



Caesarea Philippi Fact Sheet

Location: In Golan at the base of Mt Hermon, 25 mi north of the Sea of Galilee.



Meaning of Name: also known as Baniash/Panias (after Greek god Pan), Baal-gad (Lord of a troop; Lord of prosperity); Baal-hermon; named after Philip the tetrarch of Iturea, Herod the Great's son

Bible References: 7x

- *Josh 11:17* – Baalgad conquered by Joshua
- *Matt 16:13-28/Mark 8:27-38* – Jesus & His disciples visit Caesarea Philippi area

Israeli History: Originally, this area was under Canaanite rule and inhabited by Phoenicians and Zidonians. They named the area after the god Baal, a sun god. Israel, led by Joshua, conquered this area, which bordered the tribal territories of Manasseh and Naphtali. During the Hellenistic period, the area was renamed after Pan, the Greek god of the wild and hunting. When the Roman empire seized Palestine, Herod the Great had a temple constructed in the area that was dedicated to Caesar Augustus. After his



death, his son, Philip the tetrarch of Ituraea (*Luke 3:1*), established Caesarea Philippi in 3 BC as one of the capitals of his province.

Archaeology: The main archaeological evidence remaining in the area paints a wonderful backdrop of the conversation Jesus had with His disciples, as recording in *Matt 16* and *Mark 8*. Philip (of whom Caesarea Philippi was named after) minted coins with his likeness on one side and the temple his father



Philip's coin depicting the Augusteum

Herod the Great constructed for Caesar Augustus (called an Augsteum). The site of this temple was originally thought to be either the temple of Pan found at Banias, or Netzer's Palace about 100 meters west of the Pan complex. Both locations do not appear to match the construction of the Augusteum found on Philip's coins.



Temple remains at Omrit

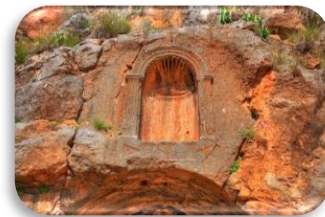
A third possibility was located in 1999 in Omrit, less than 3 mi southwest of Banias. It would have been along the road from Bethsaida to the Caesarea Philippi area, and more closely matches the description of the Augusteum on Philip's

coin. *Mark 8* indicates that Jesus asked His disciples "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" *by the way* to Caesarea Philippi; perhaps He was passing by this shrine to the son of Julius Caesar, whom the Romans considered to be a god, when Peter declared "thou art the Christ, the son of the living God" (*Matt 16:16*)!



Cave of Pan

The Temple of Pan is an interesting site in and of itself. Sacrifices to Pan were thrown into the cave, who was believed to live in the cave. A spring that once was very deep is found in the cave as well. Several niches etched into the rock of the cliff face remain. The Temple of Zeus stood prominently to the right of the cave and niches, as evidenced by the columns and stone foundations. Included in the complex was the court of Nemesis (goddess of justice and vengeance) and the tomb of the sacred goats.



Niche in courtyard of Pan



Life of Christ: Jesus and His disciples visited the “coasts” (*Matt 16:13*) and “towns” (*Mark 8:7*) of Caesarea Philippi, making the location a region or province more than a specific town. Six days later after this momentous occasion, Jesus took Peter, James and John into a high mountain (likely Mt Hermon), and was transfigured before them (*Mark 9:2*).

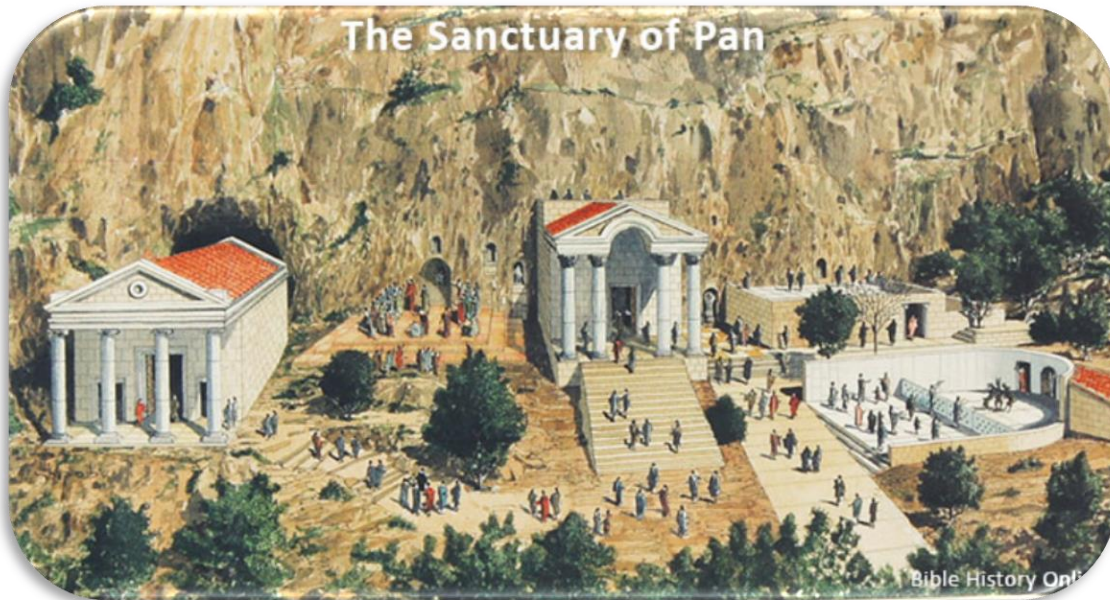
Israel Geography: One of the major sources of the Jordan River is the Banias spring; a beautiful waterfall is found in the area. It is a lush place watered not only by the springs, but by the rainfall coming from nearby Mt Hermon.



Banias Waterfall



Bees making hive on face of a rock along Banias stream



Consider This:

- Jesus took His disciples to a stronghold of paganism and idolatry to:
 - Ask them “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” (*Matt 16:13*)
 - Declare His church’s power against the gates of hell (*Matt 16:18*)
 - Point out how easily Satan can influence even the strongest disciple (*Matt 16:23*)
- The Son of God took His disciples to the place originally named after a sun god (Baal) to declare His divinity
- *Baal* in Hebrew means “husband”; it was at a place originally named for Baal where Jesus the Bridegroom first mentions His bride, the church.
- Pan is depicted as a half-man, half-goat, cementing the satanic legacy of the area & further illustrating the power of Christ’s declaration at this “seat of Satan”.



Greek god Pan