

1. Roman Imperial Cult Review:

- Imperial Cult – the state-sanctioned worship of Caesar Augustus (Octavian) as divine.
- Titles for Augustus and subsequent Caesars:
 - Son of God
 - Divine
 - Savior
 - Birth was “good news” for the world
 - Had an Advent/*Parousia* – an arrival or return
- Inscription on Athena Temple in Priene:

“The people have erected (this temple) for Athena Polias and
The divine Emperor Caesar Augustus, son of god.”¹

- Accusations toward Paul at Thessalonica – [Acts 17:6-7](#)

2. Temples to Augustus in Israel:

- Augustus reigned from 27 BC to 14 AD.
- King Herod was a client king from 37 BC to 4 BC.
- Herod relied on Augustus to keep him in power, and Augustus relied on Herod to keep things under control in Jerusalem and greater Israel.
- **King Herod built three temples to Caesar Augustus in Israel:**
 - Caesarea Maritime - entrance to the kingdom from the sea.
 - Sebaste/Samaria – Sebaste is the Greek word for Augustus.²
 - Caesarea Philippi – the entry/exit of the realm to the north to Damascus.³

3. Omrit, Israel Archaeological Site:⁴

- In 1998, a brush fire exposed the ruins of a significant temple from the first century.
- Archaeologists discovered a large temple – similar to the one at Sebaste and Caesarea Maritime – that dates back to Herod the Great.

¹ Livius.org - <https://tinyurl.com/2p95spfz>

² Josephus, Jewish Wars, Book 1, Chapter 21, (403).

³ Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book 15, Chapter 10, (363-364)

⁴ Omrit, Israel - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omrit>

4. **Flavius Josephus** – a Jewish freedom fighter (born Joseph ben Mattias) who became a Roman historian after being captured.

- Josephus tells us that Herod the Great built a temple to Caesar Augustus near Caesarea Philippi – then known as Pania (named for the Greek god Pan, who was worshiped at that site).⁵

5. **“Who do you say that I am?”**

- Why does Jesus walk his disciples 30 miles north to Caesarea Philippi to ask them a question?
- Jesus teaches concretely. Jesus wants his disciples to experience the subject of his lesson through seeing and hearing simultaneously. Whatever Jesus is teaching about, assume the audience can see it.
- Matthew 16:13 – “The region of Caesarea Philippi”
- Why does Peter include “living” when talking about God? Doesn’t every Jew already know that God is a “living God?”
- Mark 8:34 – Who are the crowds? What are they doing there? How does their behavior lead to losing your soul?

6. **Spiritual Principle** - Your Soul will reflect that which you worship.

- Who do you place as the object of worship?
 - Jesus, the Son of Man, the Son of God?
 - Caesar, a human being?
- Jesus is the “Son of Man” –the “image of the invisible God” in whose image we are created.
- We are supposed to transform into “Christlikeness” – when we worship Jesus as Lord, we naturally transform toward the image of God in which we are created.
- What happens when we worship political leaders? What are we worshipping?
 - Power
 - We will begin to conform to “power” and justify anything that serves that power.
- We lose our Souls when we worship power rather than the one in whose image we were created. Jesus – the Heavenly Man – is the Arcytype of the perfect (sinless) soul.
 - When we worship anything less than the Heavenly Man, our souls become distorted – they lose the image of God that was originally intended.

⁵ Josephus Jewish Wars, Book 1, Chapter 21, (404-406).