

Caesarea Philippi
Public Faith
(Matt. 16:13-20)

~ BACKGROUND ~

GOING BACK TO THE DAYS OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL...

- This place was known for **Baal worship**.

IN FACT... UNDER KING JEROBOAM...

- He set up a **golden calf** in Tel Dan – not far from here.

During the Hellenistic period under the Greeks...

- Spanning from Alexander the Great in (332 BC)...
 - Until Cleopatra's death in (30 BC).
- This place **became** associated with the **Greek god Pan**...
 - (A half-man / half-goat)... and **Zeus**.

IN OTHER WORDS...

People considered this place spiritually significant!

- Worshippers (worldwide) gathered here...
 - Because it was associated with the boundary between earth...
 - And the underworld – known as Hades.

OK... SPRING AHEAD...

- To the time of Jesus who was here during the Roman Rule.
 - [Span of Roman Rule = (63BC – 313AD)].

DURING THAT TIME...

- This place became known as Caesarea Philipp.
 - (Which is what you see in your Bible today).

~ TEACHING ~

NOW OUR STORY PICKS UP IN...

- (Matt. 16:13-20) NLT

OVER IN (Luke 9:18-20)...

- He tells us Jesus left the crowds in Galilee
 - AND took his disciples on a field trip...

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- To teach them a spiritual lesson.

AS THEY APPROACHED...

- The villages in THIS area... [c.p. (Mark 8:27-29) NLT]
 - Jesus asked the disciples two questions:

1) *Who do men say I am?*

2) *Who do you say I am?*

PETER ANSWERED (v.16)...

- You're the Messiah!

THEN JESUS GIVES AN OBJECT LESSON...

(Matt. 16:18) NLT

"Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means rock) and upon this rock I will build my church and all the powers of hell [the gates of hades] will not conquer it."

CAPTURE THE SIGNIFICANCE...

- In the ancient world "gates" were for defensive purposes...
 - To keep an enemy out.

JESUS WAS SAYING...

- That the church was to be on the offense (taking ground)...
 - WITH the Gospel message AND all the powers of Hades...
 - (The underworld of death)...
 - Is NOT able to stop it!

HERE'S THE POINT... DON'T MISS IT...

- We win!!!!

CHURCH...

- In a world filled with competing beliefs...
 - Christ offers hope to those who are misguided & dying.

AND...

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- Against the backdrop of darkness...
 - Our belief in Jesus... stands out as a bright light!
 - Jesus told us we are Salt & Light.

~ IN CLOSING ~

As Christians we spread the message of Christ within our culture!

BECAUSE...

- *“The gates of Hades... [can] NOT overcome His church”* (Matt 16:18).

AMEN!

SIDE NOTE:

- Around (1,000 AD) an earthquake collapsed part of the temple...
 - And the water now flow below the cave.