

NT#14 MATTHEW 15:21-17:13 [Parallel accounts: Mark 7:24-9:13; Luke 9:19-36; 12:54-57]

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I. Introduction

James E. Talmage states,

"Unable to find in Galilee rest, seclusion, or adequate opportunity of instructing the Twelve as He desired to do, Jesus departed with them northward, and journeyed into the coast or borders of Phoenicia, a district commonly known by the names of its prominent cities, Tyre and Sidon" (*Jesus the Christ*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1915, [Thirty-Fifth Edition], 354).

It is important to note that the Phoenicians were of Canaanite descent and were Gentiles, and not the house of Israel.

Following his encounter with the Canaanite woman, he will return to the Galilee area and at a mountain near the Sea of Galilee, will miraculously feed the multitude who come to hear his teaching, but this time for a different purpose. This time the participants will number 4000.

From the Sea of Galilee, Jesus and his apostles will travel in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi where he will conduct a significant interview with his disciples and teach them the importance of revelation upon which his Church will be built.

At either Mount Tabor or Mount Herman, Jesus will leave his disciples and take with him, Peter, James and John. While on the Mount, Moses and Elias [Elijah] will be transfigured before them as well as Jesus himself. They will also hear the voice of God the Father as He bears his testimony regarding His Son, Jesus Christ. While they are on the Mount, Peter, James and John will also receive sacred

priesthood keys of authority. These "keys" will be required in order for them to direct the Church of Jesus Christ following His death and resurrection.

As we address each of these events in the ministry of Jesus Christ, it is important that our testimonies are also strengthened. Like his disciples, we are also being taught the lessons that Jesus is teaching regarding spiritual truths.

II. Jesus heals Canaanite woman's daughter

It is while Jesus is in the area of Phoenicia seeking rest and solace that a woman comes seeking his intervention on behalf of her daughter who is possessed of a devil.

Matthew 15:22-24

22 And, behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

James E. Talmage states,

"Her words expressed at one faith in the Lord's power, and a fullness of mother-love, for she implored as though she were the affected sufferer. The fact that she addressed Jesus as Son of David demonstrates her belief that He was the Messiah of Israel" (*Jesus the Christ*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1915, [Thirty-Fifth Edition], 354).

She has the requisite faith and she believes that he is the Messiah, why we might ask does he not exercise his power and authority on the behalf of her daughter? While faith and testimony are essential elements in healing, she is not of the house of Israel, as he reminds his disciples, to whom the blessings of the gospel are to be first offered. But, and I believe this is important, he does not send her away.

Matthew 15:25

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

In spite of her humble plea, her request is not granted.

Matthew 15:26

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and give it to the dogs.

While some might be offended by Jesus' reference to her as a dog, even a domesticated family pet, she does not take objection. Instead, she uses this common event to continue to strengthen her case.

Matthew 15:27

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.

Jesus having now, I believe, strengthened her faith even in the face of continued disappointment responds.

Matthew 15:28

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

James E. Talmage states,

"The woman's commendable persistency was based on the faith that overcomes apparent obstacles and endures even under discouragement" (*Jesus the Christ*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1915, [Thirty-Fifth Edition], 356).

The key to this healing, I believe is found in his not sending her away, and in her persistent pleadings. She was being tutored by the Lord, as are each of us, as to the importance of continuing to seek divine blessings, even when it appears as if the heavens are closed and there is no response to our petitions. If we will continue to be diligent in offering our righteous prayers, we will receive the guidance and direction we seek. While the answer may not be the one we desire, it will be the blessing that is in our best interest. The message to the Canaan woman and

to us is that heaven is not deaf to those who diligently and persistently seek.

III. Feeding the Four Thousand

Mark 7:31

31 And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

A multitude made up of a mixture of Jews and Gentiles follow him to a mountain slope. From the Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 15:29, we gain further understanding regarding the multitude.

JST, Mark 15:29

29 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them some lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them; insomuch that the multitude wondered when they say the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see. And they glorified the God of Israel.

It is important to remember that first Jesus taught the people the gospel giving them the eternal truths that had been polluted in tradition Judaism. Once the faith of the people had been strengthened, he then went about healing them, according to their faith in his power and authority.

Mark 8:1-3

1 In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them.

2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and having nothing to eat:

3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers [some] of them came from far.

The compassion of Jesus for those who have come to hear his teachings and the faith that they have exhibited that enabled him to heal them is now desirous of satisfying

their temporal needs.

Mark 8:4

4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?

How quickly it is that they have forgotten the feeding of the five thousand! Don't they remember that he has the power and authority based upon his will to generate from a small amount of food sufficient to feed a multitude?

Mark 8:5

5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

We learn that with the seven loaves, there is also "a few fishes" (Matthew 15:34). Seven loaves of bread and a few fishes was all they had to offer the multitude.

Matthew 15:36

36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks [offered a prayer to his Father], and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

The blessed food is now given to the multitude.

Matthew 15:37-38

37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.

38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

For the second time, Jesus has taken a small amount of food and increased it sufficiently in both incidents to provide food for a large number of people. The first incident involved "five loaves and two fishes" (Matthew 14:19), and the second incident, "seven loaves, and a few fishes" (Matthew 15:34).

J. Reuben Clark states,

"[the feeding of the five thousand occurred] A.D. 29, April...Near Bethsaida" and [the feeding of the four thousand] "A.D. 29, Summer...Decapolis" (*Our Lord of the Gospels*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964, [Fourth Printing, 1974], 265, 279).

In each incident the multitudes were blessed for first they were fed spiritually and then fed spiritually.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

The "...miraculous feeding of the four thousand is not a mere duplication or repetition of the feeding of the five thousand which took place a short time before near Bethsaida. (1) Then our Lord was mingling with his own kindred of Israel; now he is teaching other hosts who in substantial part, being inhabitants of Decapolis, are presumed to be Gentiles; (2) Then he was laying the foundation for his incomparable sermon on the Bread of Life; now he is prefiguring the future presentation of the living bread to the Gentiles nations; (3) And significantly, this mixed multitude from the east of the Jordan were more receptive, and took a more sane and sound view of the matchless miracle of feeding thousands by use of the creative powers resident in him, than did the members of the chosen seed" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11th Printing 1976], 375).

V. Pharisees and Sadducees seek a Sign

Matthew 15:39

39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came to the coast of Magdala [Magulan].

William Smith notes,

"...Christ came by boat, over the Lake of Gennesareth [Sea of Galilee], after his feeding the four thousand on the mountains of the eastern side...and from thence he returned in the same boat to the opposite shore...(In Mark 8:10), we find the 'parts of Dalmanutha,' on the western edge of the Lake of Gennesareth" (**Magdala**. *A Dictionary of the Bible*. Revised and Edited by F.N. and M.A. Peloubet. Nelson Reference and Electronic, 1986, 374).

Here he is greeted not by multitudes anxious to hear his message, but instead the Jewish religious leaders.

Matthew 16:1

1 The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

The leaders are not interested in learning of Jesus' teachings. They are entrenched in the false traditions of their faith and thus their purpose is not to gain insight and understanding, but to tempt him so that they might discredit him with the people and then destroy him!

Matthew 16:2-4

**2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.
3 And in the morning, it will be faith weather today: for the the sky is red and lowring [dark, gloomy]. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?
4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas [Jonah]. And he left them and departed.**

Because their hearts were hard and not open to the truths he had to offer them, lacking both faith and humility, they would not recognize his power nor authority!

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Jesus is here saying: 'Even if you cannot read the signs of the times, yet if ye would hearken to the light of Christ, to the light of reason and conscience, ye would know that I am he who should come' (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11th Printing 1976], 378).

The sign he offers them is the same he has stated previously.

JST, Mark 8:12

12 Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation, save the sign of the prophet, Jonah; for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so likewise shall the Son of Man be buried in the bowels of the earth.

His death and subsequent resurrection would be the only sign he would give them to confirm the verity of his divinity. They would receive nothing less.

After they had departed, Jesus continued to teach his disciples the truths of the gospel.

Matthew 16:6

6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

The initial response of his disciples is that they do not understand his reference to the "leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matthew 16:6). Then we read.

Matthew 16:12

12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"to beware of the leaven of Pharisees and Sadducees is to shun their false doctrines, their concept that the Messiah must prove his claim to divinity by signs, for instance...today, the warning is to beware of the leaven of any group whose false doctrines and antichrist philosophies work to keep men from accepting the truths of the restored gospel" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11th Printing 1976], 379).

V. Thou Art the Christ

Christ and his disciples now travel to Caesarea Philippi, an inland area located some distance north of the Sea of Galilee near Mount Hermon.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

It is here that Jesus "hold[s] a testimony meeting with the disciples...Whatever the attendance on this occasion, we are sure it was only a select and favored few who were present to hear the witness borne and to feel the Spirit about to be poured out upon them...The need for the meeting is real. The intimate friends of the Master had been subject to severe trails of their faith in the days just past, and Jesus now planned for them some sacred moments of spiritual uplift" (*The Mortal Messiah: Book 3*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980, 31-32).

Bruce R. McConkie continues,

"It comes as no surprise, then, here in the coast of Caesarea Philippi, for his disciples to hear him say what they have heard him say before: '*I am the Son of that Holy man who is God.*'...He then asked: 'Whom do men say that I am?' It is as though he said: 'My words and my works bear testimony of my divine commission. If men do not accept me as the Son of God, how do they explain these things? Who do they suppose that I am? Am I a devil as the Pharisees say? How do they explain me and my words if I am not the Son of Man?' (*The Mortal Messiah: Book 3*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980, 34-35).

The disciples now respond.

Matthew 16:14

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias [Jeremiah], or one of the prophets.

It is not sufficient that they recognize him as one of the great prophets. They must know who is really is!

Jesus turns now to the Twelve apostles.

Matthew 16:15

15 ...But whom say ye that I am?

Peter the Senior Apostle responds.

Matthew 16:16

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the

Christ, the Son of the living God.

Jesus speaks to his leading Apostle, but also to all who were gathered at this meeting. He desires that they and all men and women understand the source to whom they must turn in order to gain a testimony of spiritual truth. It does not come only through men's rational powers.

Matthew 16:17

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Bruce R. McConkie confirms,

"Mortal man was not the source of Peter's knowledge that Jesus was 'the Christ, the Son of the living God.' He had learned it by personal revelation from the Father who had sent the Holy Ghost to Peter to testify of the Son" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11th Printing 1976], 384).

Jesus continues his teaching of the disciples

Matthew 16:18

18 And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The footnote in the King James Bible states,

"Here is a subtle play upon 'Peter' (Greek petros = small rock and 'rock' (Greek petra = bed rock). Christ is the stone of Israel" (**Matthew 16:18a**. *The Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, 1216).

Joseph Smith states,

"What rock? Revelation!" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976, [1977], 274).

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Upon revelation, a rock of secure foundation, I will continue to build up my Church...God's work does not rest on individuals, but upon doctrines and principles. The Lord Jesus, himself, standing alone, separate from all other men, is the sole person under God, in whom faith is or properly can be centered" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11th Printing 1976], 385).

Bruce R. McConkie continues,

"What are the gates of hell? [they] "are the entrances to the benighted realms of the damned where the wicked go to await the day when they shall come forth in the resurrection of the damnation...the gates of hell shall never prevail against the rock of revelation" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11th Printing 1976], 389).

Matthew 16:19

19 And I will give unto thee [Peter] the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind in earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Peter is promised that at a future day he will be given the keys of kingdom by which he shall have power to bind, seal, and loose on earth and in heaven.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"The keys of the kingdom are the power, right, and authority to preside over the kingdom of God on earth (which is the Church) and to direct all of its affairs. These keys include the sealing power..." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11th Printing 1976], 389).

Without these keys of authority, no one is able to perform sacred ordinances, including baptism, bestowal of the Holy Ghost, ordination to the priesthood or seal marriages for time and eternity. When these keys are not upon the earth, the Church of Jesus Christ is not found. They must be given personally or through restoration by divine messengers sent

from heaven above. Man, though sincere in his desire to further God's work on earth, can not take this power unto himself and expect that it will be recognized in heaven.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"The witness had been borne as to who Jesus is; now he must teach them what he is destined to do to fulfill his life's mission...he must now go up to the religious capital of the world [Jerusalem] to confront the leaders; to rebuke the rulers; to cleanse the temple again; to finish his work; and finally, to die where so many of the prophets have been slain" (*The Mortal Messiah: Book 3*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980, 45).

The death of his Savior. It can't be. It is more than Peter can bear.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Peter is appealing as had Lucifer before, to the human element in Christ's nature. 'Lord, this cannot be; you must prevent it by thy divine power. Thy kingdom cannot prosper if evil men afflict and slay its King. Such indignities must not fall upon thee, of all men'" (*The Mortal Messiah: Book 3*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980, 46).

Jesus' response to Peter's effort to dissuade him from his course of duty and right is immediate and direct.

Matthew 16:23

23 But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God but those that be of me.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Peter looked only upon the loss of the Lord to the earthly kingdom and not upon the eternal blessings that would flow to all men through the atonement" (*The Mortal Messiah: Book 3*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980, 47).

As the Senior Apostle, Peter must support the Lord in performing his earthly mission as the Savior of all mankind, and in turn prepare himself to assume the

leadership of the Church following the Savior's death. Peter must learn his duty.

VI. The Transfiguration

Few events in the life of the Savior are as monumental as those events which occurred on a high mountain where Jesus and his three senior apostles, Peter, James and John, spent a sacred night enwrapped in the visions of eternity.

David B. Haight states,

"Perhaps Jesus felt not only a sense of the heavenly calm which that solitary opportunity for communion with His Father would bring, but even more, a sense that He would be supported in the coming hour by ministrations not of this earth...He went up to prepare for His coming death. He took His three apostles with Him in the belief that they, after having seen His glory,...might be fortified" ("We Beheld His Glory" in *Ensign*, May, 1977, 7).

Bruce R. McConkie states regarding this sacred event,

"Until men attain a higher status of spiritual understanding than they now enjoy, they can learn only in part what took place upon the Mount of Transfiguration" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11th Printing 1976], 399).

Bruce R. McConkie defines transfiguration,

"Transfiguration [i]s a special change in appearance and nature which is wrought upon a person or thing by the power of God. This divine transformation is from a lower to a higher state; it results in a more exalted, impressive, and glorious condition" (*Mormon Doctrine*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, [Second Edition], 803).

The sacred account in Matthew 17 regarding the transfiguration provides us with the following insight:

1. (17:2), Jesus was transfigured before his three apostles.
2. (17:3), The ancient prophets, Moses and Elias [Elijah] appeared on the Mount to the visitors.

3. (17:5), Peter, James and John heard the voice of God the Father who bore witness of his Son, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.'
4. (17:9), They were not to tell anyone of their experience until after the Savior's resurrection.

Besides the above information, we learn the following from Bruce R. McConkie's research:

5. "Peter, James, and John, were themselves "transfigured before him...thus enabling them to entertain angels, see visions and comprehend the things of God (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 158; *Mormon Doctrine*, 725-726).
6. "Moses and Elijah, two ancient prophets were translated and taken to heaven without tasting death, so they could return with tangible bodies. {*We learn from modern revelation through Joseph Smith that mortal men can only feel tangible or resurrected bodies (D&C 129:5), so it was necessary that Moses and Elijah not experience mortal death, but be translated as Christ was the first fruits of the resurrection so that they could then appear on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3) as well as later appear to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple (D&C 110:11-16)]...It was on the Mount of Transfiguration that Moses, Elijah and Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom to Peter, James and John...[Moses held the keys of the gathering of Israel and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north; and Elijah, held the keys of the sealing power]" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 158).
7. "John the Baptist, previously beheaded by Herod, apparently was also present [JST, Mark 9:3] (400)...Perhaps he was there, as the last legal administrator under the Old Covenant, to symbolize that the law was fulfilled, and all old things were done away" (404).
8. "Peter, James and John saw in vision the transfiguration of the earth, that is, they saw it renewed and returned to its paradisiacal state (Doctrine and Covenants 63:21-21; *Mormon Doctrine*).

1966, [Second Edition], 718-719).

9. "It appears that Peter, James, and John received their own endowments while on the mountain (*Doctrines of Salvation 2*, 165).

10. "Apparently Jesus himself was strengthened and encouraged by Moses and Elijah so as to be prepared for the infinite sufferings and agony ahead of him in connection with working out the infinite and eternal atonement (*Jesus the Christ*, 373).

11. "Certainly the three chosen apostles were taught in plainness 'of his death and resurrection' teaching which would be of inestimable value to them in the trying days ahead (JST, Luke 9:31).

"Hear Ye him] Not Moses, whose very name symbolized the law to which Israel had been subject for fifteen hundred years; not Elijah, the one prophet whose name stood for all the prophets of all ages;...not the prophecies and laws of the past; not all that the Jews held as holy and sacred! but "my beloved Son"—Hear ye him! Salvation centers in Christ; turn to him; believe him; follow him; obey him!" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11th Printing 1976], 399-403, numbers changed).

As the small group of four came down from the Mount to join with the others, Jesus gave his three Apostles their final instructions regarding what they had experienced.

Matthew 17:9

9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charge them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

This event was too sacred for them to even share with their fellow Apostles!

VII. The Elias of the Restoration

Upon returning from the Mount of Transfiguration, the disciples inquire of Jesus regarding the Elias who must first come. Jesus tells them.

Matthew 17:11-12

11 Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

12 But I say unto you that Elias is come already and they knew him not,...

Before we can fully understand this scripture we need to understand the meaning of the term, Elias.

James E. Talmage define Elias as,

"Elias, is a title of office; every restorer, forerunner, or one sent of God to prepare the way for greater developments in the gospel plan is an Elias. The appellative "Elias" is in fact both a personal name and a title" (*Jesus the Christ*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1915, [Thirty-Fifth Edition], 375).

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"In the [Joseph Smith Translation, John 1:19-28], it is revealed that John the Baptist came as an Elias to prepare the way before Christ, who then, himself, came as the Elias who was to restore all things as far as the meridian dispensation was concerned. John was the Elias of preparation, Jesus the Elias of restoration" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11th Printing 1976], 406).

Bruce R. McConkie continues,

In reference to the inquiry of the disciples, it is as if they are asking, "How was it, they pondered, that the scripture promised that Elias would precede the coming of the Son of Man, and would restore all things by way of preparation for that transcendent event, when in fact he had come after?...Jesus' response was that 'Yes, it is truly written in the prophets that Elias shall first come and restore all things, and it is also written that Elijah shall return before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come. But both of these comings are yet future" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11th Printing 1976], 406).

Bruce R. McConkie continues,

"Elijah, the prophet, the same person who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, [along with Moses] came to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on April 3, 1836, [in the temple at Kirtland, Ohio,] and conferred upon them the keys of the gathering of Israel and the sealing power. [This event had been preceded by the appearance of John the Baptist on May 15, 1829, as he restored again to earth (D&C 13), the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, "which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and the baptism by immersion for the remission of sins]. [Thus] "between May 29, 1829...and September 6, 1842--when Joseph Smith, writing by way of revelation, recorded the list of ancient prophets who, each in turn, had returned bring their "dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories (D&C 128:18-21)--the work of Elias of the restoration was accomplished" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965, [11th Printing 1976], 407).

VIII. Conclusions

During this lesson we travelled initially to the North in order to find rest and seclusion from the Jewish leaders who are seeking not for spiritual truth, but only to justify their own traditions and to turn the honest seeker away from Christ's teaching. Here in Phoenicia, Jesus will encounter a Canaanite woman, non-Isralite, who seeks a blessing for her daughter. Her persistence and sincere faith in his power to heal, will open the way for others like her to also receive the gospel message of salvation and eternal truth.

Jesus will also teach and then feed 4000 souls with "seven loaves and a few fishes" (Matthew 15:34). These individuals are mainly Gentiles to whom the gospel will be taught by his Apostles following his death and resurrection.

Again Jesus and his disciples will encounter the Jewish leaders who continue to "seek a sign" of his power and authority. He reiterates again the only sign he can offer them is "the sign of Jonah" meaning his resurrection after being three days in the tomb. No other sign would satisfy them for they are not receptive to the whisper of the spirit or the miracles he has provided.

It is important that his disciples know who he is and so he gathers them about him and asks them, "whom say ye that I

am?" (Matthew 16:15). It is Peter who once again declares to all who are present, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16:16). It is on this occasion that Jesus wants each of his disciples to understand that testimony that is firm comes by the spirit of revelation, and not from any other source. It is upon the rock of revelation that the Church of Jesus Christ is built and the devil has no power upon this divine source.

We then concluded with an in depth examination of the events that occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus and his three leading Apostles. It is only through the insight provided by divine revelation through modern prophets that we are better able to understand these events and their importance.

With increased understanding and insight, comes also a responsibility to share these restored truths with others who are also seeking. Having received further light, it is our privilege to also share.