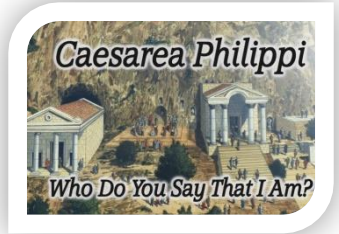


Luke 9:18-22 The Turning Point



A. At Caesarea Philippi

1. *Caesarea Philippi* is at the foot of the snow-capped mountain of Mt Hermon. Mt Hermon is the tallest mountain in Israel.
2. At the bottom of Mt Hermon there is a steep cliff. It almost looks like someone cut the mountain in half with a knife. There is an arched cave there, and in Jesus' days a river was flowing out of that cave, which then became the river Jordan. As the snow melted and seeped through the porous rock, it flowed out of the cliff through the cave. So spectacular and unusual was the sight that it became a place of pagan worship. Even today we can see statues and idols there.
3. The Greek god 'Pan', half man and half animal, whom the Greeks believed to be the son of Zeus was shrined there. So the place is still called '*Panias*' or '*Banias*' today. In Jesus' days it was called '*Caesarea Philippi*', meaning 'Philip is Lord'. (Philip was one of the Tetrarchs, a "quarter king" over one quarter of the land.)

B. Who do you say that that I am?

1. It is here that Jesus asks His disciples, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" (v.18)

The disciples answered, John the Baptist, Elijah etc (v19). John was the greatest messenger given to Israel in those days. He was a powerfully anointed as a preacher and prophet. Elijah was the prophet of all prophets and a mighty miracle worker. He even raised the dead. The crowds believed the greatest of their prophets and miracle workers have returned or even reincarnated in Jesus, maybe all rolled into one!

2. But Jesus didn't care about what others said about Him. The answer to His next question, "But who do you say that I am?" was what Jesus really wanted to hear from His disciples. Jesus waited 2 ½ years to ask this question.

Peter answered, "The Christ of God." (v20) Matthew records Peter's answer in greater detail, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. (C.f. Matt 16:16)

In essence, Peter was saying, "Yes, You lived and existed long before us, but not as one of the prophets. You were with God in heaven and came from God, because You are the Son of God."

3. Then Jesus said one of the most amazing things in the Bible.

"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matt 16:17-19)

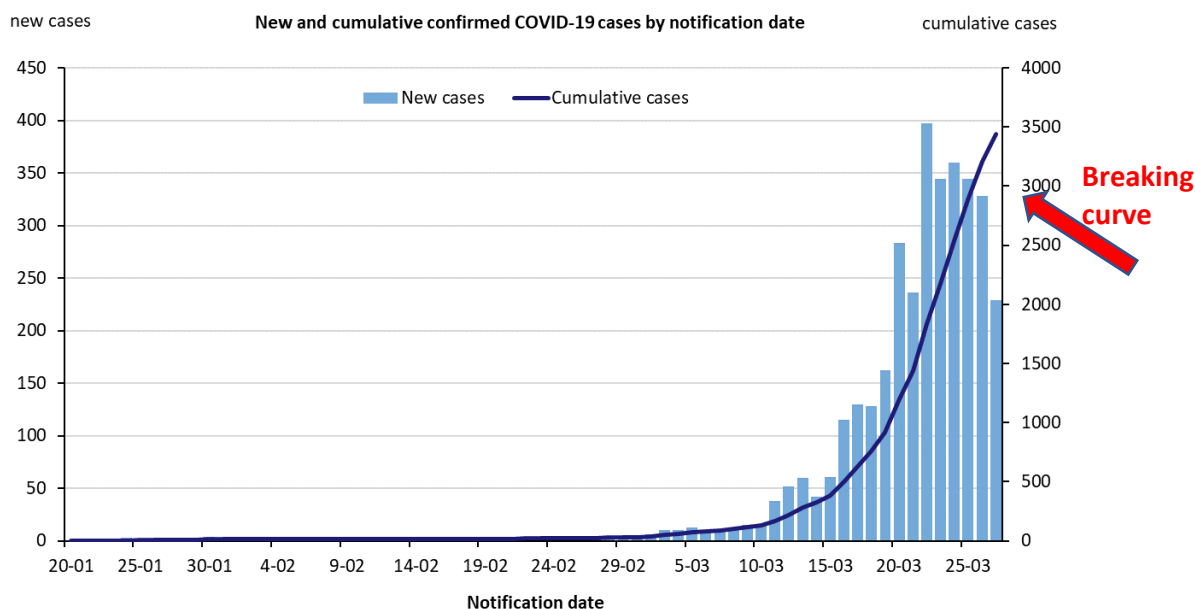
- Bar-Jonah means 'son of dove', one who is open to the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The revelation of Jesus Christ is the most holy revelation we can receive as human beings. Mankind's eternal salvation depends on it. But there is only one source from which we can receive this revelation. It does not come from man. It doesn't depend on what others say. We must receive this revelation directly from the heavenly Father through His Holy Spirit, the heavenly dove.
- There is a play of words here. Simon means 'reed'. Peter means 'rock'. The revelation of Jesus Christ will transform us from a 'reed' shaken by the wind of fear, to a solid 'rock' immovable to all challenges of life, including covid-19.
- Upon this revelation Jesus Christ will build His church on earth until His return. His church has received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to open heaven's door and shut hell's gates. The gates of hell will not prevail against the Church of the Living God.

This confession is the turning point in Luke's gospel ! This revelation is also turning point in our lives, and also for Australia!

Here for the first time, Jesus mentions His death and resurrection that is yet to come (v22). It is Jesus' death and resurrection that gives the church heaven's authority.

C. Praying in the Midst of Covid-19

1. The opinion of the world about Jesus is inconsequential. The only people on earth who has right to exercise the authority of heaven, are those who have the revelation of who Jesus truly is. And that is the Church of Jesus Christ.
2. Call to prayer – March and April are critical. Last Friday night I believe I have heard the Lord say, ‘Pray and break the curve with the authority of Jesus.’ I am grateful for the dynamic prayer last Wednesday and Friday nights. We can just see the curve in Australia breaking this week, and the fatality rate is very low compared to the rest of the world - 0.4%. It is too early to rejoice, but we can be encouraged.



3. Do you know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and He came and died for you?

If you haven't received Jesus into your heart yet, do make Him your Saviour and Lord today!

"Dear God, I know I'm a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe that He died for my sin and that you raised Him to life. I want to trust Him as my Saviour and follow Him as Lord, from this day forward. Guide my life and help me to do your will. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen."

Contact us on www.gloryi.org if you like to know more about Jesus, or you have made the decision to follow Jesus today.

D. Closing Words

- Stay home and stay safe, and let's use this time to go deeper into Jesus' presence. Let us have quality time with the Lord and with family. This will pass. Let's stay centred in the Lord.
 - Stay connected with one another and with the church. And let's encourage one another. It's time to pray. Australia needs the church's prayer more than they realise! I urge all of us to join together in prayer.
 - Jesus told us in Matt 24:6-8, "And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows."
- AMP says "See that you are not frightened."
- Let's resist the spirit of fear and stay firm. Let God's authority rest on you. Let God's protection rest on you. Let God's wisdom and peace rest on you. It is not the end of the world. We will overcome. It is church's time to shine. Amen.

***"The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."* (Num 6:24-26)**