

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

Session #7 Walking to Nazareth

INTRODUCTION : Teacher in Chicago area elementary school (Atlas p. 50 8-4)

I. VISIT TO UNDERSTAND THE SETTING OF NAZARETH

1. The village is tucked into a small valley near _____
2. It's thus _____ and not located on any major highways.
This geographical isolation had two impacts:
 - a. It became an ideal place if you wanted _____
 - b. It had limited _____. It was a small village of subsistence farmers but limited by the amount of farmland.
 - c. It occupied about _____ with a maximum population of _____
 - d. What's it like today _____

III. HOW IS JESUS CONNECTED TO NAZARETH?

1. This was the town where _____ (cf. Lk. 1:26
"In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee to a virgin.")
2. Mary & Joseph traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem for birth of Messiah. (Lk. 2:1-7)
3. After fleeing to Egypt Mary & Joseph along with Jesus returned & settled in Nazareth (Mt. 2:21-23)
4. We have almost no glimpses into the life of Jesus growing up here and working with Joseph the carpenter. Cf. Luke 2:52 "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." He apparently spent a couple decades here.
5. During his public ministry Jesus returned to his home town and spoke in the synagogue. (cf. Lk. 4:14-30) How was Jesus received in his home town synagogue?

6. On a later visit to Nazareth what happened? _____ (Mark 6:1-6)

IV. JESUS'S ASSOCIATION WITH NAZARETH CREATED LOW EXPECTATIONS THAT CLUNG TO HIM

- A. What happened when Nathaniel was told the Messiah came from Nazareth?
John 1:44-46
 1. Why do you think Nathanael responded so negatively to Nazareth?
 2. Nazareth was not a major town.
 3. Furthermore, the extended stay of Jesus in Nazareth led many to assume he had been born there. So often Judeans dismissed him without believing (cf. John 7:41-43)

4. **Tim Keller**, *The Skeptical Student*: Nathanael sneers, "Nazareth!?" Everybody from Jerusalem looked down on people from Galilee. This kind of attitude is characteristic of the human race. Some neighborhoods have always looked down at other neighborhoods as being on "the wrong side of the tracks." And how do people who are looked down upon deal with it? They go looking for other people on whom they can look down. And so it goes endlessly. Though Nathanael was not from Jerusalem but from one part of Galilee, he felt he could look down on a place like Nazareth, which was considered to be in an even more backwater and primitive region of Galilee. Always there are the right people, there are the suitable people, there are the smart people, and then there are (lower your voice) those others. And the way you signal to other right, smart, and suitable people that you are one of them is to roll your eyes when the wrong people and places are mentioned."

B. The occupying Roman government had low expectations of Nazareth.

1. The Roman governor then tried to get even how? _____
(Jn. 19:19)

2. This juxtaposition of geography with royalty was offensive. But what did Pilate do? _____ (John 19:22)

C. Matthew explains what the Father had in mind with Jesus living in Nazareth. Fulfills what promise/prophecy? Here are three possible solutions:

1. Perhaps Matthew is referring to the _____ Numbers 6:1-21.
Why is this not a good solution? _____

2. Another solution is that Matthew was using _____
He is linking Jesus with OT prophecies that describe the Messiah as _____ (cf. Isa. 11:1). *Netzer*.

3. A further solution is _____ (Note plural)
cf. Beck pp.36-37 "This is the only time that Matthew uses this formula for introducing OT prophecy, and it means we ought to look for a thematic statement about the Messiah found in more than one OT passage. Matthew indicates that the fulfilled prophecy is intimately connected to the fact that Jesus lived in Nazareth and was called a 'Nazarene'—I think the church father Eusebius is correct when he wrote early in the fourth century that this label Nazarene simply identifies Jesus as someone who came from Nazareth."

APPLICATION - What lesson does this have for us today?

1. Sometimes we think we are insignificant — that our life will never count for anything.
"God delights in using the seemingly insignificant things of this world to display the greatness of His plan." (Dyer).

2. Isn't this what the Apostle Paul also said? 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

3. What about you? ... If so, come with me to the top of the Nazareth Ridge. Nothing is _____

5. May each of us come to the point where we say, I can't believe how God has chosen to use me.