

"Who do you say Jesus is?"

Mark 8:27-30 NIV

"Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, 'Who do people say I am?'

²⁸ They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.'

²⁹ 'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah.'

³⁰ Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him."

In his Gospel, Mark used the Greek word for *immediately* 17 times.

He wrote the briefest of the four Gospels.

In my Nestles Greek text,

Luke is 91 pages long,

Matthew's 83 pages,

John's 66 pages,

Mark's, only 53.

Mark emphasized Jesus' miraculous power.

Action and clout impressed Roman citizens.

That's why many scholars think Mark wrote this gospel especially for the Roman people.

Mark told of Jesus healing blind, deaf and uncontrollable, demon-possessed folks.

He related how Jesus fed thousands of people from just a school boy's sack lunch.

Mark includes an intriguing incident when Jesus' enemies came to arrest him in Gethsemane.

Recall that Jesus took the disciples with him to the garden, where he went to pray for strength.

Jesus knew that Judas would bring the high priests' thugs and armed guards to arrest him.

After betraying Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, Judas himself would identify Jesus. When the group arrived to take custody, Peter pulled his sword and swung it.

Intending to separate the guy's head from his body, Peter severed only the man's ear.

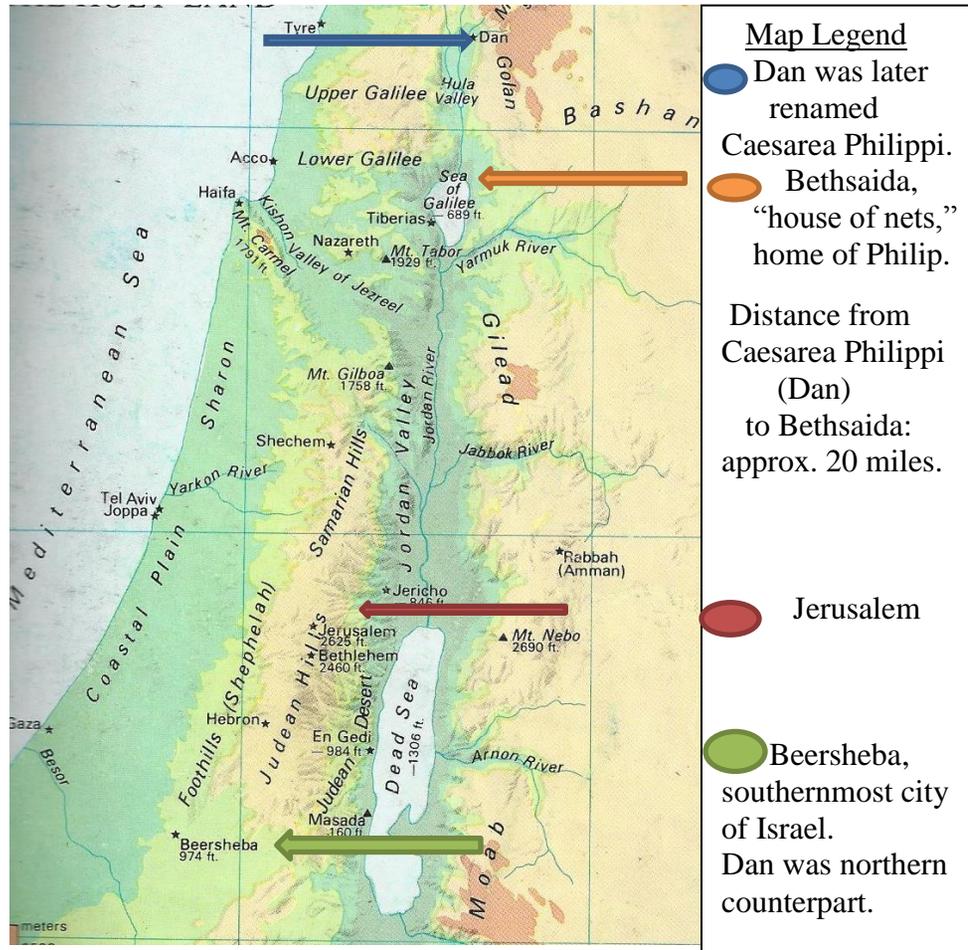
Mark's Gospel says this: "A young man was following Him (Jesus), wearing *nothing but* a linen sheet over *his* naked *body*; and they seized him. But he pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked."¹

Many scholars think Mark referred to himself here.

If this is true, Mark was certainly in a hurry that night, wasn't he?

¹ Mark 14:51, 52 NASB

Let's get to the incident our Mark text reports.



Caesarea Philippi Photo by Bob 1980

Most Christians treasure John 3:16.

It's the most quoted Bible verse of all:

Some call John 3:16 the Golden Text.

In difficult times, we go to this Scripture.

We cherish its emphasis on God's love.

May I share a few secrets about John 3:16?

How many people know that John 3:16 is part of Jesus' conversation with a man who called on him late one night?

The guy likely came covertly because he didn't want it known that he consulted Jesus.

This map shows where Jesus and the disciples were; near Caesarea Philippi (Dan).

Jesus asked the Twelve:

"Who do people say I am?"

Have you seriously asked yourself that question?

Embarrassing for a high-ranking religious leader of his stature to consult a hillbilly flash-in the pan like Jesus of Nazareth.

Mix a little Catholic religion with Judaism, you'd call him a Jewish archbishop or Cardinal.

That's why this fellow named Nicodemus made his afterhours visit.

Nick heard Jesus performed some one-of-a-kind miracles and he wanted to know more.

Recall the emphasis on miraculous power?

Yet when this Jewish archbishop-Cardinal came, Jesus spent little time talking about miracles. Jesus went directly to vital life-issues.

Life compares to driving down a road one day and all is well.

Life is good.

We smell the flowers, enjoy warm breezes, and chat "the latest" with our loved ones.

Suddenly we're on an unknown road.

A frightening cul-de-sac.

Separated from our loved ones.

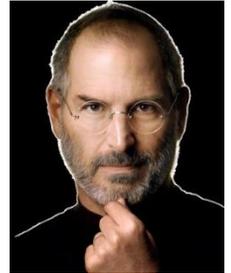
Remember Steve Jobs, co-founder of the company that made the iPhones many of you carry?

Some think that his IQ exceeded Einstein's. A fellow named Liam Loasby posted some of Steve Jobs' last words on Facebook.



Perhaps you've seen or heard some of them, e.g.:

"At this moment, lying on the sick bed and recalling my whole life, I realize that all the recognition and wealth



that I took so much pride in, have paled and become meaningless in the face of impending death. . ."

"Non-stop pursuing of wealth will only turn a person into a twisted being, just like me. God gave us the senses to let us feel the love in everyone's heart, not the illusions brought about by wealth.

The wealth I have won in my life I cannot bring with me. . ."

"Material things lost can be found. But there is one thing that can never be found when it is lost - "Life".

This brilliant man seemed to acknowledge God's existence.

Yet Jobs apparently never saw that all levels of life come from God and that God holds us accountable.

Did Jobs never hear Jesus’ Mark 8:36 question:

“What does it profit a person to gain the whole world, but lose his/her soul?”

At the last, Jobs saw the need for family and family’s love, but he never included God in his life plans—the God who alone controls life.

Let’s go back to what Jesus said to his late night visitor: “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son . . .”

Jesus told Nicodemus about God loving the world, yet consider the rest of John 3:16.

God gave his only begotten son.

The two words “only begotten” translate one Greek word *monogenas*.

You know the term mono (one).

Many preachers talk in a mono tone voice and they bore you to snores. Right?

Our terms *genetics-genes* come from the *genas* in *monogenas*.

This term *monogenas* appears in John 1: 16 & 18.

16: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth . . .” **18:** “No one has ever seen God,

but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.”

A *monogenas* person is one-of-a-kind person.

To put it biologically, we all came from a human female egg impregnated by male sperm.

Because the Holy Spirit impregnated Mary, Jesus came from God as no other person ever has or will.

God so loved the world that he gave of himself—his humanly *monogenas* Son.

We like the idea of eternal, but it’s not automatic. John 3:16 say that we obtain eternal life by believing in Christ, the “*only begotten*” son of God.

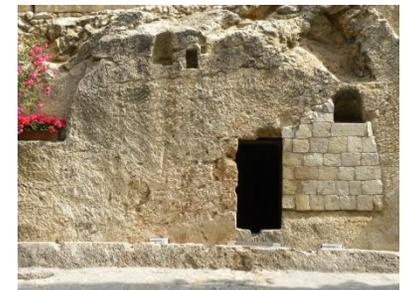
Jesus came from God and humanly embodied the fullness of God.

People envied-crucified-killed him but Jesus came back from death by God’s power.

He returned to God and is fully God.

Unlike Buddha, Mohammed, and other famous teachers whose graves you can visit, Jesus grave is different.

Two different sites in Jerusalem have been presented as possible sites for Jesus’ burial.



I’ve been inside both tombs.

Both are empty.

An Arab brother took me to see one of them and took my picture.

One more phrase in John 3:16 make this verse very personal: “*whoever believes will not perish, but have everlasting life.*”

The two words *whoever & believes* are only one Greek word also.

Some Greek verbs have participles, which are active nouns—a person, place, or thing that is doing something.

In short, participles tell what the participant does.

Ball games have participants and there are watchers or fans.

The participle translated “*whoever believes*” refers to someone who believes and keeps acting on that belief.

Many people say “I believe in Jesus,” but do they act and live as if they believe in Jesus the only begotten Son of God?

Is he the Lord of lords and king of their lives?

If he is your Lord and manager, how many of your attitudes, actions, and words last week demonstrate your belief in Jesus?

Recall Jesus question in Luke 6:46?

“Why do you keep calling me ‘Lord, Lord!’ when you don’t do what I say?”

If Jesus really is Lord and God, it’s vital to know what he expects of us.

He created us and gave us life.

He came here to show us how to live and to honor him and the Father.

He will return to judge each of us.

Jesus set the standards.

Not some union boss or politician.

Not some professor or scientist or billionaire. All of them will eventually return to this globe’s dirt.

We have four Gospels to tell us about Jesus and the actions he wants us to take.

Jesus chose twelve Apostles to fill in the details. We keep listening to the world and getting more frustrated, anxious and angry.

We should listen to and be active for Jesus.

What specifics?

- **Love our enemies.**
- **Use our gifts to serve Jesus.**
- **Help the poor, the needy and the hungry.**

- **Tell others of Jesus' forgiveness, his resurrection power, and his return to fairly judge all people.**
- **Openly glorify God through Christ.**

Two things no one knows.

1. One is when Jesus will return to judge us.
2. No one knows the day of his/her death.

One Saturday night a few years ago, in the middle of the night, a tornado struck an area of Northern Kentucky and Southern Indiana.

The storm ripped through a mobile home park. **At least twenty-two persons died.**



All probably had plans for Sunday.

Maybe some were going to church.

Others wanted to sleep in and have brunch.

Some likely had their hearts set on watching an NFL game.

But Saturday night was their last night'

We don't know the day or the hour of death.

We also don't know the day or hour of Jesus' return to judge us.

But both will occur:

We will all stand before God's judgment seat to account for what we did here.

Do you know Jesus?

He is the one to whom all presidents, kings, senators, billionaires, working people, those on welfare, and all criminals will answer to Jesus for their thoughts and actions.

Jesus began all life on this planet and he will give life anew that is everlasting to those who believe him, love him, and obey him.

I pray that you have accepted him as your savior, but also made him your Lord.

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