

Summary Handout

“I Will Give unto Thee The Keys of the Kingdom”

Lesson
13
Summary

Matthew 16; Jesus heals the daughter of a Gentile woman—He feeds the four thousand. Jesus warns against the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees—Peter testifies that Jesus is the Christ, and is promised the keys of the kingdom—Jesus foretells His death and resurrection.

Matthew 17; Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James, and John on the mount.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights: **Keys to Understanding the Keys:** Matthew and Mark give us a powerful chiasmus to help us relate the events of the transfiguration in a pattern that extends beyond geography or even chronological events. (The New Testament is an incomplete chronology, since so few of the Savior’s actual days in mortality are mentioned.) The following dialogue occurs in the area of Caesarea Philippi, one of the northernmost towns in the land of Israel.

“Keys” and “Three Days:” “. . . Jesus . . . asked his disciples . . . Whom do men say that I . . . am? “. . . Simon . . . answered . . . Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered . . . Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed [it] unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; . . . And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” “. . . From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be raised again the third day. (*Matthew 16:13-21*)

Highest Witness of the Son of God – Center of the Chiasmas: Note that a promise of keys and a prophecy of three days is stated. This Gospel account is followed by the transfiguration. It happened six days later and, according to President Spencer W. Kimball, occurred on Mount Tabor about sixty-five miles south of Caesarea Philippi. There, the highest witness of Jesus as the Jehovah, Son of God, was given. “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” (*Matthew 17:1-7*) (*Mark 9:2-7*)

Proud or Pleased? The highest compliments rendered by the Father, “beloved” and “I am well pleased,” are examples for us to use in place of “pride” or “I am proud of you.” In 1989, Prophet and President Ezra Taft Benson gave a profound talk about removing “pride” and “proud” from our language. He taught that there is no justifiable use of the word “proud.” He also said, “Pride is ugly.” Being pleased is a compliment; being proud seems selfish.

Tabernacles, Booths – facing Jerusalem’s Temple: Before we see the remainder of the chiasmas (three days and keys), let’s look at the added insights of the seasonal and ritual traditions accompanying the transfiguration, likely to have been during the very Sukkoth season when Jews expect the Prophet Moses (and others) to return, preceding the Messiah’s advent. It is the custom to build small booths called tabernacles or in Hebrew, Sukkoth. The festival of Sukkoth is a sequel to Passover (the first full moon after the first day of spring) when Elijah is expected. It begins on the first full moon after the first day of fall. Additionally, the transfiguration may have been a special temple-like endowment for Peter, James, and John. “The Savior took Peter, James, and John upon a high mountain and there he, with Moses and Elias, conferred upon these apostles the keys of the priesthood . . . The Lord consecrated and made holy the mountain top, instead of taking the apostles to the temple in Jerusalem, because the temple had become a “den of thieves,” having fallen into the hands of apostate Jews who did not worship the true and living God.” (*Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, Vol.2, Pg.233*)

Going to the Temple at the High Holy Days – Times of Holy Convocations: “. . . these are Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot . . . on each of them every male Jew was expected to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem.” “Interestingly, the rededication of the Temple and the re-celebration of Sukkot paralleled the consecration of Solomon’s Temple, which . . . dedication ceremony (was) held on the festival of Sukkot.” (*Encyclopædia Judaica Jr.*) The following information explains one of the two holiest convocations the Children of Israel were commanded to keep. The spring

convocation is Passover and Sukkoth is in the fall. (Modern L.D.S. convocations called General Conference also coincide seasonally.)

Sukkot: “. . . (Hebrew for "huts" or "tabernacles"), a seven-day festival beginning on the 15th day of the month of Tishrei, which falls in September or October. (In the Diaspora an extra eighth day is celebrated.) One of its main observances is living temporarily in huts, called *sukkot*, resembling those in which the Children of Israel dwelt during their forty years in the wilderness after the Exodus from Egypt.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Fall Conference: “This autumn festival was the last of the three "pilgrim" festivals connected with the farming year. From all corners of the Land of Israel throngs of pilgrims used to make their way up to Jerusalem carrying the gaily decorated baskets of fruit and grain which they brought to the Temple as a thanksgiving offering. At the gates of the city the townsfolk greeted them with music. The pilgrims then ascended the broad marble staircase that led from the City of David to the summit of the Temple Mount, where they would present their offerings to the Priests.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Dedication of Temple: “This holiday was also the occasion for the consecration of the Temple built by Solomon and every seventh year on Sukkot, the Torah was read by the king before the assembled people. In his vision of the end of days, the prophet Zechariah foretells that all the nations of the world will assemble for Sukkot festival in Jerusalem to worship God.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Building the Temporary Tabernacle: “The *sukkah* is a structure with at least three walls, made of any material. It must be at least ten handbreadths in height, and in area at least seven handbreadths square. The roof covering, or *sekhakh*, is usually leafy branches, and these must be arranged so that there is more covered than open space.” “In present-day Israel, as in other countries, Jews construct sukkot in their gardens, on the sidewalks, and on the roofs and balconies of their houses, just as they did at the time of the return from the Babylonian exile, as described in the Book of Nehemiah: "So the people went forth . . . and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God . . . and there was very great gladness." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Expected Guests: “When a family performs the mitzvah of the sukkah joyfully, they are said to be visited in the sukkah by seven "guests of the festival" (the ushpizin) who are present in spirit. Each day it is customary to invite and welcome one of these seven guests --- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, (Joseph), Moses, Aaron and David --- by an appropriate recitation.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Chiasmas Completed Following The Account of the Transfiguration: Before the account of the transfiguration Matthew quotes the Savior promising the keys to Peter, “. . . I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Thereafter, the account includes the third day prophesy. (*Matthew 16:13-21*) After the account of the transfiguration the same points are reported in reverse order. “And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.” (*Matthew 17:23*) “Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (*Matthew 18:18*)

Three Nights, Three Days: The prophecy of three days and the promise of keys repeated by Matthew creates a chiasmus emphasizing the Lord’s grand role as the beloved Son of God. It also includes an explanation of the principle of eternal keys and the three-nights/three days atonement as part of the experience Peter, James, and John had on the mount.

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