



**Alone at Last**



## **Drastic Measures**

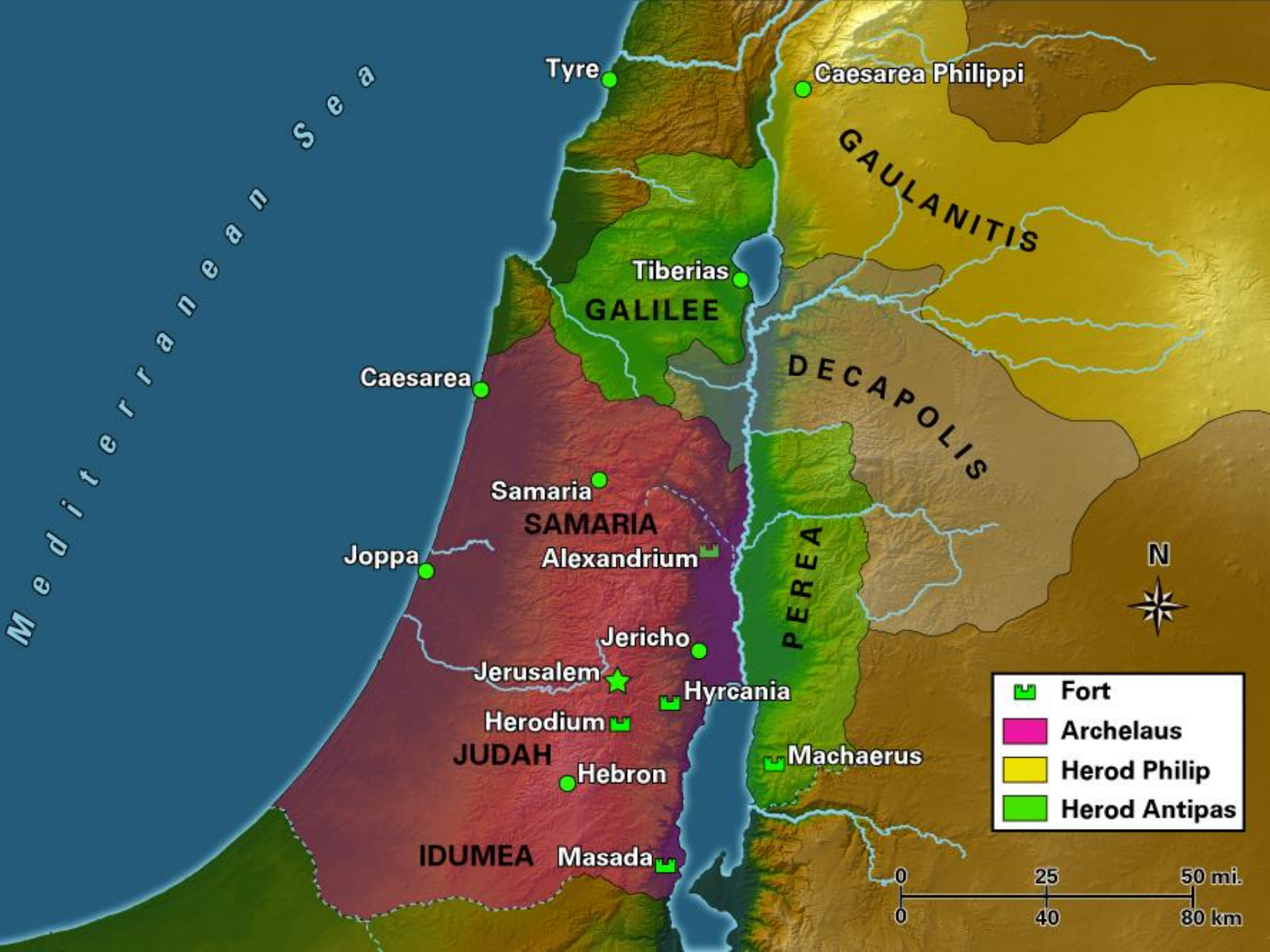
**Having been several times frustrated in His attempt to get alone with His apostles, Jesus decides to take them to the region of Caesarea-Philippi, a very remote place in the foothills of Mt Hermon.**



**Matthew 16:13**

**Now when Jesus  
came into the  
district of Caesarea  
Philippi...**





Mediterranean Sea

Tyre

Caesarea Philippi

GAULANITIS

Tiberias  
GALILEE

Caesarea

DECAPOLIS

Joppa

Samaria  
SAMARIA  
Alexandrium

Jericho

Jerusalem

Hyrcania

Herodium

JUDAH

Hebron

Machaerus

IDUMEA Masada

- Fort
- Archelaus
- Herod Philip
- Herod Antipas

0 25 50 mi.  
0 40 80 km





# Caesarea Philippi / Paniaas



- **Pan: God of Nature, the Wild, Shepherds, Flocks, Goats, of Mountain Wilds, and is often associated with sexuality.**
- **He has the hindquarters, legs, and horns of a goat, in the same manner as a faun or satyr.**
- **Pan is often connected to fertility and the season of spring.**











# Josephus Tells Us:

“And when Caesar had further bestowed upon him another additional country, he built there also a temple of white marble, hard by the fountains of Jordan: the place is called Panium, where is a top of a mountain that is raised to an immense height, and at its side, beneath, or at its bottom, a dark cave opens itself; within which there is a horrible precipice, that descends abruptly to a vast depth: it contains a mighty quantity of water, which is immovable; and when anybody lets down anything to measure the depth of the earth beneath the water, no length of cord is sufficient to reach it. Now the fountains of Jordan rise at the roots of this cavity outwardly; and, as some think, this is the utmost origin of Jordan”







# The Following Event

- Is the “final exam” of the apostles’ undergraduate degree.
- Jesus asks specifically what they believe concerning Him, and Peter – speaking for the 12 – makes his confession of faith.





**Matthew 16:13-20**



# Such an Important Moment

- But the significance of the moment is sometimes lost in the discussion of the conversation that follows.
- Understand that the truth confessed by Peter here is precisely what Jesus has claimed concerning Himself throughout His ministry.
- By the same token, it is a truth not easily or hastily embraced.
- Jesus' delight with the confession is born of the fact that this two-fold truth was so difficult to believe, but the apostles have confessed (11 of them honestly) that they have bowed the knee to those claims.



# Oft-Debated Points

1. “flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven”
2. “upon this rock I will build My church”
3. The concept of “My church”
4. “keys of the kingdom of heaven”
5. The command in v. 20: “Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.”





**Matthew 16:21-27**



## Understand:

- The text is explicit that Jesus had not spoken of dying before this (Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31).
- Notice as well that when Jesus did begin to speak of His death, His apostles were scandalized.



# Recorded in all 3 Synoptics

**Matthew 16:28** – “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

**Mark 9:1** – “And Jesus was saying to them, ‘Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.’”

**Luke 9:27** – “But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.”



# What Follows in All 3 Synoptics?





# Imperative to Understand

- This remarkable event must be understood against the backdrop of Matthew 16:13-28.
- In short, Jesus' prophecy of His own death so staggered the apostles – it was so foreign and so offensive to them – that they began to doubt Jesus' messianic identity.
- The transfiguration was a gracious and spectacular strategy to reinforce the staggering faith of three of those apostles.



**A Common Question:**

**Where Did This  
Event Occur?**





**Tradition says: Mount Tabor**







# Why Tabor?

**Matthew 17:1 (KJV)** – “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into **an high mountain apart**”







# Some Facts about Mt. Tabor

- Mentioned for the first time in Joshua 19:22; the mountain's importance stems from its strategic control of the junction of the Galilee's north-south route with the east-west highway of the Jezreel Valley.
- In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple period, Mt. Tabor was one of the mountain peaks on which it was the custom to light beacons in order to inform the northern villages of Jewish holy days and of the beginning of new months.



# Josephus Tells Us:

- “**he built walls in** proper places about Jotapata...and what they call **Mount Tabor**” (*The Jewish War*, 2:20:6)
- “Mount Tabor, a place that lies in the middle between the great plain and Scythopolis...its top is a plain of twenty-six furlongs, and **all encompassed with a wall**” (*The Jewish War*, 4:1:8)



So, Where Did It Happen?





# Map 29





# A Correct Understanding of:

Matthew 17:1 (KJV) –

“And after six days Jesus taketh  
Peter, James, and John his  
brother, and bringeth **them** up  
into an **high mountain**  
**apart**”





**Matthew 17:1-8**



# What is the Transfiguration?

- The Greek word that Matthew used is *metamorphoo* meaning “to transform or change in form.”
- It was not just His appearance that changed, but His essential form became different.
- This vision of Jesus would have strengthened the disciples’ faith that He was the Messiah, and it would also have helped them understand that the sufferings He said He would experience would not be final (16:21). They would see Him glorified “coming in His kingdom” (16:28).



## **A Few Questions:**

**What two OT figures  
appear with Jesus?**

**Why those two?**

**What are they talking with  
Him about?**



## **Another Question:**

**When Peter sees  
Jesus transfigured, he  
offers to build 3  
booths.**

**Why?**







## **Matthew 17:5**

**While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”**

**Of what scenes from Scripture is this one reminiscent?**



**And Another:**

**Given the rebuke spoken  
from heaven against  
Peter's suggestion, how  
do you understand what  
Peter was thinking in  
making the offer?**



**And Two More:**

**Why do you think Jesus took only Peter, James & John to this event?**

**Why do you think Jesus commanded those three not to tell anyone of what they had seen until after the resurrection?**



# The Essential Significance

- Of the Transfiguration:

Jesus allowed the inner three disciples to become eyewitnesses for a brief moment to the physical glory which will belong to Jesus when He reigns as Messiah upon the earth.



**Turn Over to**

**2 Peter 1:16-21**



# The Two-fold Purpose

- Of the Transfiguration:

1. To encourage Jesus as He faced the cross.
2. To fortify the staggering faith of the disciples in the Messiahship of Jesus—faith which was staggering because of Jesus' recent announcement that He was going to die!



# Parallels?

