

Christ in Prophecy

Israel 22: Pilgrimage 7- The Old City

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: The Old City of Jerusalem is one of the most fascinating places on planet earth. And it is a place of great spiritual significance to Christians. It is where Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected. And it is where He is going to return to rule over all the world. Stay tuned for a visit to the city.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. Over the past few weeks we have been taking you on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We began in Tel Aviv at Independence Hall. From there we journeyed up the coast to visit sites like Caesarea Maritime, the Roman capital during the time of Christ. Our third program focused on the area around the Sea of Galilee where Jesus had the headquarters of His ministry. The fourth week, we visited the city of Nazareth where Jesus grew up. Our fifth program focused on two amazing archaeological sites in Israel, the ancient fortress of Megiddo that guarded the Valley of Armageddon and the city of Beit Shean, both the ancient city on top of the tel, and the Roman city at the base of the tel. During week six of this series we explored the Mount of Olives from top to bottom. And in this program we are going to take you into the Old City and show you some of its sites starting at the Lion's Gate in the Muslim Quarter and ending in the Jewish Quarter.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: We are entering the Old City through the Lion's Gate that leads into the Muslim Quarter. It is located on the east side of the city. This is the gate that the Israeli Army broke through when it entered the city in the Six Day War in 1967. Although the gate leads into the Muslim Quarter it is immediately adjacent to a beautiful courtyard that contains a Crusader Church. The church is called the Church of St. Anne, named for the mother of Mary, whom the Crusaders believed was born in a grotto under the church. The interior of the church is all stone, and thus it serves as an echo chamber for singing.

Gary Fisher: My Savior God to thee, how great Thou art, how great Thou art.

Dr. Reagan: Next door to the church of St. Anne is the Pool of Bethesda, which you can see here in the foreground. We conducted a devotional at this site.

Von VonSeggern: The Scripture passage I'd like to share comes from the Gospel of John chapter 5. So that's the passage John chapter 5, beginning with verse 1 if you'd like to look it

up. And while you are looking it up I just wanted to just say a couple words if I may. It was always a great honor for me to serve the men and women of our nation as a chaplain. And one of the things that I wanted to always do with those precious men and women, sons and daughters of our country is to let them know how special they were in the eyes of God. And one of the ways that we in the military we show that is through something we call a salute. And I just wanted to have the privilege before I have no other chance to do this, is to acknowledge all of you sons and daughters of God our Father who are warriors of the Cross, which is a battle far greater than any battle ever fought on this earth. And so to all of you, warriors of the Cross, you have my salute. So then He goes to the Temple and Jesus finds him in the Temple. And to me this is where the miracle of the Pool of Bethesda actually took place. Not here, but in the Temple because it was there that Jesus found him, and said these words, "Stop sinning, or something worse is going to happen to you." You know yes, it is so important to receive physical healing, but we all know it's not physical healing that's the most important, it's that spiritual healing. It's that relationship with Jesus Christ. It's choosing Christ and then living righteously. That's the healing that the world needs, that Israel needs, that our country needs. It's to stop sinning.

Dr. Reagan: After walking through the Old City on the Via Dolorosa, the traditional path that Jesus walked to the Cross, we have come to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which is the Catholic site of the crucifixion. The interior of the church is dark and dreary and very ornate. Six different Christian groups have claimed various parts of it and are constantly in conflict with each other, presenting a terrible image of Christianity to the Jewish people. The focal point inside the church is this very ornate structure which is the supposed tomb of Jesus.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Before proceeding to the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, we decided to visit Mount Zion. In the time of Jesus this area was inside the walls of the Old City, but when the walls were rebuilt in the 1500's the architects decided to leave this area outside the walls and pocket the money that was supposed to have been spent. They paid for that mistake with their lives, and their tombs can be seen today just inside the Jaffa Gate on the west side of the city. The Zion Gate that leads from the Old City to Mount Zion is heavily pockmarked due to ferocious fighting that took place here during the Israeli War of Independence in 1948 and 49. One of the sites on Mount Zion is the Upper Room where Jesus and His disciples held their Last Supper. This room is not authentic. It dates back to the time of the Crusaders. But the location is authentic. Directly below the room is the site of the tomb of David. Neither the tomb nor the site is authentic. The Bible says that David was buried inside the City of David which is far to the south of this location.

I've asked Bob Wilder from St. Joe, Indiana to read the 23rd Psalm for us. And the reason we're doing that here in this particular setting is because just behind the wall over here is the traditional site of the tomb of David. Now it is not the real site of the tomb of David. David we are told in the Scriptures was buried in the City of David, inside the city which is very unusual probably had some special tomb for the kings, and that's quite a distance from here. But the Crusaders established this particular spot and it has been the site of the tomb of David ever since that time. So people just come here to pay homage to David and every time I bring a

pilgrimage group here I try to have somebody read the 23rd Psalm. And I've asked our Brother from Indiana to do that. So Bob, what does that 23rd Psalm mean to you?

Bob Wilder: The 23rd Psalm is very special to me because back in 1963 my father had developed a severe infection that resulted in emergency surgery. He was in intensive care for 30 days, unconscious for 29 of those days. He had memorized the 23rd Psalm as a child and he started saying that as he regained consciousness. And when he was able to say the entire 23rd Psalm he knew that his mind was going to be clear. So at this time I would like to have you all stand and join me as I read the 23rd Psalm and ask you to recite that with me. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His namesake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Dr. Reagan: Our next stop is in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. There is a beautiful plaza in the center of the Quarter where people gather for fellowship. We stopped there to rest and reflect on our day.

Well we have come to the end of our day of walking through the Old City of Jerusalem. And I'm sure that most of you at this point will understand why one of the most popular t-shirts you see in the Old City is one that says, "I walked my feet off in Jerusalem," because we did that today. We started on the Mount of Olives, we came down to the Kidron Valley. We started in the Old City at the Lions Gate, we walked all the way across the Old City from the Lion's Gate to the Jaffa Gate. Took a break for lunch, came back to Mount Zion. Came through the Zion Gate and into the Jewish Quarter.

And now we are here in the Jewish Quarter. You've seen each Quarter except the Armenian. The Armenian Quarter, the Armenians are very reclusive they've built a wall all around their buildings and their churches, they don't want anybody interfering with them so there is nothing to see there. But this Jewish Quarter is amazing, it is all brand spanking new compared to the other parts of the city. And the reason for that is that in 1948 and '49 there was fierce fighting here to control the Jewish part of the Old City and the Jews lost it. So the Jordanian forces conquered all of the Old City in the war of '48 and '49 and then they came in here and systematically destroyed the Jewish Quarter. They destroyed all the houses, they blew up all the synagogues. This is one of their great synagogues right here, they blew it up. We have movies of all of this. They just totally destroyed it.

So in 1967 when the Jews reconquered the city of Jerusalem they came into this area and started to rebuild. But before they did so someone said, "Let's dig first." And so the whole rebuilding of the Jewish Quarter was held up by archaeologists who came in and did archaeological digs all over this area before they started rebuilding. Now every one of these buildings you see, every one of them are built over archaeological excavations. And in many of them you can go in and go down into the basement and see these amazing archaeological excavations. But they rebuilt the city and that is why it's so new. And they rebuilt their great synagogue.

And I love to come to this place because right over to my right is a major plaza right here in the center of the Jewish Quarter, and I love to come here and sit and eat lunch on my free day and

watch people dance. Right now that is not going on because this is the eve of the Sabbath. And on the Sabbath eve all of the Jewish Quarter closes down around 2 or 3 in the afternoon, they don't wait until the Sabbath starts they close early so almost everything here is closed. But on a regular day you could come here to this square and you could sit there and watch people playing musical instruments. You could see even Rabbis dancing in the streets; it's really wonderful they join hands, they dance, they sing. And it always reminds me of a glorious passage over in the book of Zechariah, remember Zechariah had already written after they came back from Babylonian captivity. So he is talking about something is going to happen in the future. And listen how he describes what it is going to be like one day. He says, "Again the word of the Lord of host came to me saying, Thus says the Lord of host, 'I am zealous for Zion with a great zeal with great fervor I am zealous for her.' Thus says the Lord, 'I will return to Zion and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of truth, the mountain of the Lord of host, the holy mountain.' Thus says the Lord of host, 'Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age. The streets of the city shall be full of boys, and girls playing in the streets.' Thus says the Lord of host, 'Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east, from the land of the west; I will bring them back, and they will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, they shall be My people and I will be their God in truth and in righteousness.' It shall come to pass that just as you were accursed among the nations, oh, house of Judah and house of Israel so I will save you and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear let your hands be strong for thus says the Lord of host, 'Just as I determine to punish you when your fathers provoked me to wrath.' Says the Lord of host, 'And I would not relent, so again in those final days I am determined to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah do not fear.'" And then he ends with this, "Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of host in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord." And then the last verse which is absolutely incredible, "Thus says the Lord of host, 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man and say, 'Let me go with you for we have heard that God is with you.'" That will not be fulfilled until the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ. But just think about it we live in a world today where the Jew is despised, hated, cursed, where the Jew is hunted down, killed. But in the day of the millennial reign of Jesus Christ, the glory of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem to all the world, the radiance of the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are told that the nations will send representatives each year here to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. And so great will be the blessings flowing from Jerusalem through the Jewish people to all the world that when one Jew walks by ten Gentiles will grab his robe and say, "Let us walk with you because we know that God is with you." The world is going to be turned upside down in its attitude toward the Jewish people.

Our last stop of the day is at the magnificent Western Wall Plaza, which is the spiritual focal point of modern day Judaism. This area became a holy place because it is the closest the Jews can get to where the Holy of Holies in their ancient Temple was located on the top of the Temple Mount.

Ok, we are standing here now in the big plaza in front of the Western Wall in the United States they often refer to it as the Wailing Wall, but never over here it is called the Western Wall. And this plaza did not exist before 1967. What happened was that over the years the Jews would come to this area to pray at the wall because this was the only place they could come. Buildings were built right up to the wall, like that building over there, right up to the wall. And this was true

all around on this side and on the north side, and on the east side the outer wall; this is the inner wall of the Temple Mount. On the eastside they couldn't pray there because there is a Muslim cemetery. On the south end there were buildings built up. So the only place they could pray was in an ally over here, all this where we were standing was covered by houses and the houses went right up to about six feet from the wall and there was a narrow ally which for hundreds and hundreds of years is where the Jews went to pray. And one of the reasons they prayed here was not only because this was the only place they could get to that wall, that retaining wall but it was the closets area to what they considered to be the Holy of Holies because the Temple would have been located up on the Temple Mount, and the Holy of Holies would be at this backside probably somewhere over in that area, but this was as close as they could get.

When the War of Independence ended in 1948-49 the Jews lost the city, the Jordanians took over the city. Part of the Armistice Agreement, part of the Armistice Agreement was that the Jews could come to the wall and pray. But as soon as they signed the document and they secured the city no Jew was allowed to come here for 17 years, nobody allowed to come here to pray. And so in June 7, 1967 when they conquered the city one of the first things they did was to come in and bulldoze out all of the buildings in this area. And they opened this big plaza where they have national celebrations, military celebrations. And they also cut the plaza down; if you look over at the wall there you can see that there is a dark area about six feet tall that is where the floor was at that time. They cut it down about six feet but that is not even near the First Century that wall goes down another 60-70 feet below that that much debris has been pushed off. And so there is a long way you have to go down to get to where it was in the First Century. So today this is an area where people come to pray. There is one for the women on that side, one for the men on this side. The men must have their heads covered to go up to the wall. And in a few minutes we'll give you an opportunity to go there and pray. But first you noticed all these flags around here. In fact we happen to be here a couple days before the celebration of Independence Day and they have been replacing all these flags with new ones. They are getting clatter in the background as they getting ready to put up stadiums for people to sit. They are going to have big celebrations here. And I thought it would be good for us to pause for a moment while we have all these flags around us for Gary to tell you the prophetic significance of the Israeli flag.

Gary Fisher: Thank you, Brother. In May of 1948 we had already reviewed the history where they were going to start a new nation called Israel. And everybody knows if you are going to have a new nation you have to have a flag. One of my favorite teachers Zola Levitt said one time wherever three Jews were gathered there were at least ten opinions.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah.

Gary Fisher: So, one of the things they did on that Independence Day down in Independence Hall on May 14th, 1948 was discuss the flag. So if you get all these Jewish people in there they were arguing and this, that and the other they wanted to put a menorah on the flag, they wanted to put a fig leaf on the flag.

Dr. Reagan: Lion.

Gary Fisher: But I'm going to tell you today, serve you notice, that 2,500 years before that day God had answered what was going to be on that flag. And you will have to turn in your Bibles later, but that little story is in Isaiah 11, it says in verse 10, "In that day there will be the root, or the growth of Jesse who will stand as a flag," this Bible says banner, the Hebrew word is flag,

“to the people, for the Gentiles shall seek Him and the resting place will be glorious. It will come to pass in that day the Lord will again set His hand the second time.” That sets the framework, the time frame for this flag. The first time they were dispersed from the nation was to Babylon. So this is going to happen when the second time they come back to the land, that is today. And so it says again in verse 12, “He will set a flag for the nations, a symbol, the outcast of Israel gathered the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.” Now, I passed over a little point that I have to go back to. It says, “In that day,” verse 10, “there shall be a root of Jesse who will stand as a flag.” What is on the center of this flag? The Star of David. Who is David’s father? Jesse. Who is the growth of Jesse? David. God answered this story for them 2,500 years ago. And at the end of the day with all that argument that went on they settled on the Star of David being on the center of that flag, and it serves as a banner today that the Jewish people are being gathered back to this land. Eventually they are going to be here to do exactly what God called them to be and that is to be the head of the nations. Yeshua will be here as their King. He will rule over them and over the Gentiles as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. That flag waving is telling us we are living in the days that that was going to happen, soon, today would be a good day with me. Amen.

Dr. Reagan: Amen. Well part of that compromise that they made that day is that they decided the menorah would be the official legal symbol of the State. So, on all State stationary you have a menorah at the top. They agreed that the Lion of Judah would be the symbol of Jerusalem. So the Jerusalem flag looks just like the Israeli flag except it has the Lion of Judah in the middle. And they agreed that the Star of David would be the symbol on the flag. The flag also is designed to look like a prayer shawl, it is the only flag in the world designed to look like a prayer shawl. When you go up the wall you will see men wearing prayer shawls, they are white and they usually have blue stripes. So it is designed to look like a prayer shawl with the root of Jesse in the Middle just as prophesied over 2,500 years ago. We live in exciting times.

One of the traditions here is to write prayers on a piece of paper and stick them in a crevice in the wall. So, I am going to go up now and do that. Ok, I am now at the wall I am putting my piece of paper in a crack here in the wall. And I am praying in the name of Yeshua Hamashiah, that the day will soon come when the veil will be lifted from the eyes of the Jewish people and they will cry out, “Baruch Haba B’Shem Adonai,” “Blessed is He comes in the name of the Lord.” And the remnant of the Jewish people will be saved to the everlasting glory of God. That they will look upon Him whom they have pierced and weep, wail and mourn as one weeps over the loss of an only son. And on that great and glorious day the great remnant will be saved. And that will happen of course when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. So I cry out from the bottom of my heart, maranatha, maranatha, come quickly Lord Jesus. And it is appropriate to back away from the wall and then to turn and walk away from it.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: Having made 45 trips to Israel, I thought I would share with you some thoughts about why I think it is important for Christians to make such a pilgrimage. The first reason relates to the fact that Israel is the only land in all the world that is referred to in the Scriptures as Holy Land. Now, one of the key meanings of the word, holy, is to be set apart, and Israel meets that qualification. It has been set apart by what has happened there in the past and what is going to occur there in the future. It is where God became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, and it is

where Jesus spilled His precious blood for the sins of mankind. It is where Jesus will soon return and where He will reign over all the world.

The land of Israel is the center of the cosmos because it is where the battle between God and Satan is focused. It is the center of the nations because the fate of the world hangs on the fate of this land. All the nations of the world are supernaturally obsessed with it, and the Bible says that in the end times all the nations will come against it. That prophecy is being fulfilled before our eyes. When you stand on the Mount of Olives and you look out across the Kidron Valley at the ancient city of Jerusalem, you can sense in your spirit that you are at the center of history. You can spiritually discern that you are standing on the most sacred real estate on planet earth. It is an awesome and humbling experience that will draw you closer to the Lord and motivate you to develop and maintain an eternal perspective. That, of course, is all very subjective and the intensity of the experience can vary from person to person.

More objectively, a pilgrimage to the Holy Land will bring the Bible alive to you in a very special and meaningful way. Never again will Jaffa, Capernaum, Jericho and Jerusalem be mere words on a page. Rather, they will be vivid geographical locations that live in your heart because you have actually walked their streets. The mere mention of these places will cause a mental image to spring up into your mind, and you will have a sense of the town's size, its location, its relation to other sites. Likewise, the historical reality of Jesus will become more meaningful to you as you walk where He walked and see and sense what He experienced. For example, it is awesome to stand in front of the Garden Tomb and reflect on the meaning of His resurrection. You will marvel that a man who had no money, no political power, and who preached for only three years in a tiny country without the aid of radio or television could change the history of the world and impact the lives of countless millions. You will get a feel for His humanity while appreciating even more profoundly His divinity.

Finally, a pilgrimage will also force you to take a hard look at yourself and your relationship with God. You will find yourself searching your soul and renewing your commitment to Jesus. You will sense a call to stop playing church and to get serious about your relationship with Jesus. Perhaps the best summary statement I have ever heard about the impact of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land is the one that said, "It converts the Bible from black and white into Technicolor."

Well, that's our program for this week. I hope it's been a blessing to you, and I hope you will be back with us next week when we will continue our pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our redemption is drawing near."

End of Program