

King David's Palace, Hezekiah's Tunnel, and the Tower of David

The Holy Land | Season 1 - Episode 1

1. Where does Beck always begin his visit to the Holy Land? Why?

He explains that at this place, he remembers WHY he has come.

- a. **What about that place helps him remember why he has come?**
- b. **Does anything help you remember your connection to Scripture or to God? If so, what is it?**
- c. **Why do you come to this study...with what expectations?**

2. Do you ever feel small and insignificant when you encounter God? If so – what setting or circumstance causes that for you?

3. Beck explains that “these stones” - ancient Jerusalem and her stories – can shape our understanding of God's Word.

- a. **Beck states that Jerusalem is the “only place” to start this Holy Land Journey – why?**
- b. **Beck states that a city like this really shouldn't be here – why?**
- c. **What explanation does Beck give for the choosing of that geographical site for Jerusalem to be established?**
- d. **Why do YOU think God might have chosen it?**

4. Read 2Samuel 5:1-12 as a recap of David's conquest.

- a. **David saw Jebus as a highly defensible place for a city. What man-made features supported his conquest?**
- b. **To what does this Scripture passage attribute David's power?**
- c. **Is there anything about the geographical sites in this video - David's Palace, Hezekiah's Tunnel, or the Tower of David - that stood out to you? If so, share why.**

5. Beck concludes by explaining that, “Biblical writers and poets did not think of Jerusalem as a cold place on the ground. Rather, they thought of it as a person! A companion in the enterprise of the Kingdom of God. If we can feel that as Bible readers...then we GET Jerusalem.”

- a. **Are there ways you already think of Jerusalem more as a person than a city? Elaborate.**

***“Jerusalem stands centerstage in God's unfolding plan of salvation...
To fully understand Jerusalem, Bible readers need to see How God made this city His home.”***

Modern Day Jerusalem: The Temple Mount & Old City Markets

The Holy Land | Season 1 - Episode 2

What makes Jerusalem stand out above all other cities is God's Presence in this place.

1. **What does Beck refer to as the “beating heart “of Jerusalem? - Why?**
2. *It was here that God gave Jerusalem its voice and mission. Read 1Kings 8:1-13, 9:1-3*
What was the significance of the ark being brought to the Temple?
3. **Read Deuteronomy 6:4,5**
 - a. **What does “the Lord is One” mean?**
 - b. **How did God want this to affect His people?**
 - c. **How did this understanding of God compare with the surrounding cultures?**
4. *Beck leads us through the Old City and its Markets to help us feel the atmosphere of Modern Day Jerusalem and perhaps identify traces of its past.*
What about the old city/market draws your interest? Explain
5. *God used Jerusalem to speak to His people residing there - “ancient Israel” - as well as the rest of the world over the centuries. It is in Jerusalem that a message of forgiveness is proclaimed. Consider the Western Wall...it gets people as close to the old temple as they possibly can be.*
 - a. **What do people do with their prayers at the Western Wall?**
 - b. **What do you think moves them to do this?**
6. *The Wall is a powerful place of communion with God for many people aligned with the monotheistic religions.*
 - a. **Is there a particular place you experience close communion with God?**
 - b. **What helps you feel God's Presence most clearly?**
7. *People often run to God in times of brokenness...we are all seeking peace, hope, joy, and restoration.*
Have you received any of these gifts when turning to God's Presence? Share as comfortable.
8. *Beck describes this place as a message...a message of God's presence...a message of peace, hope, joy, and restoration.*
 - a. **How can we best live into being God's Presence - peace, hope, joy, and restoration - in the world?**
 - b. **God continually plants His people amidst other cultures...why, do you think?**

Jerusalem: Before and After Babylonian Conquest

The Holy Land | Season 1- Episode 3

1. Summarize the special role given to Israel - what is the significance of Jerusalem to that role?
2. How would you explain the meaning of God is One after watching this video?
3. An entire world had misunderstood who the Almighty was...How does that compare to our world today?
4. What behavior did Solomon model that eventually led to the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon in the 6th century?
5. Recall the second commandment...You shall have no Gods before me.
 - a. Do we create room for other gods in our own lives?
 - b. "Tension lives between these two places - one God...many gods." Can you relate to this?
6. *The consequence of unrepentant sin is made clear in the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. The book of Jeremiah bears witness to the depths to which Israel had fallen and the response of our Holy God. God does not release them from this consequence, but He promises not to forsake them.*
 - a. What helps you hear God's warnings or discern God's leading in your life today?
 - b. What helps you yield to God's desires and commands...what gets in the way?
7. *Beck describes Jerusalem's plight like this: God says...if Jerusalem will stop being a beacon to the truth...I will take away its light. God's presence had left and the destruction of Jerusalem was horrific. The remnant who survived would be taken into exile or left to scrounge for survival in a desolate place.*

Read Psalm 137: 1-6 A Lament over the Destruction of Jerusalem...when the music stops.

 - a. Why did the musicians hang their harps?
 - b. What message of hope is included in this solemn psalm?
8. *The ancient "Kinnor" was the very first lyre to be mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. Making music with it was very intimate to the musician.*
 - a. How was it played?
 - b. How does it illustrate intimacy between the player and God?
9. *Hanging of the harps suggests separation from God while in exile - but we note that they hung the harps...they did not destroy them.*
 - a. Beck points out that the visual presence of God does not return - even in the rebuilt modest temple - until when? (He describes this as God's love reaching its highest expression)
10. *Beck encourages us "when we read about this Holy City, look for how the Almighty is revealing who He is and how He thinks about us."*
 - a. What does this excerpt of The Holy Land reveal to you about who God is?
 - b. What do you hear it revealing about how God thinks about us?
11. **God's temple is now within His people. Read 1Corinthians 3: 16-17 and 2Corinthians 3:16-18**

Consider the hung harps as a metaphor to your life as a Christian. The harp's music reflects the dynamic and life-giving exchange between Creator and created, between God and His sons and daughters.

 - a. What keeps your music playing?
 - b. What causes you to hang up your harp...for your walk of faith to be faint?
 - c. What will cause you to pick it back up again and revitalize your faith?

Where Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac Are Buried

The Holy Land | Season 1 - Episode 4

PROMISE

Leaving Jerusalem, we enter the Judean hill country with its central mountains and steep valleys. What can be learned about God and His relationship to His people as we visit the homeland of the patriarchs?

1. **What timeline was involved when transforming this hill country to usable land for agriculture?**
2. *An inheritance in this day typically involved land that had been worked for generations. When Abraham was called to leave the land of his ancestors, God promised to take him to a new inheritance.*
 - a. **How did Sarah's death mark the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham?**
 - b. *God's foundational promise to Abraham was significant - leaving his generational inheritance for what God would provide...he became a foreigner, immigrant, one living off the land, a temporary resident...no belonging...he waited on God's promise to be fulfilled.*
 - i. **Do you ever feel like an outsider while living out your faith?**
 - ii. **What promises are you waiting for God to fulfill in your life?**
3. *Beck describes the predicament of time: "But just like the labor intensive, slow, and persistent construction of cultivated land, the promise would only fully blossom for a future generation."*
 - a. **What do you do when God's timeline for something in your life is incongruent with yours?**
 - b. **How can we live out our faith intentionally today for the sake of future generations?**

Where Jesus Was Born - Bethlehem

The Holy Land | Season 1 - Episode 5

FULFILLMENT

Bethlehem - House of Bread

In contrast to Hebron, this part of the Judean hill region is gently rolling and a place of agricultural provision. We find stories here that are full of hope, provision, solutions, blessing - of regular bread and so much more...

- 1. List a few Biblical figures who hail from Bethlehem.**
- 2. Briefly share highlights of what you know about the lives of these people; do their stories connect with concepts like provision, solution, and/or blessing?**
- 3. The church of the Nativity, shared by three groups of Christ followers, is a place of connection to the long-awaited Messiah. What is remembered here is a solution – the solution to sin which God provided through His son. As Beck puts it, Bethlehem has always provided the solution to our deepest need - the Bread of Life for the world.*

Read John 6:25-33

And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?" Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.' Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." Therefore, they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

- a. Do you experience Jesus as the Bread of Life? If so, share what that means to you.**
 - b. What do you think about the quote cited: "If you don't have a history, you won't have a future."**
 - c. How can this quite apply to our connection with the people of the Bible?**
- a. What view of the Church of the Nativity is seen from the Bell Tower?**
 - b. What do you understand the connection between the manger and the cross to be?**

Profound: Mount Hebron - the Place of Promise - actualized and in view from the Place of Fulfillment.

Mount Tabor, Deborah, And the Jezreel Valley

The Holy Land | Season 1 - Episode 6

1. **What are some characteristics of the Jezreel Valley that invited so much conflict in Biblical times?**
2. *Beck describes the approach to Mt. Tabor: “The switchbacks that climb up Tabor are like the back and forth swaying of the people.” Describe the swaying of the people to which he refers.*
3. *When Joshua led God’s people into Canaan, there was an issue with rain.*
 - a. **Where did the people put their hope for survival?**
 - b. **How did this impact their next 20 years?**
4. *Eventually, God’s people repent and cry to God for help - the prophetess Deborah is part of their answered prayer.*
 - a. *Deborah reveals God’s plan for battle to the Israelites - how does the plan contradict human reasoning?*
 - b. **Has God ever led you to do (or not do) something that went way against your instinct or reasoning?**
 - c. *As is typical, God’s people are outnumbered and less equipped than the enemy for this battle. Why do you think this is a part of God’s plan?*
5. *The Israelites, this time, responded in faith and obeyed, doing the battle God’s way.*
 - a. **What was the result?**
 - b. **Are there battles in your life, or the world around you, that could be better fought God’s way?**
6. **Read the following verses:**

Exodus 40:34-35 * Isaiah 43:5-7 * Matthew 5:16 * Revelation 4:11

 - a. **God desires glory - How was He glorified in this battle “scene.”**
 - b. **Are there ways you have witnessed God receiving glory in our day and time?**
 - c. **How can OUR lives glorify God?**

The Epic Battle at Gideon's Spring

The Holy Land | Season 1 - Episode 7

1. *Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. Deuteronomy 6:4*

This passage underpins much of The Holy Land video series.

Is One God Enough? *This question creates the dilemma the Israelites would find themselves in over and over again.*

Read Judges 6: 7-16

- a. Gideon felt God had abandoned them; how had God's people abandoned God?
- b. What can we do when we find ourselves blaming God for situations in our lives?
- c. What helps you remain faithful to God?
- d. How can we help others who are tempted to abandon God?

2. Read Isaiah 55:9

- a. Once again, God does the unexpected - He calls a farmer to manage a battle. What else does God require that does not conform to "our ways" in preparing Gideon and his men for this battle?
- b. *Reading Judges 6 and 7 will shed more light on this battle and the struggle Gideon went through to trust and obey God. What helps you trust and obey God?*

3. *Over and over God calls us to allow Him to fight our battles...our job is to obey and give Him the glory.*

- a. What makes it easy to surrender your battles to God?
- b. What makes it difficult?
- c. Have you ever experienced God's clear Hand of deliverance through one of your battles? If so – consider sharing with the group.

Megiddo & Armageddon

The Holy Land | Season 1 - Episode 8

BOOKEND BATTLES

- Life is abundant in the fertile Jezreel Valley...and death has been abundant as well. Beck recalls truths from Genesis...*
 - How is the goodness of God's creation seen here?**
 - How has the consequence of sin riddled this place?**
- Discuss what makes the city of Megiddo the "most strategic place in the ancient world...a city built for war."**
 - What is so consequential about the narrow pass?**
- Both King Solomon and King Josiah engaged in battle at this place – 400 years apart. Josiah battles the Egyptian army at Megiddo. Beck names him, "good King Josiah."*
 - Share what you remember about this king.**
 - Among other strengths, Josiah was the last of Judah's kings that lived with the conviction to tear down idols - multiple god worship - for Judah's good. Good Josiah lost his life here. For the Israelite, good was conquered...they must have lamented...how long will evil reign? We might wonder the same thing today...*
 - Consider where you see evil reigning, in your separate lives and in the world around us. Share as you feel comfortable.**
 - What do you think makes people wonder if evil will reign forever?**
 - What can we do to overcome evil?**
- Armageddon - the word - is likely of what derivation?**
- Beck explains that Megiddo, a place of conflict throughout the generations, continues to be a Modern-day conflict within the Christian community – how so?**
- Beck likens the last book of the Bible, one we know to be an apocalyptic piece of literature, to a caricature...a cartoon of sorts. Discuss what you think he means by this and whether you agree or see things differently?*
- In this tumultuous valley, we need hope - that evil and suffering will one day end...that peace will reign. Beck summarizes his take on Revelation with 2 insights:*
 - What can we expect in the years ahead with respect to living as a Christian in the world?**
 - What hope and consolation does he explain we can rely on, in God's timing?**
- Megiddo - site of history's first recorded battle and intimately connected to what will be the last great battle...bookend battles, if you will.*
 - Endless battles here point us to a Spiritual battle that is ongoing - what determines its conclusion?**
 - Our job is to live from this already accomplished victory in the world – what helps you do that?**