

## Lesson VII.

## THE GREAT QUESTION

November 17, 1912

**BETWEEN THE LESSONS**—This Lesson follows immediately on the one before the last. Jesus, desirous of retirement, goes northward on the road from Bethsaida where He gave sight to the blind man, to Caesarea Philippi. It is a time of education for His disciples. They have seen the wonders of Christ's deeds. Now they are to learn the wonder of His own divine Person and the wonder of His death on the cross.

**GOLDEN TEXT**—Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.—Matthew 16 : 16.

**Memorize vs. 36, 37. THE LESSON PASSAGE**—Mark 8 : 27 to 9 : 1. Read Matthew 16 : 13-28.

27 And Jesus went <sup>1</sup> out, and his disciples, into the <sup>2</sup> towns of Caesarea Philippi : and <sup>3</sup> by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, "Whom do men say that I am ?"

28 And they <sup>4</sup> answered John the Baptist : <sup>5</sup> but some say Elias ; and others, One of the prophets.

29 And he <sup>6</sup> saith unto them, But <sup>7</sup> whom say ye that I am ? <sup>8</sup> And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected <sup>9</sup> of the elders, and <sup>10</sup> of the chief priests, and <sup>11</sup> scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32 And he spake <sup>12</sup> that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But <sup>13</sup> when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan : for thou <sup>14</sup> savourest not the

things <sup>15</sup> that be of God, but the things <sup>16</sup> that be of men.

34 And <sup>17</sup> when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, <sup>18</sup> Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

35 For whosoever <sup>19</sup> will save his life shall lose it ; <sup>20</sup> but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, <sup>21</sup> the same shall save it.

36 For what <sup>22</sup> shall it profit a man, <sup>23</sup> if he shall gain the whole world, and <sup>24</sup> lose his own soul ?

37 <sup>25</sup> Or what shall a man give in exchange for his <sup>26</sup> soul ?

38 <sup>27</sup> Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation <sup>28</sup> ; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Ch. 9 : 1. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, <sup>29</sup> That there be some of them that stand here, which shall <sup>30</sup> not taste of death, till they <sup>31</sup> have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

**Revised Version**—<sup>1</sup> forth ; <sup>2</sup> villages ; <sup>3</sup> in ; <sup>4</sup> Who ; <sup>5</sup> told him, saying ; <sup>6</sup> and others, Elijah ; but others ; <sup>7</sup> asked them ; <sup>8</sup> Omit And ; <sup>9</sup> by ; <sup>10</sup> Omit of ; <sup>11</sup> the ; <sup>12</sup> he turning about and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and saith ; <sup>13</sup> mindest not ; <sup>14</sup> Omit that be ; <sup>15</sup> he called unto him the multitude with his disciples, and said ; <sup>16</sup> If any man would come ; <sup>17</sup> would save ; <sup>18</sup> and whosoever ; <sup>19</sup> Omit the same ; <sup>20</sup> doth it ; <sup>21</sup> to gain ; <sup>22</sup> forfeit his life ; <sup>23</sup> For what should a ; <sup>24</sup> life ; <sup>25</sup> For whosoever shall ; <sup>26</sup> the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when ; <sup>27</sup> There be some here of them that stand by ; <sup>28</sup> in no wise taste ; <sup>29</sup> see the.

**Daily Readings**—(Courtesy, I.B.R.A.)—M.—The great question, Mark 8 : 27 to 9 : 1. T.—Peter's previous testimony, John 6 : 68-71. W.—Peter's later assurance, Acts 4 : 1-12. Th.—Hindered by riches, Matt. 19 : 16-23. F.—Martha's testimony, John 11 : 20-27. S.—"Before Abraham was, I am", John 8 : 51-59. S.—The great answer, Mark 14 : 53-62.

## THE LESSON EXPLAINED

## I. A GREAT CONFESSION.

27, 28. Into the towns ; Rev. Ver., "villages"—into the neighboring hamlets, without entering Caesarea Philippi itself. Caesarea Philippi ; so called to distinguish it from Caesarea on the Mediterranean, where Paul was imprisoned. It was called Caesarea in honor of Augustus, Philippi in honor of the Tetrarch of Tra-

29, 30. Whom say ye ? The second and supreme question. They had known Jesus at close range. Their idea of Him is all important, for they are to be His ambassadors. Peter answereth ; spokesman and leader, as usual. The Christ ; Matt. 16 : 16, "the Christ, the Son of the living God", Luke 9 : 20, "the Christ of God." The confession means the same in each. To Peter, Jesus is the Messiah. The people define Jesus in the terms of the great men of earth. Peter defines Him in the terms of heaven. Mark omits the blessing and promise of Christ to Peter for His answer, which Matthew gives. Charged ; word means, command with threat. The time was not ripe for declaring His Messiahship.

## II. A KEEN REBUKE.—31-33. Began to teach.

A turning point in Christ's training of the Twelve. Must ; inner compulsion, not outer necessity—not because He could not help it, but because He willed it (see Luke 2 : 49 ; 4 : 43 ; 24 : 26). Suffer many things. See Matt. 16 : 21 ; Mark 9 : 12 ; Luke 9 : 22 ; 17 : 25. Rejected. See Ps. 118 : 22 ; rejection after legal trial. Elders ; laymen or priests who were members of the Sanhedrin, the supreme ecclesiastical court in Jerusalem. Chief priests ; the most distinguished representatives of the Jewish priesthood, generally Sadducees. Scribes ; professional interpreters of the law. After three days. Matthew, "the third day" ; both expressions the same. (Compare Matt. 27 : 64.) Openly ; in plain words, not in



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chonitis, and lay twenty-five miles north of Bethsaida on the spur of Mt. Hermon. Whom do men say ? The first question about the popular ideas of Jesus. John the Baptist. Guilty Herod thought Jesus was John the Baptist come to life, ch. 6 : 14. Elias ; Elijah, the promised forerunner of the Messiah, Mal. 4 : 5. One of the prophets. Matthew (ch. 16 : 14) adds Jeremiah, a prophet regarded as, in some respects, the greatest of them all. All took Jesus to be a great person ; none took Him to be the Messiah.