

Ancient Paneas stood at the foot of Mt. Hermon in the far north of ancient Israel. In the Roman period, this city was also known as Caesarea Philippi. Its most ancient name, Panion, reveals the worship of Pan here. An enormous cave, just west of these rock-cut niches, was evidently the focus of Pan worship in antiquity. The spring gushing forth here, one of the sources of the Jordan River, added to the sanctity of the site in antiquity. Josephus mentions a "beautiful cave" at Caesarea Philippi (*Antiquities* 14.363-364). The niches shown in the slide, cut into the bedrock just east of the cave, may have held statues to Pan. One of the Greek inscriptions on the right is dated to 87 C.E. and mentions Echo, the mountain nymph, and the god Pan. Herod the Great's son Herod Philip inherited this city from his father and named it Caesarea in honor of Augustus Caesar. It is called Caesarea Philippi to distinguish it from other cities named Caesarea, including Caesarea Maritima on the coast of Israel. According to Matthew 16:13 and Mark 8:27, Jesus visited Caesarea Philippi or its environs with his disciples.