is, follow me, and be with me in the same plane of life and in his conquest over the world. **Deny himself.** Cut loose from all earthly ambitions which have for their end the gratification of the flesh and the sensual enjoyment of worldly pomp and glory and love of ease. **Take up his cross.** Those about to be crucified carried the transverse beam of the cross to the place of execution. Each man must take up his particular cross, whatever it may be, and **follow me.** Where? To each one's own Golgotha, and, thank God! to each one's own Easter morning.

24. Will save his life. Whosoever will make his life—its pleasure, its comfort, its glory—the sole end and aim of his efforts will eat the apples of Sodom. Selfishness is of the earth, and will always betray its origin, and men will hate it and scorn the self-seeker, the automatic self-advertiser, the little petty tyrant, the unkind, unmerciful provider of his own stomach and trumpeter of his own good deeds; and thus will he who sets his life before him as the one thing in all this universe to be taken care of lose it, and that forever. **Lose his life . . . save it.** He who abandons himself to the good of others, gives up his life for the life of others, will gain his own life and all life. Every door of love in the whole wide universe, in this world and in all worlds, will be open to him. Millions would die for Jesus Christ, but not one sane man would lay down his life for Julius Cæsar or Napoleon.

25. The value of anything depends on what it can do. All that the world has cannot equal man himself nor satisfy him when he is himself. Happiness is not in the world outside, but in the world inside. He who is happy will find the world smiling; he who is unhappy will never see the

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