

Luke 9:18 Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”

Luke 9:19 And they answered, “John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.”

Luke 9:20 Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

Luke 9:21 And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one,

Luke 9:22 saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

Luke 9:23 And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Luke 9:24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

Luke 9:25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?

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Jesus prayed alone, but His disciples were with Him. It was while He was praying, and His disciples were with Him, that He asked them a question. This may indicate that the question Jesus asked originated from His prayer to the Father. As He prayed, the Father may have spoken to Him to ask His disciples a question that would reveal their level of life, and also reveal who Jesus really was.

In our individual prayer to the Lord, does the Lord speak to us? Does He speak to us concerning the church, concerning the needs of the saints, concerning the raising up of brothers and sisters, concerning how we should shepherd them? Do we pray for the church, or do we only pray for our own needs, for our family, for our health, for our job, our exams etc? The Lord will only speak to us concerning the church if we spend time with Him, and with the brothers and sisters (the disciples). Do we know them? Do we know their needs? Jesus spent time with the Father, and He was with His disciples at the same time. His time with the Father here was not separate from His disciples, but very much related. In the same way, if we are not with the saints in the church life, and we do not know the needs of the saints, our prayers may not be that specific, and the Lord's speaking may not be that specific to us.

Jesus' question to His disciples also challenged their awareness of people's realization of Jesus' identity. Do we know what people think about Jesus? This may help us in our prayers for people, and in our gospel preaching.

CK Jen

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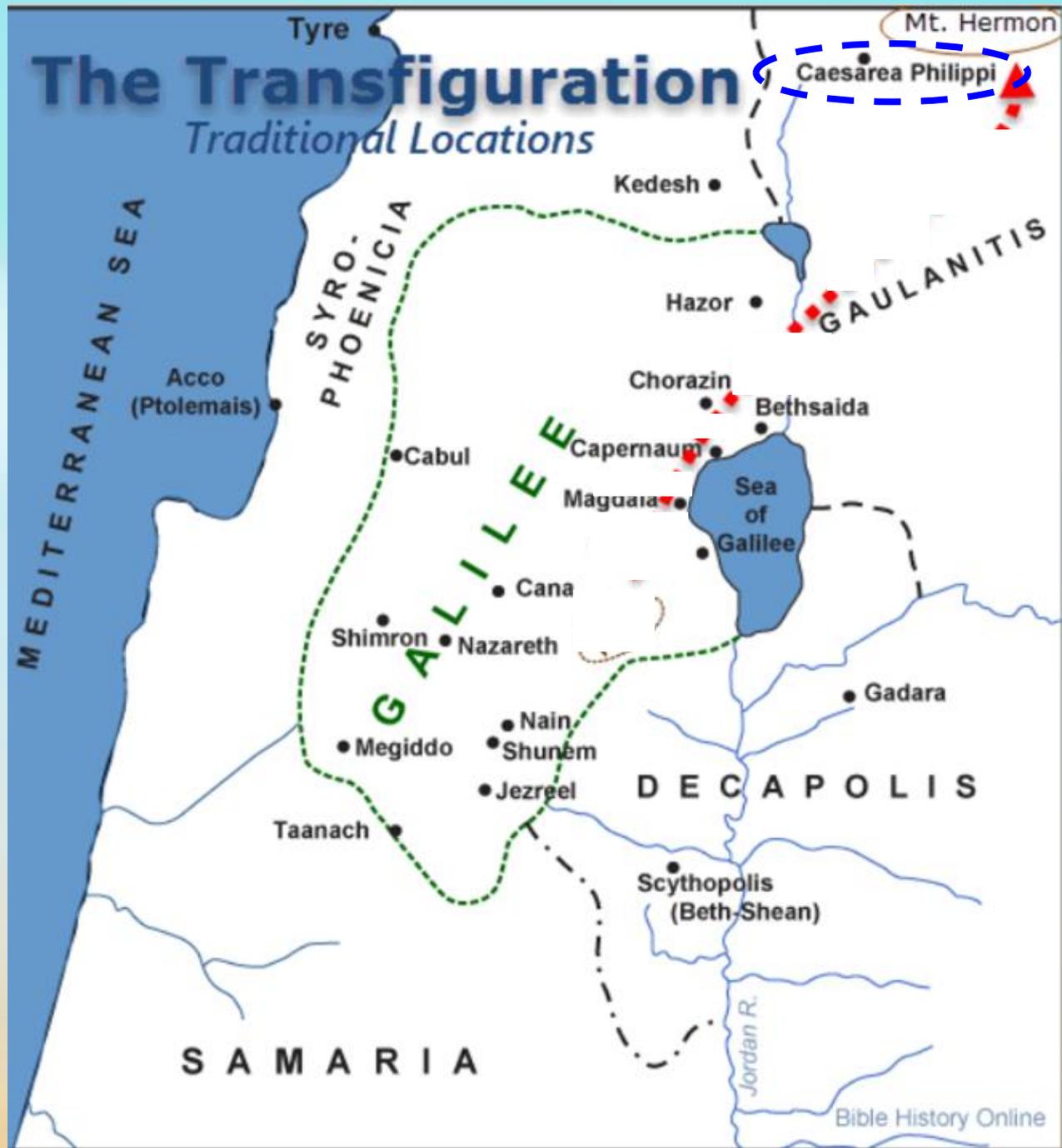
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**The Lord Jesus deliberately led the disciples to travel a long distance from the Sea of Galilee to Caesarea Philippi, away from the Jewish religious crowds and the Gentile idol worshippers, in order to let the disciples know who He was.**

At that time, without a heavenly revelation, the crowds could only know at best that Jesus was the greatest prophet. One must receive the heavenly revelation so that he can know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Praise the Lord, Peter received the revelation from the Father.

**The Lord Jesus did not desire His disciples to be as ignorant as the crowds (however, we need to know that also in order to preach to them properly).** They must know exactly who He is in order to follow His living way of the cross in order to establish the kingdom of God. So **the Lord Jesus directly asked His disciples, “Who do you say I am?”** The objective knowledge of the Lord Jesus (“crowds said”) is not meaningful, but our personal subjective knowledge and experience (“you say”) counts. **In our living, do we really know and experience Who Christ is?**

**Matt 16:16** Simon Peter replied, **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”**



# The Transfiguration

*Traditional Locations*

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Acts 2:36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Why did Jesus command His disciples not tell anyone that He was the Christ? Even though He was the Christ of God, Jesus Himself did not directly declare that fact. It was Peter, through the revelation of God the Father, who declared it. This may suggest that Jesus, the Christ of God, waited until He had suffered, been rejected, crucified and raised before He, through His disciples, would declare to people that He was the Christ (Acts 2:36).

What does this mean to us? Any revelation that we receive must be tested through our experience of the cross. Before we testify to others who Jesus Christ is, has He spoken to us? How fresh is our revelation of Him? Yesterday, last week, last month, or last year? Any testimony we give will give the Lord opportunity to test us through the denying of ourselves. How much are we willing to pursue the Lord, pursue His word, and attach ourselves to brothers and sisters, to have companions, to grow together? The Lord will test us again and again to perfect us. If we say that He is the Christ (the sent or anointed One), the Lord will test us. What about us? Are we sent? Are we sent to our friends, to our colleagues, our students, our neighbors, to preach the gospel to them? Do we respond? Do we live out what we testify? Jesus Himself waited until His death and resurrection before manifesting Himself as the Christ of God.

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“Christ” refers to the one that God prophesied in the Old Testament through all the prophets, and that His saints throughout the ages have counted on, that is, the One who will come to accomplish the will of God. “Christ,” which means God's anointed one, refers to the Lord's mission; the Son of the Living God refers to the second person of the Triune God and refers to the Lord's person. **The Lord's mission is to accomplish God's eternal purpose through His crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and second coming;** His person specifically expresses the Father and ends with the Spirit, so that the Triune God can be fully manifested .

**The reason why “He strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one”** is that If Jesus is now proclaimed as "the Christ ", **it will affect the redemptive mission of the Lord Jesus on the cross. The Lord Jesus would use His death and resurrection according to the Father's will and set time to show that He is the Christ and accomplish the redemptive work for all mankind.**

Because the disciples had the revelation of Christ, Jesus could further reveal the way of the cross to them. **This was the first time that the Lord Jesus announced that He would suffer and this was something Peter couldn't understand. The disciples might not fully understand the meaning of "resurrection in three days." The Lord Jesus explained to them three times (Luke 9:22, 9::44, 18:31-33).** in detail, that **Christ's mission was to go through crucifixion and resurrection.**

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1 Peter 1:9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

To lose our soul life today, in this age, is to deny ourselves, in order that our soul may be saved in the next age. The world is very tempting, with its attractions. It may not be the sinful world, but the psychological world, even the world that offers "good" things such as a good education, a good job, a good family life. Eventually, these "good" things may squeeze out the Lord to the point where we are ashamed of telling others that we are Christians, or praying before a meal in front of others, or ashamed of preaching the gospel. Here, in this context, Jesus does not tell His disciples to "give up" the world, or to leave the world, but rather to testify, to not be ashamed of Him or His words. The Greek word for "words" is logos, referring to the constant and abiding word of God (the Bible), the word that defines who God is and what His purpose is. Are we ashamed of His words (logos)? Or do we come to His word? Do we pursue it desperately? Do we testify it to others at our job, at our school, to our family? This is not a matter of renouncing the world, but announcing to others who Jesus is. To preach the gospel is a real experience of the cross. Many times, we are more ashamed than afraid to preach the gospel. We are ashamed of what others will think of us. May we come to the Lord's word and not be ashamed of His words, but allow His words to speak to us and replace things that are more precious to us than Him.

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To deny the self means that one no longer takes himself as the center of his existence and living. There are two types of crosses: A. the cross of Christ - for our redemption (**1 Pet 2:24**); B. the personal cross of the believer (his cross)-for the crucifixion of himself together with the Lord (**Rom 6:6**). **To follow the Lord daily means to walk with the Lord daily.**

To save the soul life is to allow the soul to enjoy the world. To lose the soul life is to make the soul suffer from the loss of enjoyment of the world. **Those who follow Christ, if they still let their souls enjoy this world, will lose their enjoyment in the coming kingdom age.** If, for Christ's sake, they let their souls lose their enjoyment in this world, their souls will have enjoyment in the coming kingdom age, that is to share the joy of ruling the whole earth with Christ.

**It is really hard to follow the Lord without heavenly revelation. For example, both Moses and Aaron were both born in a family that loved God very much. However, Aaron did not know God and God's principle. It seemed that Aaron only knew God's doings. This parallels Abraham who knew the Lord, and Lot who only knew God's doings.**

**1 Pet 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.** By his wounds you have been healed.

**Rom 6:6** We know that **our old self was crucified with him** in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

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If a person is filled with the world and has no place for the Lord in him, he will not be able to gain the Lord and eternal life. Therefore, we need to exercise to deny the "self" by accepting the cross, so that we can gain the Lord and eternal life.

If a person regards any person, thing, or object on earth as more precious than Christ and the gospel, he will consider the Lord Jesus and His words as shameful. When the Lord Jesus returns in the future, He will also regard that person as shameful. **Therefore we need to exercise to enjoy the Lord and His words together with the saints in the church life.**

“There are some standing here who will not taste death “means that before you die “you will see the kingdom of God“, and it refers to the Lord Jesus who will reign in His kingdom, **which was typified by His transfiguration on the mountain in Luke 9:28-36.**