



“Behold, Thy King Cometh”

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

Follow Him: A *Come, Follow Me* Podcast with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

Do you ever feel that preparing for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* lesson falls short? Join hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they interview experts to make your study for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ *Come, Follow Me* course not only enjoyable but original and educational. If you are looking for resources to make your study fresh, faithful, and fun--no matter your age--then join us every Friday and Saturday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

How are the Triumphal Entry and a Hosanna shout connected? Dr. Keith Wilson explores Jesus’s glorious entry into Jerusalem and how modern-day disciples can honor Jesus Christ.

Part 2:

Dr. Keith Wilson examines discipleship and beliefs regarding a physical resurrection and shares testimony of the power and sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Keith Wilson
- 00:56 Introduction of Dr. Keith Wilson
- 04:44 The triumphal entry recorded in all four gospels
- 07:56 We can do more to celebrate Easter
- 12:15 Three things that influence the size of the multitude for the triumphal entry
- 20:41 Symbolism during the triumphal entry
- 32:53 Dr. Wilson shares a story about the symbolism of the hosanna shout
- 38:29 The lesson behind cursing the fig tree
- 1:18:10 End of Part 1–Dr. Keith Wilson

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. Keith Wilson
- 02:45 The influence of John the Baptist continues on after his death
- 04:11 The parable of the wicked husbandman and the parable of the marriage of the King’s son
- 05:42 Dr. Wilson shares a personal story of a Jewish wedding celebration
- 10:16 The tribute coin
- 13:44 The Sadducees question marriage in the resurrection shows Jesus was teaching eternal marriage
- 24:47 The great commandment in the law
- 31:04 The question of all questions: Do you believe Jesus is the Messiah?
- 33:17 C.S. Lewis gives us the choice of accepting the Savior as simply a man or as the Messiah
- 41:03 Dr. Wilson shares that faith is a choice. You will find the evidence you seek.
- 1:02:47 End of Part II–Dr. Keith Wilson

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Biographical Information:



Keith J. Wilson was a professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University when this was written. After serving a mission in Vienna, Austria, he graduated from BYU in German and health science. Subsequently he received an MA from BYU and a PhD from the University of Utah, where his doctoral

studies focused on the history and formation of universities in America with particular emphasis on the influence of religion in higher education.

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Hank Smith:	00:01	Welcome to Follow Him, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come, Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:11	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	00:15	As together, we Follow Him.
Hank Smith:	00:19	Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith, and I am your host, and I'm here with my kingly co-host, John Bytheway. Welcome, John, to followHIM. Another week.
John Bytheway:	00:31	Kingly. I've been compared to a joker before but the king. As part of the King's court, I'll take that.
Hank Smith:	00:39	John, we are in Matthew 21 through 23 this week and also in Mark and Luke and John. We needed a Bible expert to come with us and he is here. Who's joining us?
John Bytheway:	00:50	Yes. I'm so excited to introduce Dr. Keith J. Wilson, who we both know. But let me tell our listeners about Dr. Wilson. He was born in Ridgecrest, California, the fourth of 10 children. He came to BYU as an undergraduate, served a mission in Austria, where the hills are alive, we've heard. Came home, headed to medical school but then took a study abroad teaching job, fell in love with teaching. He has a master's degree from BYU in German, a PhD from the University of Utah in educational administration. And he kind of focused on the university's roots and how many universities began as religious institutions, became secular institutions and has some background and did his studies on that, which sounds really interesting. He has eight

children and a foster son. He and his wife, they have 35 grandchildren and two in the oven. That's amazing.

01:49 Dr. Wilson actually started Wilson Diamonds. Came back to teaching though. He's been everything from a nursery leader to a bishop. It's remarkable how similar those two callings are. No, that's a joke. He served most recently as a patriarch. He's now currently serving a mental health mission, he and his wife, at South America, Northwest area and we're just thrilled to have him. Our opportunities to have him may be limited as he could be heading to South America soon, so we're happy to have him. Now I have to tell you, Hank, my personal connection. I have here my master's thesis, which has been read by approximately six people and Dr. Wilson is one sixth of them, so I have his signature here. The poor man had to go through this. So we became friends and he's a respected colleague and mentor to me for going through that process, so we're so happy to have you here, Dr. Wilson. Thank you for being with us.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 02:52 Well, thanks. It's an honor to be here and join you two in this podcast.

Hank Smith: 02:57 Yeah, we are grateful to have you, Keith. Are you heading to South America, do you know in the next couple of weeks?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 03:04 Yeah, we finally received our visas after waiting eight or nine months. We're scheduled now to head down there, probably the mid to the last part of May. We'll head down to Lima. I'll get to practice my German/Spanish.

Hank Smith: 03:17 Keith, I've heard you say this before, you're going as junior companion.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 03:22 That's right. For 40 years I've been teaching religion, being a bishop and sitting on the stand and my wife has prepared herself to assist missionaries with their mental health needs. When we signed up for the mission, she told them all my qualifications and they said, "No, he'll not receive a special calling. His calling will be to be your assistant." And they knew it well because it's all hands on deck. The workload is so high. Right now, missionaries are challenged with the kind of post Covid scene, with the early age, with the daunting task of missionary work and a mental health kind of counselor support person really is essential in kind of the mission structure. And so we work oh, 12, 14 hours a day, six days a week, just trying to help missionaries and it's gratifying to see her touches with them. Really uplifting.

Hank Smith: 04:16 That's wonderful. Absolutely wonderful. All right. Today we are going to be spending our time in all four gospels, Keith. I don't know if we could make this more difficult for you. In just a couple of hours. We'd like you to cover Matthew 21 through 23, Mark 11, Luke 19 through 20 and John 12. And the lesson, since I have my kingly co-host here, the lesson is called Behold Thy King Cometh.

John Bytheway: 04:41 Thy King Cometh.

Hank Smith: 04:43 Keith, where do you want to start here?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 04:44 Well, you've started in a great place just with your introduction, Hank, and that is, it's not very often in the New Testament do you have a singular incident being reported in all four gospels. There's just a handful of them. There's the baptism, there's the feeding of the 5,000, there's the trial and crucifixion, resurrection, and there's the triumphal entry. That's what you have all four. And the reason behind that I believe is because everybody was reporting the things that to them were most important about the Savior's ministry, but these were the high points. These were the mountain peaks of importance in the Savior's ministry. The triumphal entry is just such a great one to zoom in on and to catch the importance of that.

Hank Smith: 05:29 Awesome. We want to start in Matthew? Do we want to start in Mark? Do we want to start in Luke or John?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 05:34 I think what I'd like to start with is I'd like to kind of give you a little bit of an overview as to why this triumphal entry and the events that follow right after that are so significant.

Hank Smith: 05:46 Let's do it.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 05:47 And the place where I'd like to begin is with this idea. We all in life really thrive on positive reinforcement. Sometimes we don't get as much as we'd like, but when we get encouragement from those that we love and trust, it just makes all the difference in the world. It's the whole essence of community and family and loving other people. And I'd like to suggest to you that the triumphal entry is really one of those touches in Jesus' life where He gets encouragement.

06:25 We tend to think of Him, "Oh yeah, He's the Son of God." That He just kind of buckles up His belt and does His thing each day until He performs the atoning sacrifice. And yet we miss the personal side of Him. We miss Him when John the Baptist is

beheaded, just wanting to have private space alone. He's hurting. We miss Him smiling. We miss Him, kind of disappointed at times. We miss Him when He is a little bit upset. So to see this personal side of Him, to see the fact that the Father seemed to build in some events right close to when He would do the hardest thing of His whole assignment that He built in some reinforcement. I just love that.

07:09 It's like a mother when a little child comes, leaves her a little note and says, "Mom, I love you." And she just melts. All the 24-hour day stuff that she's doing. Or like a teacher when somebody comes up and thanks you for a lesson, and you can tell they've got a tear in their eye and they're really sincere. And just a myriad of other places. A businessman when he says, "You know, you made a difference. You were so kind and so generous." And you take it all across the spectrum, it's part of our nature. And to be reinforced, I think in church terms, we call it tender mercies, places where the Lord touches us. The triumphal entry was a huge tender mercy for the Savior Himself. And so that's kind of where I'd like to start us.

07:56 Now there's a second kind of tandem thing that I'd love to accomplish as we talk about these chapters today. And that's this, as a people, as a religious faith, we have been chastised over the fact that we don't do much to celebrate Easter. So I've thought often long and hard, "Why? Why don't we as LDS do more with celebrating Easter?" There's a statement by Gordon B. Hinckley, it was Christmastime. He said "There would be no Christmas if there had not been Easter." And so Easter is obviously the high point of our religious celebration and commemoration of what happened during this time in the Savior's ministry.

08:37 Why don't we? Why aren't we the top of the heap in terms of celebrating Easter? And I think there's two or three things. One is, we don't have any buildup to our Easter celebration. It's a one-day celebration. And the second is, our general conference usually falls right in the same area. And we do have buildup for general conference. We all have been hearing the announcements in church and we anticipate that and there's special sales in the stores and everything else. And then the third one is that we never know when Easter is. It moves around. It's got a latitude of about four or five weeks. That's crazy. We know exactly when Thanksgiving and Christmas is. We need a good influential person to say, "Let's have Easter on this day." And just fix the date, rather than attach it to some lunar cycle and everything else. So those are the three things.

09:32 In today's discussion, I want to hook you on the idea. I just want to, in a fisherman's term, I want to set the hook, that we can do better with Easter. And it will be largely because we begin to focus on Palm Sunday, triumphal entry and realize that something huge is coming in our celebration. It's easy for me to get kind of cranked up on this because I see such importance with us commemorating in a very appropriate way the resurrection of our Savior, the greatest miracle physically to occur.

Hank Smith: 10:07 That was great.

John Bytheway: 10:09 Oh man, I just agree that not only would there not be Christmas without Easter, think of all the other things that wouldn't be. We wouldn't be sitting here, the churches wouldn't be sitting here. Christianity wouldn't make any sense without the resurrection, that's the ultimate triumph of the whole thing. And so a whole lot of things wouldn't be, without Easter. Maybe it wouldn't be the year 2023 since what? Since the birth of Christ. Why would we remember that if He were nothing but just another moral teacher? So yeah, everything kind of hinges on Easter. I like what you said.

Hank Smith: 10:43 That's great. Thanks Keith. So you're saying Palm Sunday should be the beginning of our Easter celebrations?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 10:49 Yeah, a little bit like Christmas Eve is to Christmas Day. And the cool thing about Palm Sunday is we know that it was the first day of the week. That then defines this what we call in Christian terms, the Passion Week. So there's seven days kind of that are generally seen in the Passion Week and Palm Sunday is the first of those. Palm Sunday is just a huge thing. Look at all four gospel writers' report on it. And the church has done quite a bit of work. You can go to their website now and they'll have all seven days and things that families can do and the Ensign for March of this year, Brother Huntsman and another colleague published a thing about family traditions and things you can do during those seven days. And I just think, man, the more of that we can kind of internalize, the more appropriate our worship of Easter will be in this greatest miracle.

Hank Smith: 11:40 Awesome. So out of the four gospel authors, which one do we want to look at for the triumphal entry? Keith, we're going to look at multiple or are we going to hone in on one?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 11:49 Well, I think we can certainly blend them and there's some very distinctive differences between John's account and the other three synoptics, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But I like to use

Matthew because Matthew seems to be setting up a stage and sort of framing it a little more tightly than some of the other authors. So I'm going to stay with the Matthew outline there as he puts it forth.

Hank Smith: 12:12

Okay, let's do it. Matthew 21, right?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 12:15

Right. You'll notice right off the bat, a real important thing is that this triumphal entry is huge. It's just huge, is the only way you can say it. It talks about in Matthew, "A very great multitude spread their garments." See in verse eight. And then in verse 10 of Matthew 21, "All the city was moved saying, 'Who is this?'" Now what contributes? Because this is an important thing. In Jesus' ministry, most of the time He's seen by Jerusalem, which is the heartthrob of Judaism at His day. He's seen by Jerusalem and those that control things as being just some wacko up there in Galilee. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Come on, give me a break." And things like that. And now we have Him coming into town and it is huge.

13:07

Now, there's three things that if you read carefully contribute to the size of the triumphal entry. Maybe we could mention one of the good commentary Bibles actually says that they estimated that there was somewhere close to a hundred thousand people. If you've ever been over to Jerusalem, you'll know it's a pretty tight little city and for a hundred thousand people, it just would be teaming and crawling and jam-packed with people everywhere. Because the scholars estimate that Jerusalem at the time of Jesus is probably oh, 10,000 people, maybe five to 15 are some of the estimates that you'll see. But still a fairly small city compared to our modern cities. But then in ancient times for that to swell to a hundred thousand and a few scholars go way off the edge and say a million plus people. So this thing is big. So what causes it to be so big?

13:58

So if you read there in John 12:10, "But the chief priest consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death." The chief priests are so upset with Jesus taking control and being so much in charge. So one of the things that contributes to this is the raising of Lazarus, and you've done a nice job of talking about that already, this raising of Lazarus. Now it's only reported in John, so it's nice that he brings us the aftermath of it here too. But it had a big impact probably just a week before this, and it's right in Jerusalem's backyard. It's in Bethany, which is just up over the hill top. Number one thing that contributes to the size is Lazarus.

Hank Smith: 14:38 I've often thought that maybe the raising of Lazarus is the Savior's, when it comes to His mortal ministry, it's His crescendo moment. He's been building to this moment and building and building, and then the raising of Lazarus is too much for anyone to look the other way. It's His big moment which leads to His triumphal entry. Am I seeing that right?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 14:58 I think so. Now, it certainly did not sway everybody in the crowd that saw it. Some started to disbelieve, but it was so... I mean those that had any kind of a heart that could be penetrated were just blown away with Lazarus just coming out there. Lazarus is the first thing that seems to do it. A second is the Passover itself. This is a pilgrimage festival in the Law of Moses and there were three pilgrimage festivals, feasts in which people were supposed to travel to the temple and offer sacrifices, and yet this one was the granddaddy. It was the equivalent, parallel in our culture, of Christmas. That was Passover. For ancient Jews, that's a big thing because Jesus comes right during Passover, right at the start. In John's record, it says, "six days later is Passover." So there's a big one.

15:48 Now, the third one though, you have to catch kind of systemically from the whole of the Savior's ministry in the scriptures, and that is His ministry is crescendoing. He started to get even a large following in Galilee with things like the feeding of the 5,000 and others and word is spreading just like wildfire. There's a guy that can do these things and things like that. You'll notice six months before the triumphal entry as far as we can determine is the Mount of Transfiguration and what we call the Feast of Tabernacles that just precedes that.

16:23 And in that John 7, when Jesus is coming back, and that's another one of these pilgrimage feasts, when Jesus is coming back to Jerusalem for the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, He sends His disciples in ahead of Him and He comes in discreetly. See, His ministry then is taking off and He doesn't want for it to come crashing down prematurely. He sends His disciples in and then He kind of sneaks in through the back door. And that's just indicative that He's getting more and more popular and things. The triumphal entry is kind of the crescendo of that popularity. So it was just huge.

Hank Smith: 17:01 One thing, John, that I don't know if we've discussed very well that we probably ought to is the point Keith is making here, and that is that Jerusalem and Judea and Galilee where the Savior did a majority of His work and miracles and ministry, they're far apart from each other. You might think, "Oh, they're right next to each other. Word is spreading." But you've got Judea in the

south, you've got Galilee in the north. That's a good three-day journey if you're going to make the trip from one to the other. And you've got Samaria right in between. And am I saying that right, John?

John Bytheway: 17:34 Yeah, that's the way I understand it. And how is this news traveling? Is this all word of mouth for travelers going back and forth?

Hank Smith: 17:42 Yeah, I would think so. And when the Savior, He comes to Jerusalem. Sometimes, I think before I went to the Holy Land, maybe both of you can identify with this, but before I went there I saw Galilee and Jerusalem as close to one another, not realizing how far apart they were. And that Jesus doesn't actually spend a lot of time in Jerusalem, He just travels down for these pilgrimage feasts that Keith was talking about. There's three of them every year, and then He returns home to Galilee. So the miracles are happening in the north and the people in the south are hearing about them. Although according to the Gospel of John, He has done some miracles in Jerusalem. Am I getting that right for both of you?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 18:20 Yeah. And the separation, I think you can highlight that quite a bit. You said three days. Oh, it's 75 to 90 miles depending on which route you take. This is a good week, maybe even 10 days if you've got a lot of baggage and things. There's a real barrier there.

Hank Smith: 18:36 I think that's an important part because you're thinking, well, if the chief priests have seen all these miracles, well they likely haven't, that they've only heard of a couple in Jerusalem and maybe heard of a lot of them in Galilee. That's helpful. So Jesus dies away from home.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 18:53 Yeah. He really does. But first we have the size and just what an incredible outpouring it is, and I'd like to depict it sort of as Jesus' day in the sun. And I find that fascinating, at the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah come and Luke records, "To speak to Him concerning His death." And then Joseph Smith adds, "His death and resurrection." Well, what's going on that heavenly messengers have to do that? I like to interpret that as they were encouraging Him because He's coming up to this greatest of His assignments and He's like, most of us, we have daunting things in our lives. And I believe it begins to weigh upon Him. He'll make statements to that effect. "My hour is not yet, but is nigh." And so it's a big thing. And specifically there's a couple, two or three things in which He is just framed right here in the sun as the Messiah. So we need to talk about those.

Hank Smith: 19:54 Talk about them. I think you're right about the Mount of Transfiguration, Keith. If I remember right, I'm opening up to the Bible dictionary, "Transfiguration, Mount of," in one portion. In the second paragraph, there's three paragraphs. It talks about how these beings Elijah, Moses, even John the Baptist. Here it is. "The event was important in many ways. Priesthood authority was conferred upon Peter, James and John. The significance of the Savior's work was emphasized and the unity of various dispensations and the close relationship of Jesus and His prophets was demonstrated." So I can second witness that. I think a lot of these angelic beings are there to encourage Him, which is the way you started us out today, which was wonderful. He needs that encouragement just like all of us do.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 20:41 One of my colleagues described the Mount of Transfiguration as a celestial correlation meeting to encourage and to make sure that He was still willing to go through with this. So now we're at the doorstep, literally, of Him doing that with the triumphal entry.

20:56 Now let's talk about the ways that the people respond and the symbols that he employs in the triumphal entry, because that's also something that every family ought to incorporate into their Easter celebration. You'll notice in Matthew 21 talks about, "When they drew nigh to Jerusalem or come from Bethphage and the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples saying, 'Go ye over into the village.'" Now, so we have this idea or this event of Jesus asking them to bring Him a colt or a young donkey, an ass, and there aren't two animals there. That's probably something that an editor made a mistake in the reading of Matthew. Because you can compare the other ones and all of them are just a singular, and it makes no sense for Him to kind of be trying to straddle two animals or something in this triumphal entry. He's supposed to do that. Now why? Do you remember what He's doing there? He's fulfilling prophecy. And the prophecy is Zacharias 9:9. John, do you want to go to that and just read it for us?

Hank Smith: 22:01 You got that one memorized, John?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 22:05 Zacharias is a beast. It's hard to find right there at the end.

John Bytheway: 22:09 Yes, Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, oh daughter of Zion, shout oh daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy king cometh unto thee. He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

Dr. Keith Wilson: 22:27 Isn't that interesting? I feel pretty certain that Jesus knew His scriptures well enough in the way that He studied and recites the Psalms and things, that He was aware of this and He specifically directs them to go and get an ass, a young donkey for Him to ride into town on. This also is reminiscent of Solomon when he was crowned king of ancient Israel. Instead of riding on a horse or anything, he specifically summoned a donkey and he rode an ass into town. And that became the symbol, kind of a king lowly and humble, but still a kingly kind of entrance.

Hank Smith: 23:07 Kind of a symbol of being a peacemaker.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 23:09 Exactly. If He'd been conquering the town, He would've come in, of course, on a horse. But He comes in on a donkey, a domestic animal, a burden of peace.

John Bytheway: 23:20 I actually have in my margin written here, "He's coming lowly on an ass versus coming on a warhorse in Revelation 19 at the second coming." So I think it's interesting. The animal is a symbol of what kind of message is coming at that point, so.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 23:39 Oh, that's a great point. Yeah. Now as you continue reading there in Matthew, so He mounts this colt and they set Him on it. And then why don't we do the next two verses? They're real significant too. Hank, do you want to do those, eight and nine?

Hank Smith: 23:54 Matthew 21:8-9, "And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, others cut down branches from the trees and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before that followed cried saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest.'"

Dr. Keith Wilson: 24:13 So now we have the second two symbols that are very prevalent in this triumphal entry. He's sitting on this donkey, riding into town. They put their clothes in front of Him. Now the clothes was a sign of great respect. And you can imagine back in ancient Israel, even when Jesus is crucified, the soldiers try to decide who gets His clothes? Because clothing was so hard to weave and to procure, and you probably only had one set of clothes and things like that. But they take their clothes, their cloaks, and they put them in front of Him so that instead of riding on the dirt or cobblestone or whatever the surface was, He's riding on something softer, something that's cleaner. And it's become really the welcome for the red carpet treatment and a kingly kind of royal welcome. So there's the first big symbol that they do.

- 25:05 And then the third is they use tree branches. Okay, it says they put tree branches in front of Him. Now, John of our four authors is the only one that defines those tree branches. John, do you remember what he says about those?
- John Bytheway: 25:22 Are those the palms?
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 25:23 Exactly. They're palm branches. And John says that specifically in his, that's kind of interesting that John would pick up on that, because John has Jesus in a very, what we call high Christology, where he sees Him very closely connected as the Son of God. In the other gospels you see a little bit more of the mortality of Jesus, but John has Him more connected as the Son of God in that sense of divineness, the fact that they do palm branches.
- 25:51 Now, what's the palm branch represent and why was it so specifically not just a tree branch? In the ancient Middle East, the palm tree was seen kind of associated with kings and sort of shade, and they used it for a lot of things. Shade was kind of symbolic. Also, its fibers, ropes and writing using parchment from palms and things like that. But the symbol that seemed to co-opt it the most was Greek mythology. Nike was the athletic kind of God, and Nike was symbolized by a palm branch. So it became kind of the sign of victory in competition and things like that. It's just interesting you have these three symbols.
- 26:36 Now I have a slide here that I'd like to show for those that are watching with the video, but in that, there's these three symbols, the donkey, the clothing, and the palm branches. And here's the symbolic interpretation of those. Remember, they're putting their clothes down because He's royalty. So the Prince of Peace, He's riding the domestic animal of peace, rides into the city victorious. Isn't that cool, to see the convergence of these three symbols.
- 27:10 Now as a family, do you want to know what we could take from this on our Palm Sunday observance? We should reenact the triumphal entry and use branches and things like that to just kind of symbolize. And then the great shout which they made, which was the capstone of everything, and it really set the Pharisees and chief priests and everything on edge. And that was, Hosanna is the way that they'd say it in Hebrew. Hosanna. And that was coming from Psalms 1:18. That was where the word was coined. And in Hebrew it meant, "save us" or "save us now, we beseech thee." Salvation is now.
- 27:51 When they say that, and that's a messianic psalm from the book of Psalms and David's kind of prophecies, when they use that

phrase, "Oh, that is the final deal. That seals the deal. We are accepting this Man as the Messiah, the promised Messiah." And you can see the Pharisees are just beside themselves. In some of the accounts it says, "Don't you see how the whole city has moved and we are nothing?" And they come back at Jesus and say verse 15 of Matthew 21.

John Bytheway: 28:23

"And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did and the children crying in the temple and saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were sore displeased, and said unto Him, 'Hearest thou what these say?' And Jesus saith unto them, 'Yea, have ye never read, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou has perfected praise?"

Dr. Keith Wilson: 28:45

Okay, so do you notice something here? Jesus just kind of throws this in back in their face. It's like He gets to say, "Isn't this great? They're acknowledging Me as the Messiah." And the chief priests and everything are beside themselves. Now He does one thing there that just really draws the chief priest into the argument and wanting to bring Him down, and that is Matthew has Him cleansing the temple on the very day of the triumphal entry. Look at verse 12. "Jesus went into the temple and cast out all them." And then look at 13, "And said unto them, 'It is written My house.'" Now, in the book of John before, at the start of His ministry, He goes into the temple and cleanses it, but there He refers to it as whose house? Do you remember?

John Bytheway: 29:30

He said, "My Father's house."

Dr. Keith Wilson: 29:32

Exactly. And so now He's taking direct ownership of the temple. Do you know how threatening that would've been to the Sadducees and the Pharisees? The Pharisees are there to kind of show their purity and things, but the Sadducees are running the temple.

Hank Smith: 29:47

It's a cash cow for them.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 29:48

It's the National Bank of Ancient Judaism. And He's taking possession of it symbolically as He comes in. It's like throwing gasoline on the fire. This just causes such animus towards Him. But this is the one day when He just kind of says, "I'm not worried about what you think. I am here to present Myself because this is My assignment." It's a really cool setting. Most of the time, Jesus doesn't ever get to be the guy that the crowds cheer for and things, because there's not crowds. But this one, the crowds are cheering for Jesus, maybe a hundred thousand people, cheering for Jesus.

Hank Smith: 30:29 Yeah, that's beautiful.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 30:30 Have any of you ever been over to Jerusalem at the Easter celebration and the Palm Sunday?

Hank Smith: 30:35 I've never been there for Easter.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 30:37 It is quite the thing. Usually about 30 to 50,000 Christians assemble over on the Mount of Olives, Bethphage and things right there, and then they do the processional up. It's just such an incredible kind of fun thing as a Christian community to celebrate Easter that way and reenact the triumphal entry.

Hank Smith: 30:59 We'll have to go there on Easter, John.

John Bytheway: 31:00 One of the things I've always wondered about the triumphal entry is, were they expecting the messiah of popular expectation as we've heard it coined sometimes. That He's going to deliver us from the Romans. He's the redeemer of Israel, meaning political Israel. Or were some there knowing He was going to deliver us from death and sin. And I wonder if Jesus knew what kind of welcome was He getting? Were they welcoming Him as the political messiah or as the spiritual Messiah? What do you think?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 31:32 John, I believe that they would've known the Psalmic verse 1:18 there closely enough that they would've sensed that that was referring to their salvation, and it was beyond just their physical deliverance. Now, He did a couple things to let them know. Now the cleansing of the temple could have been seen still as a political messiah come in and overthrowing. But then what did He do? Matthew records in verse 14, "And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple and He healed them." Right there in the temple, He heals them. And how that must have been such a moment in which there is no doubt as to what kind of Messiah He is.

32:13 Yeah, I think you're right. On the surface, some could have just said, "Oh, this is a big phony that's coming in the town and it's a circus act and things." But at its core it was messianic. It was salvific. He makes that point again and again. Now we have a parallel, interesting parallel in our own LDS worship today with the triumphal entry that I'd love for families also to kind of capitalize on. And that is we have the Hosanna shout in one of our own religious rituals or practices, if you will. When does that occur? Tell me a little bit about that.

Hank Smith: 32:52 That's temple dedications, right?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 32:53 Exactly. And now with the church doing kind of this close circuit temple dedication, everybody, whether they live close to a temple or not, pretty much has the opportunity to experience temple dedications. I'll never forget the first time that we as a family went to one of the temple dedications. It happened to be a while back. It was the Palmyra Temple dedication, and it was a beautiful service. We all dressed up, they canceled church that day and we drove to the stake center and we were there early and there was quite a reverential feeling with the music, the prelude and everything. And then the service commenced and it was just... Everyone in white. And the temple itself was spectacular, and the talks and the singing, the spirit of God, like a fire is burning. And I just had a real deeply moving spiritual experience.

33:46 And as it ended, we quietly left our stake center as a family. We got in the old family van and started to drive home. And I just wanted my kids to remember the moment. And so I said, "So what did you like most about the temple dedication today?" And they piped up with, "Oh daddy, it was beautiful to see the chandelier and to see everybody in white and singing. The Spirit of God was so cool. And the talk that President Hinckley gave." And they went on and on and then they kind of trailed off, but they hadn't hit the one point that I was hoping that they'd remember. And I said, prime the pump a little, and said, "What about the Hosanna shout?" And there was dead silence in my big old van as we drove. And then my oldest daughter, also my most outspoken probably, she piped up from the back of the van, "Dad, it was weird."

34:36 It kind of was a shock to the heart. But then I realized that I hadn't taught them anything about the historical significance of the Hosanna shout and the fact that anciently, people were accepting Jesus into their lives, into their city, acknowledging Him as their Messiah. And that I'd fallen short with that. And all my daughter saw was just kind of this ritual waving of a hanky kind of in a robotic way and things like that and not realizing that it was the hanky and the waving was to say, "We welcome You into our lives, into our hearts, into the center of our city." So that one's always kind of stuck with me. So if families, as they celebrate the triumphal entry can incorporate that in, I think it will tie two things together, our temples with the fact that we're entering the house of the Lord as He entered the city.

John Bytheway: 35:29 What I think is also unusual about that is the idea of shouting. I mean, we have the kids sing, "The chapel doors seem to say to

me, be still." What's that joke, Hank? We spend the first two years teaching our children to walk and talk and the next 16, telling them to sit down and be quiet. To actually have something where we are supposed to shout is unusual. It reminds me of, the Spirit of God, "Like a fire's burning we'll sing and we'll shout with the armies of heaven." So, this is a good point. We need to teach them, "This is an appropriate time to shout for joy and as you said, to welcome the Savior and to say, 'Hosanna, teach us how to be saved. Come and save us.'" So I'm glad we talked about this. I don't want them to say, "That was weird."

- Dr. Keith Wilson: 36:18 This is a fun thing for a family to do. And it's just so appropriate on Sunday, the triumphal entry or the Palm Sunday, weave these things together in your family worship. And then everybody's looking forward to the culmination of that, which is the following Sunday and the resurrection. And so you have a great way to start it.
- 36:38 Now in the scriptures, it's difficult to tell which day, which things happened. In Matthew chapter 21, 22 and 23, even Matthew chapter 24. The next real strong marker we get is Passover. And we usually assign that to Thursday even though there's some scholarly discussion about that. So the first, second and third days, they kind of meld together. Now the writers themselves, you'll notice in Matthew, he says in verse 17, "He left them and went out of the city into Bethany, and He lodged there." First off, let's stop just to take that specific point. Why would He go back to Bethany? Didn't He like the Golden Arches Hotel in Jerusalem? I mean, because Bethany's a good couple of miles out of the city and up over a steep hill. Why Bethany?
- Hank Smith: 37:27 Maybe He wanted to check on Lazarus, make sure he's still feeling well.
- John Bytheway: 37:30 Mary & Martha are there.
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 37:31 That's very good. In fact, that's where He stays.
- Hank Smith: 37:33 Yeah. I wonder if He's trying to get away from not being taken. Arrested.
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 37:38 Exactly. And the way you can see this is there's such vitriol and some of the accounts there, it says when He says things that are really pointed towards the Pharisees and the leadership chief priests and scribes, it says, "They sought to lay hands on Him."

They want to take Him right then and bring Him down. It's not the moment, even though it's close in which He'll turn Himself over to them, He still has some things to accomplish. The crowds are His buffer because all the crowds are with Him. So then at nighttime when everybody dissipates, He's got to be out of sight or they'll arrest Him prematurely. So He goes out to Bethany and seems to lodge there each evening.

John Bytheway: 38:17 I imagine every time He comes to Jerusalem, if He's staying in Bethany, that He brings a big entourage with Him and that I can see why Martha is saying, "I've got a lot of work to do whenever You come here." Right?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 38:29 Good point. Now you'll notice then in verse 17, so He goes out to Bethany, that's Matthew 21:17 at the end of the day. And then when He is coming back in the next morning, He curses the fig tree when He wants just something to pick a piece of fruit off of that because He's hungry. But that sequence is different in the book of Mark. So Mark has Him cleansing the temple on the second day. So it's hard to tell sometimes what happened on which day, but do your best to do that. Remember, don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. That just because all of the four accounts aren't completely harmonious on each detail, that's the function of human memory. We remember things differently. And that's the beauty of it. To me, it says this really is a real event because people remember it differently and they're not just copying the same text.

39:23 Generally from Matthew's lead, we have the cleansing of the temple, and then we go into the day two and day three. Two and three are very hard to differentiate between the two of them. In fact, there's no clues in Matthew 22 and 23 which one happens on which day. But here's the overarching thing that I'd like you to remember on these chapters, and that is Jesus is portrayed and acts very messianically. He is in control and He fields questions from them, and He will poke right back. He'll put parables out there that are so scathing, and the Pharisees and Sadducees, they know that He's talking right to them and condemning them, but they can't do anything because of the crowd. So He is very messianic in His teachings and the way He fields questions.

Hank Smith: 40:13 He gives them a couple of entrapment parables in Matthew 21 where they condemn themselves. Kind of like with David and Nathan, what we studied last year. He tells them about the two sons and the one about the wicked husband and the wicked renters who kill anybody who come to take the rent. And both times they answer the question. And then in verse 45 it says,

"And when the chief priest and the Pharisees heard these parables, they perceive that He spake of them." That's great.

John Bytheway: 40:40

"Hey, He's talking about us."

Hank Smith: 40:42

"I think He's talking about us."

Dr. Keith Wilson: 40:45

Yeah. Now a couple of little notes on that. If you combine the three accounts on this wicked husbandman, both Mark and Luke refer to him not as his son only, but as his beloved son or his well-beloved son. Oh, look at the similarities of that. "This is My only-begotten son." This is the beloved son. And it's no wonder that they get it. They know exactly that He's jabbing at them. And the parable, the two sons, Matthew's the only one that records that parable. It's in chapter 21 there. But it's just so apparent that He's saying to them, "You've been commissioned and agreed and now you're not coming." And then the other. So He really goes after them.

41:26

Now, just a quick comment about before we leave it there on this morning of the second day when He curses the fig tree. Occasionally you'll have people, Bible readers, various scholars, take a shot at Jesus and say, "Oh, He was angry. A tree that doesn't have fruit, He just wants to beat up on it." And things like that. And so you have to think through that. Brethren, do you want to give some reasons why He might have done this other than just a temper tantrum when He is hungry?

Hank Smith: 41:56

Yeah, I doubt Jesus is just hangry here.

John Bytheway: 42:00

It's fun to kind of make a list over the things that the Savior demonstrated he had power over. And men? Yes. Women? Yes. Children? Yes. Animals? Yes. And here we have plants, the weather. Yes. And all of these things I think demonstrated of course first His compassion and His love for people, but secondly, it demonstrated who He was. And I think to have this fig tree come out in the Institute, the Religion 211, 212 manual, it says, "The leaves on the fig tree indicated that it should have had fruit, but it did not. With its misleading appearance, the tree symbolized hypocrisy." So He was being a teacher and its fate perhaps represented what awaited those who professed righteousness yet plot the Savior's death. And my understanding of fig trees, and it might be fun to mention, how did you say it, Bethphage? Beth, how do you say that?

Hank Smith: 43:01

Bethphage. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 43:02 Bethphage means House of Figs. So take your PH and change it to an F. House of Figs, Bethphage. So that was a common symbol around there. But my understanding is with a fig tree, the leaves and the fruit grow at the same time. So if the leaves are there and there's no fruit, this is kind of a symbol of, "You're all leaves and no fruit." What's the Texas phrase, "You're big hat and no cattle." So, there's a look of hypocrisy to the tree itself. So Jesus used that as a symbol. So that's how I've always understood it. What do you think, Hank?

Hank Smith: 43:37 I think so too. I've always saw it as an object lesson. I even told my students, "Jesus probably knocked all the figs off that tree the day before. He's prepping His classroom for His object lesson." Right out of the manual, Come, Follow Me manual. First paragraph, "The Savior was hungry after traveling from Bethany to Jerusalem. And a fig tree in the distance looked like the source of food. But as Jesus approached the tree, it bore no fruit. In a way the fig tree was like the hypocritical religious leaders in Jerusalem. Their empty teachings and outward demonstrations of holiness gave no spiritual nourishment." I've also thought too, that in about less than a week, He's going to be hanging on the cross and people are going to say, "He has no power. He has no power to save Himself." I think the disciples who see this are saying, "No, I've seen Him. He has the power to destroy. I know that. I've seen it right in front of my eyes. So He's choosing not to destroy when He is hanging on the cross"

Dr. Keith Wilson: 44:32 In one of the accounts, Peter comments back and says, as they pass the fig tree that's been all withered up, he says, "Wow, Lord, look what happened to it after You cursed it." And here's another interesting thing. That fig tree would've been on the Mount of Olives there, Mount Scopus and everything. And as they came back down into the city each day, just like you said, the manual pointed out, it was symbolizing the hypocrisy and the form of religion without the conversion of the heart and-

John Bytheway: 45:00 Without the fruits.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 45:02 Exactly. And the breezes, the sea breezes come in, and that's how Jerusalem stays kind of cool and temperate. With the warm temperatures year round is you've always got a breeze. But when you kill a tree mid-season, okay, and the leaves are on it, the leaves don't fall off. They stay attached. So the breeze with the attached leaves would've been almost like an audio reminder, even a visual audio thing there. The leaves are rustling as they go by kind of warning them, "You're going into an area here that is full of form without content."

- 45:37 Now, another thing too, what time of the year is it? It's April. It's Passover. Does fruit come on a tree in April? I'm a small little orchardist and I have about 100 trees. That's my avocation. I love it. But I can guarantee you the earliest fruit around here is cherries and apricots, and they're still July. And the real fruit season is September. Apples, plums, peaches. You just go down the line. They're all on then. Why? Because the tree uses the growing season to put fruit on and make it sweet, put sugars and things into it.
- 46:13 So why is Jesus expecting it? The fig, like John pointed out earlier, is an anomaly. It's what they call an early leafer, and it puts out its starchy fruit just right with the leaves. It wouldn't have been the most succulent fruit, but it still would've been edible. That's what Jesus is going for. He's not having a temper tantrum over a tree that shouldn't have even had fruit on it at that time of year. The fig was an exception, like you've pointed out. It was showing His power over all things. It was just such a multifaceted, symbolic thing that He did there. It's far, far from Jesus having a temper tantrum because He's hungry.
- John Bytheway: 46:51 So rather than saying, "Oh, Jesus was angry." It's, "No, He's always a teacher. He took another opportunity to use something right in front of them and teach." That makes me go, "Oh yeah, He is always teaching in a beautiful way."
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 47:05 So messianic, isn't He, in this last three days here. And then He goes really into hiding, not hiding, but He celebrates the Passover with just a few people. And then Gethsemane, three people are aware that He's there suffering. This is His messianic kind of pulpit, if you will. He's standing up and just doing things to teach them right here at the last, the multitudes.
- Hank Smith: 47:27 I was going to say, Matthew 21:21. I've always laughed when Jesus says, "If you have faith and doubt not, you can also kill trees." That's the dream right there. And you could remove mountains.
- John Bytheway: 47:43 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:00 Welcome to part two, Dr. Keith Wilson. Matthew 21 through 23, Mark 11, Luke 19 through 20, and John chapter 12.
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 00:11 Right after cursing the fig tree then, you'll notice there it says chief priest, verse 23. And the elders of the people came unto him teaching and said, "By what authority?" So they challenge him. See, he's sallied right into the temple.
- Hank Smith: 00:24 Kind of commandeers the temple, doesn't he?
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 00:26 Exactly.
- 00:27 He's throwing over the tables of the money changers and everything else. And then he sealed it by healing people and things like that, but they will not let it go because this is their life. This is the way they control the public. And so they say, "Who gave you authority to be in here?" Which is a big question in Judaism. Who authorized you? Where'd you get your credentials?
- John Bytheway: 00:47 Who's your rabbi? Who taught you?
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 00:50 Exactly.
- Hank Smith: 00:51 Keith, let's make sure that our listeners understand. He's not in the temple, he's on the temple grounds, wouldn't you say?
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 00:58 Yeah, and now usually it's still considered to be in the temple, to be on the temple grounds, because that was still sacred space and things.
- 01:07 But you're right, it's like being in Temple Square, but not actually being in the temple itself. Very close parallel, because Temple Square has a fence around the temple proper. And ancient Judaism, Herod's temple, there was a large wall around it and very much a restricted entrance to it.
- 01:27 So yeah, so he is out there probably in Solomon's porches and places like that where they would've had tables set up, selling

these doves. And they come to him then and challenge him, "Who gave you authority to do this?"

- 01:39 And they have him cornered on that, because it's a very rigid procedure as to how you become a chief priest, Sadducee, Pharisee, and the scribe. What's his response? He knows he can't do battle with them on their ground.
- John Bytheway: 01:55 Answers a question with a question, but yeah, I'll answer that if you answer this.
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 02:01 Exactly.
- Hank Smith: 02:02 It doesn't seem, he gives him a chance to agree to it either. He says, "I'll be happy to tell you this as soon as you answer this question." And then he just asks the question. The baptism of John, was it inspired or not? Was John the Baptist inspired or not? They are now in a spot where they can't say anything.
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 02:21 Yeah, Matthew and the Synoptics want you to know that everybody was aware that Jesus had pulled out his trump card, his ace, and so they even explain it in the text. They can't answer that.
- 02:33 Another important point here that I'd love to make is how long has John been deceased and moldering in the ground at this point in time? At least a year and a half.
- Hank Smith: 02:43 Yeah, I was going to say it's been a while.
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 02:45 Because his death is recorded back at the feeding of the 5,000 in Matthew chapter 14. So John has been out of the picture for quite a while, and yet what's happening, Jesus is using his valiant witness, his credibility to really defend himself, the savior.
- 03:06 I've often wondered, long after you and I are gone from this earth, will our witness, will our deeds and our example still be working in God's favor? Will people still be believing and following because we chose to remain a disciple and things like that?
- 03:25 A mother's impact, long, long after a matriarch is buried, her impact can continue on with people shaping their lives and their faith and things. And I love the fact that John here is deceased, long since deceased, and yet he's still protecting the Savior. Isn't that fun to pick up on that? There's too much fun stuff here.

Hank Smith: 03:47 Yeah, just to be clear to our listeners, they can't answer it because if they say John was inspired, they're going to say, well, why don't you believe in Jesus? Because he testified of Jesus, we can't say he's not inspired, because everybody loves John. We can't speak a word against him. So they just come back and say, "We can't say, we cannot tell."

John Bytheway: 04:07 Yeah, we cannot tell.

Hank Smith: 04:08 And he says, "Well, I guess I don't have to answer your question."

Dr. Keith Wilson: 04:11 So you can see how disingenuous their motives are. And it's just like two prize fighters, they're actually just punching at each other. And so it goes on in that same mode. And Jesus crafts these parables, the two sons, the wicked husbandman in chapter 21, the marriage of the King's Son.

04:29 Oh man, that one is really poignant, where he says, "Many are called, but few are chosen." And they have that whole aspect of these people that are invited guests right at the last don't have on the wedding garment. That's also strange, because they went out and invited them, didn't they? And then they don't have the wedding garment on.

04:47 Any comments as to how to understand that? Because it seems like they're reversing themselves. They want guests to come. The wedding is always the symbolic portrayal of Jesus coming back to the church in the second coming, so you can read that into it. But why then when you invite a broader spectrum of guests, why then do they reject them at the wedding itself? Any of you want to carry that?

John Bytheway: 05:12 I have a comment from our friends, Jay and Donald Perry. They wrote a book called Understanding the Parables, and this is what they said. They said, some readers have wondered how anyone could be expected to have the proper clothing under these circumstances. After all, weren't the wedding guests pulled in off the streets?

05:29 The answer is that it was the custom for a wealthy host to provide the appropriate wedding garments for his guests. The man who had not on a wedding garment, did not lack for one, but willfully refused to put it on.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 05:42 Interesting, isn't it? In fact, my brother and I have had some occasion to be in close contact with devout Jews, where we

started this jewelry business when we were going through school. And it's continued on.

05:55 And on one occasion we were back in New York where almost all diamonds circulate through in the world market. And one of our diamond cutters had a wedding of his daughter, and he invited us to go to the wedding. And I wasn't there, but my brother was, and the wedding was just lavish, I mean rooftop stuff. And they flew all their relatives in, and for a whole week fed him and everything else.

06:17 And my brother finally looked over at Ari, who was the owner of the outfit, and he said, "How are you affording this?" And he said, "Well, frankly, it's going to cost us well over 100k, but we put a second mortgage on our flat here in the city."

06:30 And my brother just shook his head and said, "Whoa." And then the Jewish fellow looked back at my brother and said, "Well, it's the most important day of my daughter's life. Shouldn't I be willing to do that?"

06:40 So all of us ought to go into deep debt for our weddings, right? No, but my point is he flew every relative in in their family tree. He put them up, he did all these things. That's the nature of a Jewish wedding, and that's what the savior's referencing here. The fact that they don't have wedding garments on means they're wedding crashers.

07:02 They're people that are just trying to get in through the back door. Even though they'd broadened and invited other guests, they were people that just came in. Now that's the one level, wedding crashers a second is what John's referred to as they don't have on the proper clothing that demonstrates righteousness.

07:20 Revelations talks about robes of righteousness, and you can even extend it to our sacred clothing. There many are called but few are chosen, and this symbolic thing that you're chosen through robes of righteousness or covenant clothing is a fun concept that you can see in that in some ways.

John Bytheway: 07:39 So one school of thought that you just shared is that these were not necessarily the people that were invited in, but these were crashers that didn't have on a wedding garment. That's interesting. And then the other school of thought was they had garments but refused to put them on.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 07:56 And either way, they're bucking the norm of you've been invited here and we provide you with the clothing, we provide you with the appropriateness of being here. And you can see that in the church, people could be invited, but then not to take on the guidelines.

Hank Smith: 08:14 Elder Bednar, I'm sure our listeners remember, spoke on this parable in the October 22 general conference, I encourage everybody to go look up that talk. He does a great job of outlining the parable, and makes a couple of statements about the man who is not in the wedding garment.

08:31 He quotes a Christian author here, John Reid, who says, the refusal to wear the wedding garment exemplified blatant disrespect for both the king and his son. He did not simply lack a wedding garment, rather he chose not to wear one. He rebelliously refused to dress appropriately for the occasion. The king's reaction was swift and decisive, bind him hand and foot, take him away, cast him into outer darkness. There should be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

08:57 The king's judgment of the man is not based primarily upon the lack of a wedding garment, but he was in fact determined not to wear one. The man desired the honor of attending the wedding feast, but did not want to follow the custom of the king. He wanted to do things his own way. His lack of proper dress revealed his inner rebellion against the king and his instructions.

09:18 So it reminds me of there's only one way into the presence of God, and that is through the Savior's atonement. And it seems that this man wants to do it his way. He wants to get in his way, and that's not going to work.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 09:33 That's the beautiful thing about a parable, isn't it? The way you can see multiple meanings and layers. I've suggested that, well, these guys are wedding crashers, and they weren't even invited people. And yet the flip side of that is some of the invited people might have come in wanting to partake of the feast and the festivities, but not wanting to do it the way that the king had designated.

John Bytheway: 09:57 It's interesting too that even today, okay, my bridesmaids are going to be dressed like this, and the guys I have in my line, I want you all to go to this tuxedo rental place and get this. And don't imagine if your best man shows up, I don't really like that and doesn't want to wear it.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 10:16 Well, there's two or more incidents here or statements that I think we really should touch on, and then we'll draw it to a conclusion. But one of them is the coin and the issue of paying tribute to Caesar and the likes. And that's fascinating, because notice once again, the Herodians, now people that follow Herod and are loyal to him and the Pharisees, and they're trying to bring him down. And so they want to play him against Rome and see if they can get him between Judaism and Rome, and how does Jesus handle it?

10:48 Oh, he just so skillfully just holds up that coin. Have you ever seen any of those coins? Hank or John, when you're over in the holy land, I had a little Palestinian kid come up and say, "Hey, my father archeologist, he uncovered the Caesar coin." And I bought it off him for \$5.

Hank Smith: 11:04 Wow, what a buy there, Keith?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 11:06 Yeah, it said made in China on the edge. But nonetheless, they've uncovered literally thousands of those coins and there it is. It's got that image of Caesar right on the front face. So he would've held that up and said, "Just operate within both systems." We support governments, and that goes right along with our article of Faith 12. We believe in kings, magistrates, honoring, sustaining the law, and then also we support or we turn our allegiance and some things we owe to God.

11:39 And in those things we honor that responsibility, that obligation.

Hank Smith: 11:44 I've often thought that perhaps the Savior is quoting Genesis here, show me the tribute money. This is verse 19, and they brought him the penny and he said, "Whose image is this?"

11:55 "It's Caesar's image."

11:56 Well, if it has Caesar's image on it, it belongs to Caesar. If it has God's image on it, God created man in his own image, male and female created he them. That's Genesis 1:26 and 27. I think he might be saying, this belongs to Caesar, this little tiny thing here belongs to Caesar. But everybody here belongs to me, belongs to God.

12:23 That would be something that the Romans, the Herodians, they wouldn't think of, but I'm sure the Pharisees would've picked up on the Genesis reading.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 12:33 Well, and where they took that commandment, thou shalt make unto thee no graven image very literally. And so no human being was ever depicted in Jewish art, ancient Jewish art. It was forbidden for them to have an image then, a human image on a coin. And he so skillfully just holds it up and says, "Well, listen, this is from a different system. This is from Caesar's system. You support your government, but God is different and you support him."

13:01 But there's no image of God there.

Hank Smith: 13:03 Keith, is this an attempt for the Pharisees to get him in trouble with Rome, hoping Rome will take care of him?

John Bytheway: 13:09 Say something treasonous.

Hank Smith: 13:11 Yeah, say something treasonous?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 13:12 Very much so.

13:13 And other times, when he has the woman taken in adultery, they're playing it within the Jewish system, intra-Judaic law. The rabbis, one says real strict enforcement of adultery. The other one real lenient. But this one is inter where they're trying to play Rome against Judaism, and they feel like they've got him trapped. And he so skillfully holds that coin up and says, "Whichever system you're operating in, you have to be obedient and loyal to that."

13:44 Let's go to the Sadducees question. This one is a question that's all aflame with darts because it looks like the Savior is dissing eternal marriage. And here our whole missionary message, we're talking about verses 23 through 33. And it looks on the surface, and if you ever bump into people that are wanting to be contrary to the Restoration, they often will cite this verse, that Jesus says they are neither married nor given in marriage.

14:11 This is a common refrain against the Restoration doctrine of eternal marriage, and strikes right at our temple sealing services and things like that. Very important to understand this passage. Perhaps the most important verse in this sequence of 10 verses of Matthew 22 is in verse 23. Right at the introduction of this.

Hank Smith: 14:33 Matthew makes it clear who is asking this question.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 14:36 Exactly, it's the Sadducees. And a basic understanding of the Sadducees lets you know what? They don't believe in the Resurrection.

Hank Smith: 14:45 Keith, aren't these Jews who have allowed Greek thought, hellenization it's called, to shadow out their religious beliefs? I know they believe in the five books of Moses. Jesus is going to quote one of those verses a little bit later. But these are the opposite of the Pharisees, where they have become less religious over time and more worldly, we would say hellenized.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 15:10 Exactly.

15:10 In fact, at the time of the Maccabean Revolt, Pharisee is Hebrew for to separate. That's when they separate themselves from the leading Jews who've become this Sadduceic kind of mindset. And they're buying into all of this Greek thought because it's a Greek empire, and they're trying to make friends with their culture.

15:29 So Sadducees have gone towards Greek theology, and the Jews know that that's contrary to the law and the prophets. So they want to separate themselves out, and so they call themselves perushim or Pharisees.

15:42 And now you have these two groups being present here at the last days of the Savior's life. Pharisees are challenging him because they don't feel like he's strong enough on the law and the particulars, and the Sadducees are challenging him because it just doesn't make sense to them where they've adopted all these extraneous beliefs.

Hank Smith: 16:01 Let's make it clear. Verse 23, Matthew says, "Here comes the Sadducees, which do not believe in a physical resurrection."

16:10 That is so crucial, because they're asking a question about what happens in the resurrection which they don't believe in.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 16:16 So why are they asking the question then?

Hank Smith: 16:19 The fact that they ask this question tells you Jesus was teaching eternal marriage.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 16:24 Yeah, and you're getting more into the discussion, but we just have to make this point so people don't freeze up over this passage. Because this is common material that's used against the Restoration. And you have to acknowledge, it's a

disingenuous question. They're not asking really about things that happen in the resurrection. They're challenging the notion of a resurrection.

- Hank Smith: 16:47 That's exactly right. And that's what Jesus is going to talk about it.
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 16:49 And Matthew wants you to understand it. So he tells you, "Yeah, Sadducees, and they don't believe in the resurrection." But people still gloss right over that, and then jump to the conclusion that Jesus is teaching there's no eternal marriage. Which you brought up the point too, which is worth mentioning. How did they ever get this idea that there might be eternal marriage? Jesus has taught the law of eternal marriage.
- Hank Smith: 17:11 Ironic to me, Keith, that the very passage that is used against the Restoration is actually a wonderful passage for the Restoration. The question implies Jesus was teaching this or the question would make no sense.
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 17:23 Exactly. Now, the situation there might be hard to understand for some. The example that they conjure up is what we call the principle of levirate, or levirate marriage from the Old Testament.
- Hank Smith: 17:36 Keith, correct me if I'm wrong here, but it seems this levirate marriage is in place to protect a young widow in both cases or a widower.
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 17:46 Yeah, because she's been married and she has that birthright if she has posterity, and so they keep putting step-husbands in there for her to marry so that she can have posterity. So Jesus goes on and says, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God."
- 18:10 And then he goes on to say, "I'm not the God of the dead but of the living."
- 18:14 Now, from restoration revelation, we understand that this could be referring to people that aren't married in this life and this probationary period. In the afterlife, they won't receive exaltation in the highest degree because they haven't accepted the ordinance of marriage. And that's always contingent on people having the chance rather than the circumstance that might not lend itself to marriage in this life.

18:44 But nonetheless, our theology teaches that in the afterlife, D&C 131, 132, that to be married is one of the crowning ordinances of exaltation, and married in the Lord. This one could be referring to the people that for in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, it could be referring to that.

19:06 I like to also think of it that God is saying you are not going to understand all of the details in the resurrection, because we don't live in that realm, the realm of the dead if you will. But we live now. And so you can only understand things according to your current framework and concept.

19:24 How people and relationships will overlap and be associated and things like that in the afterlife is very difficult for us to understand, and I think that's what Jesus is saying here.

Hank Smith: 19:37 This hypothetical situation they bring up, which I can't imagine this is a true story. There were seven Sadducees that all had one wife and it's one bride for seven brothers here. And I think they're trying to come up with a scenario that is so difficult to think of working out in the next life that he's stumped, his doctrine of eternal marriage looks foolish.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 20:00 Yeah, they just want to make it so it's so much hyperbole, so ludicrous that it just shows you how ridiculous your doctrine is of the resurrection.

Hank Smith: 20:09 When he says in the resurrection they, I often wonder if the they in this story is just those seven made up Sadducees. For in the resurrection, those guys that you made up, they're not married nor given in marriage. They'll be angels.

20:24 But let's actually talk about resurrection. So if this question, Keith, is a question to mock his beliefs, of course he's not going to give a doctrinal answer on marriage. He's going to correct them on their belief about resurrection.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 20:41 Yeah, very well said, that he's going right in the direction that they're forcing him to rather than pronouncing doctrine, clarifying doctrine about what existence will be like after this life when we're sealed to a person.

Hank Smith: 20:53 Very much so.

20:54 John, what do you have?

John Bytheway: 20:55 Yeah, in the religion 211 student manual, it says the Savior's reply that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, referred to the individuals in question who were Sadducees. There's Hank, they, in verse 30.

21:10 For the questioners said that there were with us seven brethren. So these are also Sadducees. But if you take away all of the brothers dying and everything, clearly as you said, let's say that verse 24 just said, if the man died having no children, then skip to verse 28, therefore whose wife shall she be?

21:33 They're trying to complicate it by throwing in this major hypothetical, but without all of that, clearly they believed she would be the wife of the first husband. And one other question I've always had about this, which is why I was excited to have you here, is it saying the Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection specifically, or is it saying they don't believe in life after death at all?

21:58 Because I know the Greek philosophy was bodies are vile and gross and corrupt, and why would you want a resurrected... but why would you want a body composed of matter anyway? Did they believe the spirit went on?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 22:11 Yeah, they very much believed that the spirit goes on. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. That's just coming right out of Hellenistic thought. So they believe that the body's a deterrent, and that's largely what Christianity's adopted today too. Handle me and see, for spirit hath not flesh and bones. Christians see that as being, he's saying that he's a spirit. Because come and touch me because I don't have body to me any longer, even though you think you see a body.

22:36 It's an interesting twist that just for us, resurrection is body, that's what it means. But for others it goes a different direction.

22:44 So to recap this one, the most important verse is verse 23, because Matthew also doesn't want you to stumble on the fact that this is a disingenuous question.

Hank Smith: 22:54 Right. Oh absolutely. That is so key to realize who is asking the question. When I'm helping prep my students who are about to serve missions, I make sure to point that out. If you could just have that understanding of who is asking the question when someone quotes this to you, you can say, "Well, who is he talking to and what did they believe?"

- 23:14 So I think it's amazing that Jesus uses one verse from the Torah, which the Sadducees do believe in, to prove that people live on after they die. When he says, "But," as touching the resurrection of the dead, almost as if since you brought it up. Since you brought up resurrection, have you not read what God said when he spoke to Moses? So there's Moses in the burning bush, and God says to him, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."
- 23:46 God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. So he would say if Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had lived and died and no longer are themselves, he would say I was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. But I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob says, I currently am their God, even though they're dead. I currently am their God.
- 24:10 So he uses one verse of scripture to prove that people live on as individuals after they die, which I think is just spectacular. To use one verse that they've probably read many times and never seen that little play on words. I am the God of Abraham, not I was.
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 24:27 That's a great point. I love that.
- 24:29 All right, well, let's go on to the conclusion of what seems like to be the final incident in these whole two or three days when he's there being very messianic, and he's just taking all their jabs and he's just answering them one by one and crafting these parables.
- Hank Smith: 24:44 He keeps winning this day of debate.
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 24:47 And then there's this one lawyer or scribe as others translate it, and they ask him a question, a provocative question, what's the great commandment in the law? And that's verse 35 and 36 of Matthew 22.
- 25:02 The backdrop for that is there were lots of rabbinic debates and discussions about which law was more important, the Sabbath day or the kosher or other things?
- 25:11 So he puts that, he wants to draw Jesus into that quagmire. And Jesus just gives him point-blank what we know in the Old Testament as the shma. Okay, that's Deuteronomy chapter six, verses four and five. In fact, in one of the accounts here, I think it might be the Luke account, it just reads exactly as it does from Deuteronomy in the shma. Hear, oh, Israel. So Jesus gives them

that. Very appropriate. And then gives them the second like unto to it.

25:41 I remember President Howard W. Hunter said, "In a sense, the first and the second great commandment are synonymous," is the word that he used. They just work together. If you love God, then you're going to love your fellow men and serve him. And then he makes the reference on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

26:00 Now, there's a different order that's established in Mark and Luke with this little verse that ends Matthew chapter 22. No man was able to ask him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

26:15 So in Matthew, he puts this last discussion as the final word that Jesus has with them. I resonate with that. I think Matthew was possibly a little more correct, because of the way it summarizes this whole feisty exchange for two or three days. And then Jesus comes back to one question, and that question silences them. And the question in essence is, what think ye of Christ?

26:44 Now, Christ is the Greek term for what? Messiah. So he's not referring to, what do you think of my last name? He's asking them, what's your concept of the Messiah? Whose son is he? Jesus brings it back to the most fundamental question that it's the elephant in the closet, and that is, do you accept me as the Messiah like the rest of the crowds have this week?

27:09 Can you get your mind around the fact that I'm the Messiah? And what's their answer to it there? Their answer is such a safe weasley answer. Do you see it?

Hank Smith: 27:19 It's the son of David.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 27:20 Yeah, the son of David. Everybody is a Davidic fan, in ancient Israel and today. You get over to Jerusalem, it's the King David Hotel. It's the King David Street. Every other young man is named David, the football team, everything. They all take the name of David.

27:35 So they give the safe answer. Oh, he's the son of David. Now, the Savior shows really keen insight into scripture, because he now uses scripture on them and the scripture that he uses is this Psalmic verse.

- 27:51 So it's Psalms 110 verse one. So he uses that verse. Now, here's the tricky part. It won't make sense to a lot of us, because in verse 44 he first says, how then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying the Lord said unto my Lord, sit on my right hand and I will make thine enemies thy footstool.
- 28:10 If David call him Lord, how is he his son? So what it is here is you're having a collapsing of time elements in this verse, but the King James translators did a nice job in that they preserved a different Lord when there are two references to Lord in verse 44. The first Lord is all caps, which is the King James way of saying Yahweh or Jehovah.
- 28:36 So Jehovah of the Old Testament, the premortal God said unto my Lord, that's generic, Lord Adonai. So Hebrew had a second word for Lord, and it was a more generic one rather than referring to Godhead Jehovah type Lord. But it was still seen as a divine being in that second representation of Adonai.
- 29:01 So the Lord Jehovah said unto Adonai, less specific Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Why then did David call the Lord, him Lord, small case? So Adonai, how is he his son?
- 29:16 So in this reference, collapsing time elements through the spirit view of who God is and who the Savior is, David is spiritually seeing Jehovah above him referring to David's son as the Messiah. But not like you said, not just the political Messiah, but what the God Messiah, the Lord Messiah, Adonai Messiah. And the crowd there, the Pharisees and the lawyers, they cannot answer. Because what's he in essence said, why was the Messiah prophesied to be God or the son of God as we would say it?
- 29:56 Why was he prophesied to be that? They cannot answer because everybody is calling this guy the Messiah. And he's right there in front of him. In essence, he says, "Let's get to the real question here. Do you believe that I am the Messiah, the promised spiritual divine Messiah? Do you believe that?"
- 30:17 They just shut up tighter than a drum, they durst not ask him any more questions.
- 30:23 It is the perfect culmination. Okay, now Matthew has the condemnation of hypocrisy and things like that in chapter 23, and that's pretty self-explanatory. I won't go there, but I think this is the conclusion of this open public confrontation where

Jesus comes, is shown to be the Messiah by the crowd, then takes on the leadership for two or three days with all kinds of jabs and disingenuous questions. And then he turns to them and says, "You know, folks, the real issue here is do you believe that I am not just somebody that does miracles, not just somebody that has a big crowd, but do you believe I'm the Messiah?"

31:04 What a penetrating question for each one of us. Our leaders have said, this is the question of all questions. Historians acknowledge that there's a Jesus, somebody that lives in Nazareth, good historians of the ancient Middle East, none of them doubt that with all the circumstantial evidence and things. It's a fact in most good credible minds that Jesus existed, but the issue is was he the son of God? That's the pivot point. Was he the son of God?

John Bytheway: 31:33 I love how we started the triumphal entry. The whole city was moved and their question was, who is this? We talked about this before, the Christmas song. What child is this? And that's the question. And then here it is again at the end, where Jesus is asking them as you so beautifully put it, who am I? Am I the Messiah? That's the fundamental question they have to answer.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 31:59 That has such nice bookends to it when you do it that way, because this is his last public thing really. And then he goes into a discreet setting and then the atoning sacrifice.

Hank Smith: 32:10 It reminds me of when the Savior was with his apostles in Caesarea Philippi, and he said, "What are people saying? What are people saying about me?" And it's, well, some say you're like a prophet, some say you're like John the Baptist. But what do you say? What do you think? I know what everybody else thinks now, but what do you think?

32:32 And then Peter has that great response. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He seems to be posing that same question here at the end of Matthew 22. What think ye of Christ?

32:43 Yeah, what's your conception of the Messiah? Could he be me? And they're like, "Well, he's the son of David."

32:51 I love this moment, because he says, "Why would David call him Lord?" Like you've explained Keith, why would David call him Lord if he was his son? The Messiah must be something bigger than the son of David. He must be the Lord of David as well.

John Bytheway: 33:04 You put it this time collapse, there's this premortal existence thing. The Lord Jehovah in small caps will come to earth and be in the lineage of David, but will still be the Lord.

33:17 This question, what think ye of Christ? It's repeated so often throughout the standard works, that there's who is he? And it always reminds me of a very eloquent and powerful statement by C.S. Lewis, which probably our listeners have heard before. But C.S. Lewis said, "I'm trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about him. I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.

33:50 This is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg or he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was and is the son of God, or else a mad man or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool. You can spit at him and kill him as a demon, or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God.

34:22 But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

Dr. Keith Wilson: 34:32 Yeah, what a classic.

Hank Smith: 34:33 Yeah, that's a fantastic quote. It's such a wonderful argument. It really is. Jesus, he has to be one of three things, based on all that he said and did. He has to either be crazy, because he's out forgiving sins. He's forgiving sins of people. He's changing Passover to be about him. He's changing it to the sacrament. Either he's crazy or he is evil, and if you don't think he's crazy or he is evil, which none of what he said sounds crazy or evil, then there's one option left, and that is that he is God.

John Bytheway: 35:09 And I like how we began the book of Matthew, not the very beginning, but it was in Matthew four that he went about teaching and preaching and healing. A moral teacher can go teach what he believes, and preaching and healing and then the ultimate Easter that Brother Wilson has brought up so beautifully. And then he's going to come back to life? That that's not what a great moral teacher does.

35:34 This is a lot more than that. Teaching, preaching and healing and coming back to life after being put to death. So that's why I

like... You've got to make your choice here is what C.S. Lewis is saying,

- Hank Smith: 35:49 You've got three choices and you've got to make one.
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 35:51 Those are great bookends that you've brought up. I love your example of Peter and whom say ye. And it comes down really for each one of us, can you say in your heart that Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten? That he is your personal Savior?
- 36:06 I remember an example that President Hinckley used a while back, when a young man from Far East had come to the states in America and through his educational program had bumped into some LDS good missionaries. And he joined the church while he was here in his graduate work.
- 36:24 And he was about to leave and go back to one of the countries there in the Far East, and he had a conversation. President Hinckley intercepted him and said, "Now when you go back, you're going to be shunned by your family for joining this church. And you're going to probably lose your job and you'll be an outcast and all these things. Is it really worth it to you to go back as a member of the church?"
- 36:50 And then the young Asian fellow looked up as President Hinckley related the experience with a tear in his eyes, and he looked at him and said, "It's true, isn't it? It's true."
- 37:04 And President Hinckley was a little embarrassed for raising the question. He agreed. He said, "Yes, it is true." And you can just feel the witness of the Savior burning in that young convert's heart when he said, "It's true, isn't it? He is the Christ."
- 37:17 To that I leave my witness too, that I have felt that same spirit come over me as I have studied the Savior's life. And particularly the triumphal entry in these last few days. He's true. I pray that we could be true to our witness, and I say that in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.
- John Bytheway: 37:37 Dr. Wilson, I think something you've really taught us today, Keith, is how this question, first of all, of who is this? What child is this? Who is this? But now it's becoming, okay, he's the Messiah. What kind of messiah is he?
- 37:53 Maybe that's another question he's trying to help them understand. Is it from sin and death? Is it from the Romans? And it seems like even up until the very end, Peter thinks, all

right, let's get out my sword. And we're going to do this deliver Israel thing. And even then, nope, not that kind of Messiah. Put up your sword.

- 38:14 Is that another question that he's helping to answer here?
- Dr. Keith Wilson: 38:18 Yeah, very much so. He's working on that issue. I love the way you introduced it before about [inaudible 00:38:25]. Does that mean are they just part of a circus coming into town? And it very much is that messianic thing, and then he goes into the temple right there and substantiates it by healing the lame. And it's just phenomenal the way he announces it.
- 38:41 Now, another thing we didn't mention is you've got this notion of the Messianic secret that he's keeping close to his vest, his pronunciations of being the son of God and being a divine being and things. You've got that held pretty tightly during his ministry. He always speaks in third person. He makes veiled references in the synagogue. He says, "This day is this word fulfilled in your ears."
- 39:08 They know what he's saying and they erupt there, but he doesn't say, "I am the Christ."
- 39:14 He does in private, but he doesn't in public. With the woman taken in adultery, the woman at the well, I that speak unto thee am he. So you've got this idea of the Messianic secret, he's not telling it to everybody right up front. Partially I think because he would've been arrested right then and there and cut his ministry short.
- 39:31 But now at the triumphal entry, he's becoming much more open and declarative right here at the last few days of his life.
- John Bytheway: 39:40 It always amazes me that those who are so concerned about particulars of the law of Moses would be okay though with the plot to kill somebody. And maybe it's because of blasphemy, but you brought up Lazarus today. Well, as soon as Lazarus starts walking around, say, let's kill him too.
- 40:00 Well, Lazarus wasn't guilty of any blasphemy, and Jesus deliberately let him stay in the grave for four days so that there was no denying. And how do they justify the thou shalt not kill? That's one of the biggies. It just always amazes me.
- 40:16 But I think as you pointed out, Hey, he's disrupting things. We're going to lose our station here. People are supposed to look to

us, and there they were up on the Mount of Transfiguration where scribes and Pharisees all think that Jerusalem's where everything's at. But boy, up there, at the Mount of Transfiguration, there's Moses in person up there, there's Elijah, there's Jesus. And Peter's going, "It's good for us to be here."

40:43 It's amazing. That's where stuff was happening, not back in Jerusalem.

Hank Smith: 40:47 Exactly.

40:49 Keith, Dr. Wilson, this has been just a treat for John and I to have you with us. I think our listeners would be interested in your journey, decades as a religion professor and a faithful member of the church. What's that journey been like for you?

Dr. Keith Wilson: 41:03 Thanks for asking, Hank. That question is one that I've carried along in my own life through 42 years of teaching, and then preparation before that. But I think I've come to realize in life that faith is a choice, and you can find evidence for truth in your life for whichever perspective you want to take.

41:29 Elder Holland referred to the Book of Mormon, and a witness of the Book of Mormon is the greatness of the evidences. That's because you're looking for the evidences to corroborate that faith, and I believe that God has intended it that way. He doesn't want to force any of us to believe. But when you believe and try to apply and live, then you shall know. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine. And it's not reversed.

41:59 And so it's almost like in life you have to make a decision as to whether or not you want to accept the Lord in your life and you want to accept the Restoration. And then you will find if you continue to honor that desire, you'll find all kinds of corroborating evidences, both internal and external.

42:22 They'll be there. I think intellectually you can argue the Book of Mormon just with a clear cut case of being something that the hand of God has been over. There's just scads of internal and external evidences, but to a person that doesn't want to believe in the Book of Mormon, has been taught that, oh, this is just some phony thing, 19th century document, they'll find evidence and they'll believe that that evidence shows to them that Joseph was a fraud, and that Mormons have been duped into believing this quirky Bible copy of their own.

42:58 And yet those of us that delve into that, those of us that delve into the life of Christ, feel his power changing us. You know that it's a very real truth, and that's part of the challenge is you sometimes ache for those that don't want to know what you've experienced and that you know is true.

43:17 For me as a "scholar", I'm not really a scholar. I'm just somebody that loves the gospel of Jesus Christ. And wants to study it and keep it fresh in my life. But for me, there's no question, because I keep receiving evidences that this is God's path and that he is in my life, flawed individual that I am. But he is in my life through this great restoration.

43:43 I love it.

Hank Smith: 43:44 You spoke earlier about the tender mercies of the Lord. Those are great evidences.

Dr. Keith Wilson: 43:49 They're always subtle there. God's not going to force any one of us to believe. It's all about us having agency and choosing a path of faith.

Hank Smith: 43:58 Well said. Thank you, Keith.

44:00 John, what a great day we've had today studying these chapters and these events leading our way up to the amazing resurrection of Jesus.

John Bytheway: 44:09 Some great questions to remind ourselves, who is this? Because we believe who he is, oh man, what a triumphal entry we want to prepare too when he comes again.

Hank Smith: 44:20 Who is this and what think ye of Christ? Fantastic questions. We want to thank Dr. Keith Wilson for being with us today, and want to wish him the best of luck down in Peru on his mission.

44:32 We want to thank our executive producer, the amazing Shannon Sorensen. We want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our founder, Steve Sorensen.

44:43 We hope you'll all join us next week. We have more New Testament to talk about coming up on followHIM.

44:50 Today's transcripts, show notes, and additional references are available on our website. Followhim.co, followhim.co. And you

can watch the podcast on YouTube with additional videos on Facebook and Instagram.

45:02 All of this is absolutely free, so be sure to share with your family and friends. To reach those who are searching for help with their Come Follow Me study, please subscribe, rate, review, or comment on the podcast, which makes the podcast easier to find.

45:15 Thank you.

45:17 We want to thank our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Nielsen, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, and Ariel Quadra. We also love hearing from you, our listeners.

Speaker 4: 45:29 The Come Follow Me curriculum has made a huge difference in my life. I have one, just been able to grow my relationship with the Savior tremendously, and I'm so grateful for that. But also grown my relationship with other people, like sitting down with my family and friends and discussing what I have learned and what they have learned throughout the week has changed so many things in my life. And I'm so grateful for that, and I'm also grateful that I have been able to learn how to better receive personal revelation.

WHO IS ZACCHAEUS?



Hank Smith:	00:04	Hello my friends. Welcome to another FollowHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with the incredible John Bytheway. Welcome John.
John Bytheway:	00:10	Thanks, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:12	We are answering a question from this week's lesson, John, and the question this week is: Who is the guy that climbs the tree to see Jesus? Where would I even find this story?
John Bytheway:	00:22	Zacchaeus is in Luke chapter 19. So why did he have to climb a tree?
Hank Smith:	00:28	He's got a bit of a height problem. It says, "He couldn't see Jesus, who he was because of the crowd." This is verse 3 of Luke 19, "because he was little of stature."
	00:39	I picture Zacchaeus jumping up behind the crowd trying to see Jesus, and he just can't get up that high. So he looks in front of him, sees where Jesus is going, and he sees there's a tree up that way. So he climbs the sycamore tree to see him.
John Bytheway:	00:52	You know what I love about this story is that Jesus says in verse 5, "Zacchaeus, make haste come down; for today I must abide at thy house." When it introduces Zacchaeus in Luke 19:2, it says, "He was chief among publicans and he was rich." He just finished saying in Luke 18 that "it's easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And they said, 'Well, who then can be saved?' Then Jesus said, 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.'" And the very next chapter is this Zacchaeus who is rich. But Jesus says, "Come on. I'm going to eat at your house."
Hank Smith:	01:31	I don't think they've ever met, but still Jesus knows his name. "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down." It says, "Zacchaeus made haste and came down." I think he fell. He's probably so shocked that Jesus knows who he is. And it says, "He received him joyfully." Everyone says, "Oh, how could you go to that

man's house? He is a sinner." And Zacchaeus says, "I give half my goods to the poor. If I've ever taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Right? "If someone says, 'Zacchaeus, you ripped me off,' I go above and beyond to pay them back." And Jesus says, "This is also a son of Abraham. He is of the house of Israel. This is a good guy."

- John Bytheway: 02:10 And some people thought that if you took the job of a publican, you'd kind of forfeited your house of Israel status. And so it's important that Jesus says, "No. He is also a son of Abraham."
- 02:21 So I like it. There's people that could be little of stature in lots of different ways, the people that don't get seen that are kind of on the sides or in the back and Jesus sees them. So I like this story.
- Hank Smith: 02:34 Yeah. Be careful on judging others. This man is a sinner and the Lord says, "No. He is a son of Abraham." That's beautiful.
- 02:44 We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called FollowHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts. We're with Dr. Keith Wilson this week. You're going to love what he has to say about the lesson. So come join us there. And then join us, sit back here for another, FollowHIM Favorites.