

September 21, 2022

Sravan:

Thank you for your recent questions. *Following are additional insights on Lesson 29:*



Caesarea Philippi

Situated 25 miles (40 km) north of the Sea of Galilee and at the base of Mt. Hermon, Caesarea Philippi is the location of one of the largest springs feeding the Jordan River. This abundant water supply has made the area very fertile and attractive for religious worship. Numerous temples were built in this city in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

Theological Significance

Caesarea Philippi is in the northeast section of Israel called the Golan Heights and was near the ancient city of Dan. It is important not to confuse it with the other Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast. In Israel all of the important church's, temples, and synagogues were built on the top of hills and mountains. They were never placed in low areas such as the valleys or coastlands. Caesarea Philippi is in the foothills of Mount Hermon which is in Syria. Mount Hermon is the largest mountain in the whole area towering 2,814 meters above sea level. To get an idea of how high that is consider that the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is about 741 meters above sea level. In Arabic Mount Hermon is called "Jabal ash Shaykh" which means "Mountain of the Chief."

And it was to Caesarea Philippi that Jesus came to proclaim that He would build His Church which would point to the True Chief, the True Master and Lord, the One True God.

At Caesarea Philippi there is a massive wall of rock that is well over 100 feet straight up and about 500 feet wide. The city of Caesarea Philippi was built on top of this enormous rock. It was enlarged and rededicated by King Philip to honor the Caesar in Rome. Caesar considered himself a god and King Philip was eager to please him. The Greek and Roman cultures had many gods. Another god that was especially honored here in Caesarea Philippi was the Pagan god of Pan.

Why is the Reference to Caesarea Philippi so Important?

Matthew 16:13-19

"When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi ...

He said to ...Simon Peter ... you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ..."

The Bible tells us that besides what is recorded there are many more things that Jesus did which could have been included in the Bible, but were not. [John 21:25] So, we know that there are no wasted words in the Bible. In Matthew's Gospel chapter 16 we are told about a very important teaching of Jesus Christ, how He would build His Church. And this took place when they entered into the region of Caesarea Philippi.

There are two especially visually striking pieces of landscape in Israel. The most prominent is the rock around which the Temple in Jerusalem was built. The second is the massive wall of rock at Caesarea Philippi.

It is here that we find the story of Matthew 16:13-19, just before the event of the Mount of Transfiguration:

Matthew 16:13-19

"When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'

He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?'

Simon Peter said in reply, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'

Jesus said to him in reply, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.

And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock (the rock here is not Peter himself, but what he testified about Jesus, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" and therefore his name changes "Peter", correlated to) I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.

I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Is there any reason that Jesus had chosen these disciples for the Transfiguration; for testing them or making their faith to increase?

Throughout the Gospel we see the same three to four disciples (Peter, James, John, Andrew – i.e. Luke 5:9-11; Mark 1:29; Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51; Matthew 17:1; Mark 13:3; Mark 14:33) selected by Jesus during very monumental moments His life, which for us in ministry today or in life, we to have a select few to share in very monumental moments in our lives. This is not to minimize the other disciples, but rather be a model for all disciples to the value of having a select few close disciples to share some of our very special moments in our lives for encouragement and support, as was modeled by Jesus Himself.

What is the explanation of Luke's account of "about eight day" and Matthew and Mark's account of "after six days"?

The slight time explanations between the Gospels only affirms the timing of the event of the Mount of Transfiguration being during the time of the year of the "Feast of Trumpets", a two day feast, also known as the day and hour unknown, either occurring on the first day or the second day of the Feast (also known as the Appointed Time), or as Luke says, "about eight days" and Matthew and Marks say, "after six days", implying the either the seventh day or eighth day, as they days began in the evening and ended in the evening.

Lesson 29: We must remember that what the disciples saw was a vision . . . not the real thing. The vision was a portrayal of future events, much as was the vision given to the Apostle John on the Island of Patmos many years later. And without that revelation we would be limited in our understanding just as the disciples were. What transpired on the Mt of Transfiguration gives us many clues about the future.

When the disciples awoke from their sleep, they saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. From this we can make several observations:

1. Moses and Elijah are the two witnesses of the book of Revelation (Revelation 11:3).
2. Moses and Elijah are "*the two olive trees and two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth,*" Revelation 11:4 (ex. Zechariah 4:2-4).
3. On the Mt of Transfiguration we see Moses, representing the Law and Elijah, representing the Prophets speaking with Jesus, the Word of God. Both Moses the Law and Elijah the Prophets testify of Jesus the Word of God.

Jesus had told the disciples that some of them would not die until they had seen the kingdom of God, after it had come in power (describing the future millennial reign of Christ on the earth). In the vision both Moses and Elijah appeared in their glorified state and the apostles knew their identities. This indicates that the time of the vision is after the two witnesses of the book of Revelation are killed and resurrected from the dead (Revelation 11:7 – 1 Corin. 15:49-54).

Revelation 11

The Two Witnesses

(the two witnesses are Moses and Elijah, which Jesus reveals to us at the Mount of Transfiguration, in which every testimony in the Bible had to be validated by two witness, and no less)

¹Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ²but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. ³And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."

⁴These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. ⁶They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. ⁷**And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,** ⁸**and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt,** where their Lord was crucified. ⁹For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, ¹⁰and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹**But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.** ¹²**Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.** ¹³And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

The Seventh Trumpet

¹⁵**Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet (the day of this blowing is known as the "Feast of Trumpets", also known as the 2nd Coming), and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the**

kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying,

“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
who is and who was,
for you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.

¹⁸The nations raged,
but your wrath came,
and the time for the dead to be judged,
and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints,
and those who fear your name,
both small and great,
and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”

¹⁹ **Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. (This event that is described is the 2nd Coming of our Messiah, and the ark of the covenant was only seen one day out of the year, on the Most Holy day of the year, “The Feast of Atonement”)**

The book of Revelation also supports the time of the vision because the next major event to occur after the witnesses' death and resurrection is the sounding of the seventh and last trump (Revelation 10:7, “*but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.*”). With the blowing of the trumpet loud voices in heaven declare, “*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever,*” Revelation 11:15. This is the beginning of the millennial reign of Christ on earth or “the kingdom of God after it has come in power.”

The point of the lesson is God does not want you to be in darkness when it comes to the future (2 Corinthians 4:6, Ephesians 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6).

The vision doesn't tell us exactly when Jesus' millennial reign will take place but it does give the time of year for its occurrence . . . early in the seventh month (September/October) of God's calendar. This was derived from Peter's statement about the construction of tabernacles (sukkahs) for Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

There are two significant feasts of the Lord that occur early in the seventh month of Tishri.

1. On the first day of the month is Yom Teruah, the Day of Blowing the Trumpet (The day is also called Rosh Ha Shannah/Head of the Year, Yom Hazikaron/Day of Remembrance, and Yom Haddin/Day of Judgment – representing the call to repentance). (ref. Exodus 23:14, Deuteronomy 16:16; Leviticus 23:24, Numbers 29:1 - ex. Ezekiel 18:21-23,30-32, Zephaniah 2:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, John 11:11, Romans 13:11, Daniel 12:1-2)
2. On the tenth day of the month is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement (The day is also known as the day of covering, canceling, pardon, reconciling – representing forgiveness). (ref. Leviticus 16, 23:26-32 – ex. Hebrews 7, 9:23-10:18)

Following these two feasts of the Lord is Tabernacles, which begins on the fifteenth day of the month. From the evidence of Scripture the “transfiguration” would have occurred on Yom Teruah, the Day of Blowing the Trumpet. Hence the beginning of Jesus reign on earth would begin at the same time.

The book of Revelation says that His reign begins just prior to the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet blast (Revelation 10:7, Revelation 11:15 – Daniel 7). On Yom Teruah trumpets are blown throughout the day and as the day draws to a close the last trump is sounded with the note Tekiah Godola . . . an extended blast. In theory this note does not end until it is blown again ten days later at the end of the Day of Atonement.

The Hebrew teaching is that on Yom Teruah, God opens three books (Malachi 3:16-18, Revelation 20:12, and Talmud Mas. Rosh HaShana 16b:23-17a:5):

- The Book of Life - those who are found therein are sealed for life.
- The Book of the Dead - those who are found therein are wicked and sealed for judgment.
- The Book of Repentance - this book includes most people whose works are neither good nor bad and they have until Yom Kippur to repent. This is called the sealing.

As the cloud (called the Shekinah in Hebrew, the cloud of glory that surrounds God Himself - ex. Exodus 13:21-22, Exodus 19:16-20:3-21, 1 Kings 6:11-14) began to descend upon the whole party God spoke a commandment to the disciples, “This is My Son, My chosen one, Listen to (Hear & Obey) Him.” This is the Ancient of Days bestowing dominion, glory and a kingdom upon His Son, the Son of Man. The disciples fell on their faces and were terrified but they got the point; they needed to do the things that Jesus commanded them to do. Immediately, in the twinkling of an eye, Moses, Elijah and the cloud disappeared. This reminds us of the resurrection of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:12. When the vision ended Jesus touched His disciples and told them to get up and not be afraid.

The point of the lesson is to hear and obey Jesus now . . . before He returns!

This Lesson is key to unlocking end-times. Jesus here foretells the day of his 2nd Coming, the Feast of Trumpets, which is the 1st and 2nd of the Biblical month of Tishri, known as One-long-day, or our Calendar between late-August

and mid-September, as the Biblical Calendar is based off of a Lunar-month and not a Solar-month. *I love it that Jesus, here, tells His disciples, as they are walking down the mountain, to tell no one of what had happened on the Mountain until after His death and resurrection. This is not only the Hope of our Faith, but the exact timing of His return. As Paul teaches in 1 Thessalonians 5, that Jesus' is coming like a thief in the night, but for those who are children of light, Jesus will not come like a thief in the night because, those who are His followers are children of the light and children of the day that this day will not come on them like a thief in the night. This was the point of the Feasts of the Lord (not the Feasts of the Jews) that God had not only created on Day-4 of His creation (the creation of the sun, moon, and stars for seasons and appointed times (Feasts of the Lord, set times in history when God will reveal Himself for the purpose of Redeeming mankind back into right relationship with Him, before man was even created and before man had ever even sinned, on the fourth day of creation, symbolizing Rest (the number 4 in the Bible symbolizes Rest), meaning, God wants us to Rest in His plan of Salvation before we even know we need to be saved.)) (. . . not only created on Day-4 of His creation . . .) but what He commanded His people to observe every year forever to speak of His Redemption and Restoration of Mankind back in right relationship with Him. These are God's Set Times in History that He put on His Calendar to set with His people to appear on those exact days and times to fulfill His Appointed Times to Save and Redeem mankind, which we saw as a blue-print during Jesus fulfilling the first four Feasts (Spring Feasts, symbolizing His First Coming) of the Lord in Passover (Nisan 15 – Our Passover Lamb/Salvation), Unleavened Bread (Nisan 16 to the First-day of the week (Sunday) – Our Separation from this world/Baptism), First Fruits (the First day of the week (Sunday) following Passover – Our Resurrection/New Creation), Weeks/Pentecost (7-weeks/50-days after First Fruits)/Pentecost (Our Empowerment/Baptism in the Holy Spirit), on the exact day and times of the Appointed Days of the Lord/Feasts of the Lord, foreshadowing the preciseness of God's exact time and date of His Second Coming in the next two Feasts (Fall Feasts, symbolizing His Second Coming) of the Lord in Trumpets (Tishri 1 & 2 (one-long-day) – Our Rapture to the Millennial Reign of Christ on Earth in Jerusalem) and Atonement (Tishri 10 – Our Sealing in the Books of Life and the Judgment of the origin of the sin of all mankind on the earth, perpetrated by the false trinity, the Anti-christ, the False-prophet, and Satan) falling exactly 1,290-days (Daniel 12:11) from the Abomination of Desolation (the beginning of Spring, March 20th, the season of Purim, 30-days out from Passover, Nisan 15), of which Jesus instructs in Matthew 24, on the Mount of Olives, to “let the reader understand” the prophecy of the Abomination of Desolation of Daniel, and just six-months prior to Jesus' Olivet Discourse, the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus, once again, pointing to the exact timing of His Second Coming, the Feast of Trumpets, 1,290-days from the Daniel's prophecy of the Abomination of Desolation. **Amazing and Breath Taking . . . Amen!***

Sravan, thank you for your questions and desire to learn more about God's Word. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with more questions. As always, thank you for this opportunity to partner with you in the Great Commission of “*Making Disciples*”. Let's keep staying in touch. Keep me in the Loop. Share Testimonies. And know, you and those you are ministering to are regularly in our thoughts and prayers.

Be Blessed My Brother, Ryan