

WALKING IN THE LAND OF THE BIBLE (Paul E. Engle)

Session #6 Reading the Bible Like a Walker

INTRO.

Dr. John Beck, *Along the Road: How Jesus Used Geography to Tell God's Story*.

I. JESUS LOVED TO WALK OUTDOORS & TEACH DISCIPLES ALONG THE WAY.

- A. Invitation to _____ at the beginning of his ministry? *"Come, follow me."* (Mt. 4:19).
- B. **Beck p. 9** *"When Jesus said 'walk,' he literally meant walk. Most of Jesus's teaching was done outdoors as he walked along the road. He led his listeners to specific locations, then knit his lessons into the spoil and scenery."*

II. HOW CAN WE ORGANIZE AND STUDY THE BIBLE? Several ways:

- A. We can organize the contents of our Bible by _____
- B. We can organize the contents of our Bible _____
- C. But we can also organize the contents of the Bible _____

Explain:

Example: : Elisha raised to life the son of a widow in the village of _____ (2 Kings 4:8-37). Nearly 850 years later Jesus raised to life the son of a widow in the nearby village of _____ (Lk. 7:11-17). What did both villages have in common?

III. HOW DID WALKING IN BIBLE TIMES DIFFER FROM OUR WALKING TODAY?

People in Bible times _____ — For what purpose?

_____ Examples:

B. **People generally walked in** _____. Why? Because walking could be _____. **Psalm 121** *"He will not let your foot be moved... The Lord is your keeper, the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day."*

What were the risks involved in traveling these highways?

1. _____
2. Disease, esp. malaria - muddy trails & swamps were breeding grounds for mosquitos
3. Injury due to falls along steep, rocky terrain.
4. Robbery (Luke 10:30 *"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho"*)
5. _____ (Gen. 37:33 Jacob over loss of son Joseph - *"Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been turn to pieces."*)
6. _____ — (Atlas p.7 0-2)

C. How far could you travel in a day during biblical times?

D. **Because people didn't walk alone, there was opportunity to talk to each other.**

“walking also provided time to reflect over and talk about the more important questions of life: Who is God? How does he think about human beings? What does he expect of us?” (Beck, p. 18)

E. In NT times people didn’t have ready access to the Scripture. cf. Beck: *“Despite these obstacles, people living in this era were not without a ‘Bible.’ They learned and reflected on what God said while walking the land of the Bible. When they hiked through their homeland, they did not just see rivers, mountains, and wilderness—they saw biblical events, directions God had given, and promises the Lord had made, all of which were intimately linked to the land.” (p.18-19)*

F. Parents _____ cf. Deut. 11:19

IV. How can we read our Bible like a walker? (Beck gives several suggestions)

A. Acknowledge that all Bible stories (and most other forms of Bible communication) have a physical setting that aids in our comprehension.

B. Actively look for clues within a Bible passage that indicate where the vents or teaching occurs.

C. Look for other stories or elements of Bible communication that share these spaces. Ask what else occurred in the same place. Questions to ask:

1. Other than place, what do the passages have in common? (people, events, words?)
2. Do the passages that share a place also share a theme?
3. Do the geographically linked passages of the Bible build on one another, teaching a lesson God wants us to learn?

V. WALKING WITH MARY AND JOSEPH FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM

A. Let’s look at a familiar story through fresh geographical eyes. It’s the story told in both Matthew and Luke. (Atlas p. 60)

B. Arrival in Bethlehem

C. What was the town of Bethlehem like?

D. Bethlehem was the setting for two Old Testament stories.

- 1.
- 2.
3. **Once more Bethlehem appears in the OT. 700 years before Christ Micah the prophet appears on the scene.**

E. So when we walk to Bethlehem with Mary and Joseph we recognize that we have been here before.

- cf. **Beck p. 30-31** *“The geography is critical because this Bethlehem story qualifies Jesus to be that descendant of David who would rule an eternal kingdom and rescue the world from sin. This is the best solution story of all.”*