

# *Along the Road*

## VIDEO STUDY GUIDE

This material is based on author John Beck's seven-part video study entitled *Along the Road*, which supplements and enhances a book by the same name, sold separately. The book provides additional detail on the seven sites featured in the videos, as well as many others. Though the two products stand alone, they may be combined for the greatest educational benefit. This study guide will direct you to each related chapter in the book.

Episode 1: Bethlehem—Birthplace of Salvation

Episode 2: Into the Wilderness—Baptism and Temptation

Episode 3: To Mount Moreh—Raising a Widow's Son

Episode 4: Toward the Gihon Spring—The Coronation

Episode 5: To the Decapolis—Casting Out Demons

Episode 6: To Mount Hermon—Son of the Living God

Episode 7: To Mount Arbel—Sermon on the Mount and the Great Commission

## BETHLEHEM—BIRTHPLACE OF SALVATION

**Additional Reading:** *Along the Road* chapter 2, “Walking with Jesus from Nazareth to Bethlehem”

**Scripture Connection:** Ruth; 1 Samuel 16; Luke 2:1–14

### PROLOGUE

Perhaps no story in the Bible is more known and loved than the account of the birth of Jesus. In the tiny town of Bethlehem, an ancient scriptural promise from the book of Micah was fulfilled as the Savior was born. But did you know that Bethlehem appears other times in the Old Testament? Dr. John Beck takes us to modern-day Bethlehem, “a very good place for us to see how Old Testament stories influence our understanding of stories from the life of Jesus.” We will see how geography connects events that happened hundreds of years apart.

### LOOKING BACK ON THE JOURNEY

*Questions for consideration and discussion*

1. In Deuteronomy 6:6–7, Moses wrote: “These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road.” How does this admonition relate to Dr. Beck’s study? What are some practical ways you can share God’s truth with the people around you daily?
2. What do you think Dr. Beck means with his term “geographic déjà vu”? Can you think of any two Bible incidents, other than those he mentions in Episode 1, that happened in the same geographic location?
3. What does Dr. Beck identify as the two significant Old Testament stories that occur in Bethlehem? What is the key prophecy that mentions Bethlehem?
4. Dr. Beck says that Bethlehem stories are always about how the Lord comes to help people in need. How did God meet the needs of a family and a nation in the two Bethlehem stories of the Old Testament? How did He meet the needs of all humanity in the birth of Jesus?
5. The phrase “fear not” appears dozens of times in the Bible. Why would Dr. Beck say the “fear not” of Luke 2:10, spoken by angels to shepherds outside Bethlehem, is the most important?
6. As you see how Scripture ties Ruth’s story to David’s to Jesus’s—and connects them all via Bethlehem—what does this say to you about the Bible’s trustworthiness? About God’s story of redemption?

## INTO THE WILDERNESS—BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION

**Additional Reading:** *Along the Road* chapter 8, “Walking with Jesus into the Wilderness”

**Scripture Connection:** Matthew 3:13–17; Matthew 4:1–4; Deuteronomy 8; Romans 7:15–20

### PROLOGUE

Of all the things that happened to Jesus during his time on earth, perhaps the incident we can relate to most is his confrontation with the devil in the wilderness. We know about temptation—we all face it. And in the wilderness we discover that Jesus faced that same threat. In this episode, Dr. John Beck gives Jesus’s temptation story a new dimension as he draws parallels to the wilderness experience of the Israelites under Moses.

### LOOKING BACK ON THE JOURNEY

*Questions for consideration and discussion*

1. Though Jesus’s wilderness experience did not occur in the same location as the Israelites’, Dr. Beck points out that they happened in similar ecosystems. In what ways does the Lord’s wilderness story parallel that of God’s people under Moses? What, according to Dr. Beck, was the question God was asking both Jesus and the Israelites?
2. How did the experiences of Jesus and the Israelites ultimately, as Dr. Beck says, “diverge from each other”?
3. Dr. Beck points out that the place of Jesus’s baptism was near the spot where the Israelites crossed into the Promised Land after their wilderness journey finally ended. What does Dr. Beck mean when he says that after the Israelites crossed the Jordan they began “their public ministry”? What changes did His baptism in the Jordan bring to Jesus’s life?
4. One of the key teachings of this episode is Dr. Beck’s explanation of why Jesus is so much more than just a “noble example to follow.” How does Jesus rise above biblical figures such as Abraham, David, or Moses?
5. How well do you relate to the apostle Paul’s words in Romans 7:19 (“For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing”)? How does Jesus’s successful experience in the wilderness help us? (See Philippians 3:8–9.)
6. How important to the Christian faith is it that Jesus was tested and tempted, “yet he did not sin” (Hebrews 4:15)?

## TO MOUNT MOREH—RAISING A WIDOW’S SON

**Additional Reading:** *Along the Road* chapter 14, “Walking with Jesus to Mount Moreh”

**Scripture Connection:** Matthew 2:23; Luke 7:11–17; 2 Kings 4:8–37

### PROLOGUE

Jesus of Nazareth, they called him. Back in the day, Nazareth wasn’t much to brag about. Maybe four acres in size, with perhaps eleven or twelve homes where Jesus’s boyhood friends would have lived. It was a town isolated from the rest of the Roman-controlled world. Once his ministry began, Jesus ventured out to other places, like the village of Nain, near the base of Mount Moreh, just a few miles south.

### LOOKING BACK ON THE JOURNEY

*Questions for consideration and discussion*

1. Why do you think God chose to have Jesus grow up in such a small, unimportant village as Nazareth?
2. Though Nazareth is mentioned several times in the New Testament—usually in the phrase “Jesus of Nazareth”—Dr. John Beck notes that only one story is told about the town. Why does he say “it’s not a very pretty story”? (See Luke 4:14–30.)
3. In the nearby village of Nain, Jesus had a very different reception. What did he do to cause the people to say “a great prophet has appeared among us” (Luke 7:16)? Can you think of other occasions when Jesus was identified as a prophet? (If you need help, see Matthew 21:11, John 4:19, and Mark 6:4.)
4. Dr. Beck goes to another town, located on the other side of Mount Moreh, for a related Old Testament story. What had happened in the nearby village of Shunem? (See 2 Kings 4:8–37.)
5. Are you surprised by the geographic proximity of Elisha’s and Jesus’s miracles? What do you think of Dr. Beck’s contention that Jesus performed his miracle in this place to get a particular response from the people?
6. As you consider Dr. Beck’s final words of this episode—“A great prophet has risen among us. God has mercy on his people”—think of some of the ways, both big and small, that you have experienced God’s mercy through Jesus.

## TOWARD THE GIHON SPRING—THE CORONATION

**Additional Reading:** *Along the Road* chapter 15, “Walking with Jesus toward the Gihon Spring”

**Scripture Connection:** Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:29–44; John 12:12–19; 1 Kings 1:28–35

### PROLOGUE

Entering Jerusalem was nothing new for Jesus; he had done this many times during his life and ministry. But on the day we now call Palm Sunday, things were different. And one of the key differences was that this time he was greeted by adoring crowds. Dr. Jack Beck explains the geographic backstory that contributes to this celebratory entry into the City of David.

### LOOKING BACK ON THE JOURNEY

*Questions for consideration and discussion*

1. What do you recall about the original Palm Sunday? What people, places, and things were involved in Jesus’s “triumphal entry” into Jerusalem?
2. In this episode, Dr. John Beck notes, “Jesus could have simply said, ‘I am the king, the son of David who will be the Messiah.’ There’s great power in that. But I think it’s even more powerful when Jesus enacts an event that leads others to draw that conclusion.” What does he say Jesus enacted from the prophecy of Isaiah 40:1–5?
3. What other Old Testament prophecy, from Zechariah 9:9, did Jesus enact on Palm Sunday? What does Dr. Beck say the Passover pilgrims understood when they “put together all of those Mount of Olives stories”?
4. In what ways did Jesus’s entry into Jerusalem parallel Solomon’s from a thousand years earlier? What did the people around Jesus shout in response? How does Dr. Beck describe their language?
5. Imagine being among the crowds that waved palm branches as Jesus passed by. You know of the prophecy, perhaps, so you are expecting a king. As you watch, what kind of king are you anticipating?
6. Dr. Beck explains the meaning of Jesus as King in our lives—that he protects us and gives our lives meaningful direction. How have these two realities been manifested in your life?

## TO THE DECAPOLIS—CASTING OUT DEMONS

**Additional Reading:** *Along the Road* chapter 17, “Walking with Jesus to the Decapolis”

**Scripture Connection:** Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39; Mark 7:31–37; 8:1–21

### PROLOGUE

Mostly located east of the Jordan River, the ten cities of the Decapolis contrasted greatly with the Jewish communities to their west. Culturally, the Decapolis was Greco-Roman and religiously, it was pagan. Yet there was Jesus, the Jewish rabbi, hanging out on what seemed to be the wrong side of the lake—twice. In this case, we are not revisiting a place we’ve read about in the Old Testament; we are coming back to a place that Jesus himself has been before. And we wonder, as Dr. Jack Beck asks in this episode, “What’s he doing over here?”

### LOOKING BACK ON THE JOURNEY

*Questions for consideration and discussion*

1. What does it say about Jesus that he made the effort to leave the familiarity of Jewish territories to visit the Decapolis, which was decidedly Gentile?
2. The demon possession Dr. Beck describes from Mark 5 is horrible. The man in the story was so dangerous that he had been put in chains and forced to live in a graveyard. When Jesus and the disciples arrived by boat from Galilee, the man said, “What do you want with me, Jesus?” Why did he respond that way instead of asking for help?
3. Are you surprised that the people of this region would ask Jesus to leave immediately after he healed the demon-possessed man? Imagine someone showing up in your area and within minutes destroying your livelihood—that, it seemed, was what Jesus did when he sent the demons into these people’s pigs. How reasonable is the residents’ reaction?
4. Why was the healed man’s request to follow Jesus back to Galilee denied? (See Mark 5:19.) How do we know that the man did what Jesus told him to do? (See Mark 8:1–10.)
5. Dr. Beck asks, “Why didn’t Jesus allow [the man] to get in the boat and go back with him to a side of the lake that would allow him to grow more in his faith?” What can we learn about spiritual growth from this man’s obedience?
6. Consider Dr. Beck’s final observation: Jesus treated Gentiles who were hungry the same way he treated observant Jews who were hungry. He fed them both. What does that say about how we should treat people who might be on the other side of some political or religious or cultural line we have drawn?

## TO MOUNT HERMON—SON OF THE LIVING GOD

**Additional Reading:** *Along the Road* chapter 19, “Walking with Jesus to Mount Hermon”

**Scripture Connection:** 1 Kings 12:25–30; Matthew 16:13–20; Mark 8:27–9:1

### PROLOGUE

Dan was a city in the far north of Israel. In Old Testament times, it was a pagan worship center built by Jeroboam, first ruler of the ten northern tribes when the Jewish kingdom split after the death of Solomon. A nearby town called Caesarea Philippi was similarly noted for its pagan worship. So it might seem surprising that the antithesis to paganism—Jesus Christ—would come to this area to teach about who he really was: the Son of the Living God.

### LOOKING BACK ON THE JOURNEY

*Questions for consideration and discussion*

1. The beauty that Dr. John Beck enjoys in this region—rushing waters, singing birds, lush vegetation—contrasts with the darkness of its pagan history. Where do we see this contrast in our world, where light shines despite the darkness of unbelief?
2. Why would a Jewish ruler, Jeroboam, introduce elements of pagan worship into his own kingdom at Dan? (See 1 Kings 12:25–30.) Why might Christians today be tempted to incorporate worldly beliefs and practices into their faith?
3. At nearby Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” What names did the disciples give? (See Matthew 16:13–14.) Why might the answers have differed here from in Galilee?
4. What was Jesus’s next question to the disciples? What was Peter’s answer? (See Matthew 16:16.)
5. Consider Jesus, standing before what many thought to be the gates of Hades, hearing the apostle Peter correctly answering the important question of “who the Son of Man is.” How does this visual help us understand Jesus’s response to Peter? How does Dr. John Beck connect Matthew 16:17–18 to the geography of Caesarea Philippi?
6. What does Dr. Beck say was Jesus’s primary purpose for visiting Caesarea Philippi? How does this journey—with Jesus and with Dr. Beck—encourage your faith?

## TO MOUNT ARBEL—SERMON ON THE MOUNT AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

**Additional Reading:** *Along the Road* chapter 20, “Walking with Jesus to Mount Arbel”

**Scripture Connection:** Matthew 5–7; Matthew 28:16–20

### PROLOGUE

If you look for the name “Mount Arbel” in the Bible, you won’t find it. Yet Dr. Jack Beck has identified this prominent mountain overlooking the Sea of Galilee as the best candidate for the location of both Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount and his pronouncement of the Great Commission. You can read details about his contentions regarding Mount Arbel in chapter 20.

### LOOKING BACK ON THE JOURNEY

*Questions for consideration and discussion*

1. As Dr. Beck started his ascent of Mount Arbel, he asked, “Are you up for a little bit of an adventure?” Is backpacking up a mountain—or just backpacking in general—something you would look forward to? What do you think the disciples may have been thinking as Jesus led them up the steep hillside?
2. Think about the powerful beginning of the Sermon on the Mount—the Beatitudes. What effect might the dramatic setting have had on the disciples’ hearing of Jesus’s teaching?
3. What do you think of Dr. Beck’s suggestion that the majestic opening lines of the Beatitudes are matched not by the recorded end of the message but by what he calls “the last paragraph of the Sermon on the Mount”—the Great Commission as recorded in Matthew 28?
4. How did Jesus change the “scope of the disciples’ ministry . . . on top of Mount Arbel”? (See Matthew 28:19.) Have you ever thought of how important the Great Commission is to you personally—as it was with Dr. Beck through his forebears in Europe?
5. What an evocative thought from the top of Mount Arbel: “This view has not changed since the disciples heard [the Great Commission]. And neither has our mission.” How does this speak to your heart? What changes might you make in life after hearing this challenge?
6. Which of the seven geographical connections in this series by Dr. Beck has been most surprising to you? How has his teaching affected the way you view God’s Word?