



Matthew

Lesson 17

The crowds were following Jesus because of the great things He was doing to relieve some of their suffering and to hear the new and different teaching He was proclaiming with such authority and genuineness. But the religious leaders were following Jesus because they were suspicious and jealous of His teaching and His authority despite all the good things He was doing for the people. Everything He said and did was revealing them as false shepherds and hypocrites who only outwardly followed God but were wicked inwardly. This was creating a hostile attitude from the people which would eventually lead to rebellion in the religious structure the leaders had established. They feared they were losing authority and

popularity, and Jesus was the problem. What they didn't realize is that Jesus was using their evil to bring about a plan that was set in place before the foundation of the world. This would involve unbelievable events of inhumanity and injustice that would come upon Jesus, and in the process would free those willing to accept His sacrifice from the bondage of sin and death. Of course, Jesus' disciples had no idea this was the plan, and when Jesus began to allude to the difficult things to come, they couldn't begin to understand that this was to be the way He would establish His Kingdom.

READ CHAPTER 17 (See also Mark 9:1-32 and Luke 9:28-45)

1. *Which disciples did Jesus take with Him to the mountain, and according to Luke, why were they going there?*

2. *Describe Jesus' appearance when He was transfigured. How does this fulfill what Jesus said to them in Matthew 16:28, Mark 9:1 and Luke 9:27?*



It is believed by many that the events of Matthew 17:1-8 (the Transfiguration) took place during the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles (Sukkot-Hebrew means “a small shelter, stable or hut”). It is named this because during this feast the Israelites were commanded to build “tabernacles or booths” to live in as a reminder of the years in the wilderness when they lived in huts or booths (Lev.23:39-44). This was one of the three annual feasts where the appearance of all males at the sanctuary was required. It fell on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, five days after the Day of Atonement, and lasted seven days (Ex. 23:16-17; 34:22-23). The first and the eighth days were days of rest. Understanding the significance of this event and the traditions that surrounded it give much meaning to the events of the Transfiguration as D. Thomas Lancaster states in his book King of the Jews. “Many beautiful traditions are attached to the annual festival of Sukkot. For example, it is traditional to invite guests into ones sukkah for a festive meal each night of Sukkot. Among the list of invitees are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David. Each one is specifically invited to come into the sukkah. Obviously, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David are all unlikely to actually attend the meal since they are all dead. That, however, is the point of the ritual. The Feast of Sukkot anticipates the Messianic age when the dead will be raised to life again and we will all, indeed, sit at the table with the aforementioned in the kingdom of heaven. Sukkot celebrates a time when all nations will ascend to Jerusalem bearing tribute to King Messiah, and each man will rest under his own vine and fig tree. Interestingly, the Gospels’ descriptions of the transfiguration of Messiah are layered with Sukkot imagery

3. *What were Moses and Elijah talking to Him about according to Luke 9:31?*

4. *If this did take place on Sukkot, how might that explain Luke 9: 33?*

5. *According to Matthew 17:9 and Mark 9:9, what specific instruction does Jesus give the three disciples after this event, and why do you think He said it?*

6. *What was the disciples’ question in Matthew 17:10, and how does Jesus answer it?*

Prayer requests:

Group time notes:
