

April 10–16. Matthew 15–17; Mark 7–9: “Thou Art the Christ”

Revelation

Matt 16:13-18

13 ¶ When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

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

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

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.

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

By what means did Peter know that Jesus was the Christ?

(flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven)

Robert L. Simpson

“Peter was the recipient of personal revelation! And in like manner this same sweet confirmation of testimony can permeate the hearts of all truth-seeking, conscientious Latter-day Saints the world over. This great gift of personal revelation is unmistakable; it is direct. It is a more sure communication than the audible spoken word, for that which we hear through mortal ears is sometimes distorted, so often misunderstood. This precious gift of spirit speaking to spirit is infallible and direct and, in the case just cited, came from a loving Heavenly Father to his faithful disciple Peter.” (CR, Oct. 1965)

What is the “rock” upon which God will build His church?

Howard W. Hunter

“This is a very significant statement. The Lord in effect said to Peter that this knowledge that Jesus was the Christ did not come to him from mortal men or from the reasoning or learning of men, but by revelation from on high, that is, direct, divine revelation of the divinity of the Master.... The Lord then added, 'and upon this rock I will build my church.' Upon what rock? Peter? Upon a man? No, not upon a man, upon the rock of revelation, the thing which they were talking about. He had just said, 'flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.' This revelation that Jesus is the Christ is the foundation upon which he would build his Church.” (CR, Oct. 1965)

Matt 16:19-20

19 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.

20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

Why was it essential that Peter and the other apostles receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

(whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven...)

Merrill J. Bateman

“Near the end of His ministry, Jesus promised Peter ‘the keys of the kingdom,’ knowing that Jesus would soon leave and that priesthood keys were needed by the Apostles if they were to direct the work after His ascension. In order for them to receive the keys, Matthew records that Jesus took ‘Peter, James, and John... up into an high mountain’ where He ‘was transfigured before them’ and Moses and Elias ‘appeared unto them’ (Matt 17:1–3). Shortly after this event, the Savior declared that the Apostles now had the keys to direct the ministry. The Prophet Joseph Smith states that ‘the Savior, Moses, and Elias, gave the keys to Peter, James and John, on the mount, when they were transfigured before him’ (TPJS, pg. 158).” (CR, Oct. 2003)

Follow Christ

Matt 16:24-26

24 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

What does it mean to “take up [your] cross”?

JST Matt 16:25-29

25 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

26 And now for a man to take up his cross, is to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments.

27 Break not my commandments for to save your lives; for whosoever will save his life in this world, shall lose it in the world to come.

28 And whosoever will lose his life in this world, for my sake, shall find it in the world to come.

29 Therefore, forsake the world, and save your soul; for what is a man

profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

(to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments - forsake the world)

What do you think Jesus means when He states, “whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it”?

David O. McKay

“Self-mastery comes through self-denial of little things. Christ in these singular words said: ‘... whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.’ Whenever you forget self and strive for the betterment of others, and for something higher and better, you rise to the spiritual plane. If, in the moment of quarreling, in the moment of temptation to find fault with another, we will lose our self-centered self for the good of the Church of which we are members, for the good of the community, and especially for the progress of the gospel of Jesus Christ we will be blessed spiritually, and happiness will be our reward.” (CR, April 1967)

Luke 9:57-62

57 ¶ And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

What is the Lord’s message to those who would become one of His disciples?

(No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God)

Howard W. Hunter

"Three men had expressed their willingness to follow him and become his disciples.... It was necessary that the men who were called and set apart for the work should devote their time and attention and forego worldly affairs.... The Master made it clear that the work of the kingdom was to take precedence over all other things....

"Not one of the three was willing to follow him without first returning to their worldly affairs. The answer of Jesus is one of the great aphorisms of biblical literature. 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'" (CR, April 1961)

Mount of Transfiguration

Matt 17:1-3

1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

It's not specifically stated here, but -
What was Peter, James, and John given at this time?

Joseph Smith

"The keys were first given to [Adam], and by him to others. He will have to give an account of his stewardship, and they to him....

"The Priesthood is everlasting. The Savior, Moses, and Elias [Elijah], gave the keys to Peter, James, and John, on the mount, when they were transfigured before him....

"How have we come at the Priesthood in the last days? It came down, down, in regular succession. Peter, James, and John had it given to them and they gave it to others." (History of the Church, 3:385–88)

Matt 17:4-9

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

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

What do we learn about the Godhead in verse 5?

Spencer W. Kimball

"It was He, Jesus Christ, our Savior, who was introduced to surprised listeners at Jordan, at the holy Mount of Transfiguration, at the temple of the

Nephites, and in the grove at Palmyra, New York. And the introducing person was none other than his actual Father, the holy Elohim, in whose image he was and whose will he carried out.” (CR, Oct. 1977)

In all of these instances where The Father introduces The Son what does He command us to do?

Russell M. Nelson

“Above all, God’s children should learn to listen, then listen to learn from the Lord. On several sacred occasions in the world’s history, our Heavenly Father has personally appeared to introduce His divine Son with a specific charge to, ‘hear him.’” (CR, April 1991)

Faith

He teaches His disciples the power of faith

Mark 9:17-24

17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

What can we learn about faith by the comment of the father and Jesus’ reply?

Joseph Smith

“If a man has not faith enough to do one thing, he may have faith to do another; if he cannot remove a mountain, he may heal the sick.” (HC 5:355)

There are degrees of faith. And there are tasks that require more faith than others. We want to insure that we have the faith necessary to draw on the power of Christ to perform His will.

Jeffrey R. Holland

"This man's initial conviction, by his own admission, is limited. But he has an urgent, emphatic desire in behalf of his only child. We are told that is good enough for a beginning. 'Even if ye can no more than desire to believe' Alma declares, 'let this desire work in you, even until ye believe' (Alma 32:27)..... In response to new and still partial faith, Jesus heals the boy....

"Observation number one regarding this account is that when facing the challenge of faith, the father asserts his strength first and only then acknowledges his limitation.... In moments of fear or doubt or troubling times, hold the ground you have already won, even if that ground is limited....

"Furthermore, you have more faith than you think you do because of what the Book of Mormon calls 'the greatness of the evidences.'" (CR, April 2013)

Exercise the faith we have been blessed with and continue to strive for more

How can increase our faith?

Larry S. Kacher

"Please consider a few questions posed by God's prophets as you strive to climb your ladder of faith:

"Am I stripped of pride? (Alma 5:28)

"Do I give place in my heart for the word of God? (Alma 32:27–28)

"Do I allow my afflictions to be consecrated for my gain? (2 Nephi 2:2)

"Am I willing to let my will be swallowed up in the will of the Father? (Mosiah 15:7)

"If I have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, can I feel so now? (Alma 5:26)

"Do I let God prevail in my life? (Russell M. Nelson, "Let God Prevail," Ensign, Nov. 2020)

"If you find your current path in conflict with your faith in the Savior, then please find your way back to Him. Your exaltation and that of your posterity depend on it." (CR, April 2022)

Continuing the story we learn more about faith

Matt 17:18-21

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.
19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?
20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.
21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

What do we learn about faith from Jesus reply to His disciples?

(Because of your unbelief... If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain)

Russell M. Nelson

"The Lord understands our mortal weakness. We all falter at times. But He also knows of our great potential. The mustard seed starts small but grows into a tree large enough for birds to nest in its branches. The mustard seed represents a small but growing faith.... The Lord does not require perfect faith for us to have access to His perfect power. But He does ask us to believe.

"My dear brothers and sisters, my call to you this Easter morning is to start today to increase your faith. Through your faith, Jesus Christ will increase your ability to move the mountains in your life, even though your personal challenges may loom as large as Mount Everest." (CR, April 2021)

What did Jesus tell them they must do to have enough faith to cast out this evil spirit?

(this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting)

James E. Talmage

"The Savior's statement... indicates gradation in the malignity and evil power of demons, and gradation also in the results of varying degrees of faith. The apostles who failed on the occasion referred to had been able to cast out demons at other times. Fasting, when practiced in prudence, and genuine prayer are conducive to the development of faith with its accompanying power for good.... Have you some besetting weakness, some sinful indulgence that you have vainly tried to overcome? Like the malignant demon that Christ rebuked in the boy, your sin may be of a kind that goeth out only through prayer and fasting." (Jesus the Christ, pg. 395)

John to Not Taste Death

Matt 16:27-28

27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

It is not definitive in Bible that John never tasted death

John 21:22-23

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

But we know from modern revelation:

DC 7:3

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, because thou desirest this thou shalt tarry until I come in my glory, and shalt prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and people

Also 3 Nephi 28

6 ...Ye have desired the thing which John, my beloved.... desired of me.

7 Therefore... ye shall never taste of death....