

Christ in Prophecy
Bible Times 1: “Nomadic Living”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Welcome to Israel and to the beautiful village of Ein Karem a suburb of Jerusalem. In Bible times, Ein Karem is the traditional site of the birth place of John the Baptist. And as such, it is also the traditional site of the visitation that occurred between Mary and Elizabeth after both of them had become pregnant. Elizabeth with John the Baptist and Mary with the Messiah. Today, Ein Karem is also the site of the Bible Times Learning Center. A place that is designed to help you better understand what life was really like in biblical times. For a visit to the center, stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus our blessed hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. We’re going to begin our study of bible times living right here inside this nomadic tent here in Ein Karem, a suburb of Jerusalem. And here is Annie Thrasher. Annie is the executive director of the Bible Times Learning Center. And Annie sort of shook me up when we first got here because we were getting all arranged for this and I sat down and she said, “You can’t sit down here you must sit up on a stool” tell them why.

Annie Thrasher: Well, in Biblical days the women of course would sit lower than the men, so to keep in the biblical mode we must do things correctly.

Dr. Reagan: I kind of like that! [Dave Laughs]

Annie Thrasher: You know most men seem to.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, well Annie why don’t you begin this by telling our viewers what the Bible Times Learning Center is all about.

Annie Thrasher: Well, we hope that those visitors, who come here, whether they're Jews or Christians, will be able to get an idea of what the Scripture is all about by placing it in the culture of the land at the time it was written. We especially for Christians hope this will be a very rich discipleship program because so much, especially of the west, just has no idea of what they are talking about when they are reading the Scriptures. They can't see what a tent like this might be for Abraham or for Sarah, or what a sheepfold might be, especially with so many people living in urban areas. So when you speak of the Lord as my Shepherd it sounds so beautiful and so poetic but what is the inner meaning? When you speak about an olive tree, you know, how does someone know what that is about unless they live in an area where there are olive trees. So when people come here they're able to place Scripture within the culture, within the history of the times it was written. And then, so it's just not vanity, to take that and apply it to your lives in some spiritual way. That your life becomes better and that's what the Word of God is supposed to be about, to enrich us.

Dr. Reagan: Is this center open to the general public.

Annie Thrasher: Absolutely, absolutely.

Dr. Reagan: So tour groups could come here.

Annie Thrasher: Tour groups come here we have Israeli groups that come almost on a daily basis. And of course the Christian groups come from around the world, which I think is very important because the Word says begin to tell the good news of the Gospel in Jerusalem.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, now Annie, we need to know a little bit about you. How did you end up here? Because you're not a native of Israel, are you?

Annie Thrasher: No, I'm not. I'm actually from the Texas area.

Dr. Reagan: Oh, from God's country. We are from God's country.

Annie Thrasher: Well actually we're a little farther north in Oklahoma.

Dr. Reagan: Oh, now wait a minute here!

Annie Thrasher: We think that Texas is Baja, in Oklahoma. But the funny thing about Israel is that some of the finest teachers have come from Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas. So....

Dr. Reagan: Well, I would agree with that. So how did you get here?

Annie Thrasher: Many, many years ago my brother was visiting here, and had a very small, very small ministry in the old city of Jerusalem. This was the late '70s and I brought a group of friends here, 25 people. And of course the study of this time, the second temple period, the time of Jesus, was my specialty. I sat with my friends and I explained to them the customs that they might see and the geography of the land. And when we came everyone was so beautifully prepared to receive more than what God could give them because they understood what they were seeing. But I noticed that there were thousands of people going around the country having no clue what so ever, they didn't know the Negev from the Galilee. Negev in the south, Galilee in the north. They didn't understand anything about the culture of the people and I'm talking about all the people in the land, the Jews, the Arabs, and the Gentiles. What do these people do in this land? How do they respond to the land? How do they respond to each other? And I went back and I thought how terribly sad for people to make maybe one trip in their life to the Holy Land and yet, never receive the fullness of what they could have gotten. Because if you have more information then the Holy Spirit can anoint so much more and quicken it to your spirit. So, that was the late '70s, and I said at that time I will do whatever I can to make the joy of knowing the land of Israel and the culture of Jesus more alive wherever I'm invited to go. So that's what I've done.

Dr. Reagan: And God fulfilled the desire of your heart.

Annie Thrasher: He did, but now, imagine that this has been since the late '70s, and so yes, it just shows that when you persevere in an anointing and in a vision that God gives you, it may take 40 years, but He does it. So....

Dr. Reagan: Well, one thing I want to emphasize is it's not just a place to come and tour it's a place of teaching. Tell us about some of the teaching stations just very quickly mention some of the stations you have.

Annie Thrasher: Well, throughout the entire garden we have built replicas of well, things that are quite obviously mentioned in the Bible. Olive trees, for instance. We can talk about the ways of olive trees, just in the Old Testament, and talk about how the olive tree is portrayed in Psalms. But then again we can also talk about it from Romans 11. We can talk about living water, where we have a living stream here. We can talk about an ancient tomb, and the customs of the burial and how does this relate to Jesus, the resurrection, oh, and Lazarus! Lazarus before that. We have a watch tower. The watch tower is modeled after a watch tower that was from the time of King David that was actually discovered in this village of Ein Karem. So, and oh, well you can see, this can be Abraham's tent, but most of the time it's my tent. It's Hannah. My Hebrew name is Hannah and it's Hannah's tent and I love to teach to about the ways of the Bible, what the women's responsibility was at the time of the patriarchs and the men's, obviously I've learned very well because I sit at a lower place.

Dr. Reagan: Well, over the next few weeks we're going to be sharing with our viewers some of your wonderful teachings at some of these teaching sites. But you know, it just occurred to me that what we ought to do as the very first teaching is just start right here in this nomadic tent and have one of your associates, who helps you with teaching, Sahker to tell us what this is all about.

Annie Thrasher: Oh that would be a pleasure. One of the unique things about this center is that we have people from varied backgrounds who come to share their perspective, not unlike yourself. And Sahker is one of our resident teachers. He is the best for describing things from an eastern perspective. Now most of your viewers will probably be from the west, and they see things and hear things through the western eyes and ears. But Sahker has taught me so much because his family has lived here for generation after generation, so to him it's life. I can talk about the life of the shepherd but he has seen it.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, in just a moment we'll be back and we'll take a look at the meaning of this nomadic tent. And we'll have Sahker to help us with it.

Part 2

Annie Thrasher: I welcome you to the patriarch's tent, here in Bible Times Learning Center in Ein Karem we are so pleased to have a replica of what life might have been like at the time of the matriarchs and the patriarchs. Now, I'm in the tent of hospitality and I don't belong here because I'm a woman, I just brought the water. So I'm going to step out and let my husband tell you more about the tent.

Sahker: Welcome to my tent! My wife took three years making this tent, you can see some of the wool right there in the corner. She's spinning this to make this tent, made from goat's hair. In winter time as soon as the water touches this tent it would close all the holes and become water proof so this is what we call the winter tent. Maybe in the summer when we have a very high temperature we might change it to another tent and even another color. Notice the colors around, red is sign of wealth, yes I'm quite wealthy. Usually it is two sections. You will see separation curtain in the middle where my wife would sit there and I would take this place. Now, usually my place is a little bit larger than my wife's place. This is the place where I welcome my guests, I'm just watching around to see anybody passing so I can invite him inside my tent, and I have very special way to do this. I just run outside and start shouting, Shalom Elechem! Shalom Elechem! It's a sign for my wife to hide because I don't want any stranger to see her. Then she can come inside later on and she could listen to what we are talking about. After she prepares the food, here where we can sit eat drink and from the other side she could listen to us.

Okay, see sheepskin here, usually sheepskin mean wealth too, because if you count how many sheepskins I have you could tell how many sheep I already ate and notice the pole right in the middle of the tent. This is what my wife would call the man. If I die, my wife would take this poll down for three days and nobody would use this tent. This mean that the man, the master just passed away. We live in a desert, a very dry place, we're nomadic people. As you see, it's a tent, temporary place for me to live because I'm going to move as soon as my water finish in the spring right next to me, then I will go and look

for more water. We have plenty food here, but we don't have a lot of water, so I would move my tent, my wives, my children, my cattle, and go and look for spring water. Then if we find water I might settle, if not I will dig a well. Remember I have four wives here, means I have a lot of children. We can do it very easy. Then as soon as I have my own well, this is meant for me, for my family, maybe for my tribe, and if you come to use this water, I will fight you. You've got to be careful not to get any water you find in the region because it might be owned by people. Now my wife my daughters should not go to the well anytime they want because I make a time table here. Early in the morning I would allow for my wives and my daughters to go to the well to get some water for here in the tent, and after the shepherds would come to fill the mangers for the animals to drink. Then at the end of the day I would send my wives again with my daughters to bring more water and that's it for that day. The shepherds would come and close the well and go to the sheepfolds. Notice that I use a big stone to close that well, needs two men to take up and down and only man could do this, no woman at all. Please remember, man and woman should not meet at the well.

Annie Thrasher: You've heard a lot about what my husband's had to say about the women in his life. But I want you to know, that he had to ask me because I was the first wife, about his second and his third and his fourth. But if you really heard what he had to say, you understand that the women have a huge role in his life, we are here to make him look good. We need to honor him because he is the head of our family. He is the father of all of our children, so if we serve him well, and serve his guest well, if I run my household well, with the other wives of course, then it shows that he has trained us well, and it brings honor to him and honor to the whole tribe. Now there are many things that we have to do and he just mentioned the water. But you know we have to take care of the children, we need to watch after the shepherds to make sure they're watching after the sheep. Make sure that the sheep are shorn at the right time, we have to make that thread to we can build our tents and work on our clothes. And prepare for winter and as we gather food we've got to save the food for, well, not a rainy day, but a dusty day. So the woman's job is very, very important and of course it always makes it easier if there's more than one of us. So we don't object to the four wives in most cases. But Sahker, my husband he has a tent to himself and this is a whole tent of hospitality but he is required to give one tent to each of his wives and so we do have some privacy and some privileges that most women may not have if they've just one wife. So, Sahker...

Sahker: Well, I told you that I have four wives, the idea is if any of them doesn't like what I say or doesn't want to do what I ask her to do, she can go home. I'll bring another one.

Annie Thrasher: How about that? It's just that simple. He can send the other wives home, but remember he always has to ask the wives he has before he invites another wife into his tent, and well, who can say? We try to be very good to him and make him an honorable man so that his tent is honored, his family is honored, his tribe is honored, and everyone knows about his hospitality because that's what he does the best.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Well Annie I want to thank you and Sahker for that very enlightening teaching, I tell you, and boy that was something else. Our crew here was standing in the background it was all they could do to keep from shouting particularly when you kept talking about the role of the wife.

Annie Thrasher: Yes, I have found that most cultures who come to visit here really enjoy the perspective on hospitality, and the role of the woman and the man.

Dr. Reagan: Well, let me ask you this, how can we take now what you have just told us about life, the nomadic lifestyle, and apply it to a better understanding of the Bible.

Annie Thrasher: Well, there are several things that we can talk about. One, as you recall, Sahker, my husband, he mentioned that if you were to see messengers coming from afar that he could get up and go to them and shout Shalom Elechem! Peace be unto you, and if they responded with "Elechem Shalom", and then showed their hands, they would see "ah, no weapons." So, he would know its safe, but now by that time, his wife or wives and daughters had disappeared just in case. Now, we notice that in the story of Abraham, he invited the messengers to come to the tent and then he hurried and he said to Sarah, bake bread, go have the servants kill a fatted calf, you know, make a feast. I basically want to impress these messengers. He wasn't quite sure who they were but he knew that he wanted to impress them about his wealth, his position and

his authority in the area and that was very important. Now, Sarah of course, later in the story, she hears the men speaking and the messengers say, "Where is Sarah your wife?" Now, that's very rude. In this culture you wouldn't ask about a man's wife at all, and you certainly wouldn't call her by name. But nonetheless, Abraham backs off a little bit, and he says "Well, what do you know about this?" He says "Well, at this time next year, Sarah will have a baby." And Sarah is listening. Now some people may think that she was eavesdropping.

Dr. Reagan: That is what I always thought.

Annie Thrasher: Yeah, well maybe, maybe she was eavesdropping a little bit, but actually it was her job to listen from outside of the tent of hospitality in case there was an instruction for the servants. After all, if they needed something, he would hear Abraham mention we need more water, we need more spices, we need more fruit, and it would be up to her to get the servants together and make sure he was served appropriately. But what she did was completely lose her mind and she started laughing. And she thought this was the funniest thing, and now, I mean, she was the wife, his main wife, barren and probably 90 years old. And I would laugh too. But the fact is that the name Isaac means laughter.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, well. Now, during the wilderness wanderings when they came out of Egypt I guess all of the children of Israel lived a lifestyle like this, wouldn't that be true?

Annie Thrasher: Oh, I would say so, absolutely.

Dr. Reagan: And they also have a nomadic temple.

Annie Thrasher: Yes they did.

Dr. Reagan: The tabernacle of Moses.

Annie Thrasher: Tabernacle in the wilderness, absolutely.

Dr. Reagan: And most people don't seem to realize that it was a tent tabernacle where you could just simply set it up and move it on and keep moving.

Annie Thrasher: Yes, it had a very specific way of being set out in the desert and the tribes were set out all around the tent and in fact, in front of the gate of the tabernacle in the wilderness was the tribe of Judah, which I think is very interesting because that means praise.

Dr. Reagan: Now once a year, people over here in Israel set up something that is supposed to represent a tent to remind them that their forefathers lived in the wilderness and God preserved them. Tell about that.

Annie Thrasher: In the fall there is a holiday called Sukkot which means booth. Now many Christians know about this because they also call it the Feast of Tabernacle. And of course this is a tabernacle in the wilderness. Tabernacle simply means a tent or a booth, it's not THE tabernacle in the wilderness which would be the temple of God in the wilderness but just a tent. And the reason that they set these up in the fall was historically to understand and remember their days of wandering in the desert but that's not quite accurate. We say wander, but they had a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. So they were actually following the Lord, wherever He decided to move. But when they got into this land, of course, it was a permanent place for God to reside in a physical building, if you will.

Now, the tabernacles were then set up to remind them of the time that God directed their path and brought them, fed them manna, brought them quail, provided for their needs. Their clothes never needed to be repaired, their sandals never wore out on their feet, this was miraculous signs of wonder of how the God of the Hebrews took care of them no matter where they went or for how long. When they got into the land they were able to plant and of course if you have a field you're going to have to watch that field. So very often they would build tabernacles, or tents, close to the fields when they were harvesting just for convenience. But it was also for protection too so that nothing would happen, so no thieves might come in by night. But if you recall the story of Ruth and Boaz, Boaz was sleeping in a tent near his field, and there were obviously women there because women did assist in the harvest.

Dr. Reagan: And would you just explain something there, what was the significance of her coming and lying at his feet.

Annie Thrasher: Ah, well, that's actually a very long teaching. But I will tell you in short.

Dr. Reagan: Okay.

Annie Thrasher: A Hebrew man would wear tassels on his clothes as described in the Bible that in the four corners of his clothing there would be a fringe. Some people see a prayer shawl today as a fringed garment, and Jesus spoke to the Pharisees talking about the very long fringes and how that was really prideful, that wasn't necessary. It was simply a sign. Now, the fringes there are 613 fringes and knots which directly corresponds to the 613 laws of Moses. The have and the have nots, the thou shall, and thou shall not. Okay, if you will and those are a man's authority. It shows that he abides by the God of heaven and this is the outward manifestation that he is a person who follows the law, he's a righteousness man. In other words, he follows the way that God has given him. Now, in the case of Boaz, if someone came to his feet and it says he spread his garment over her that would mean that she was now under his authority. So Ruth, by going into his tent, which is really scandal-less, nonetheless, shook the authority of the prayer shawl and put it over her and then he didn't object. And then right after that, having seen the faithfulness of Ruth throughout this entire harvest season. He then goes to the near kinsman who could have redeemed her life, and asked permission, "Well, do you want her." He said, "No." and so then Boaz himself took Ruth as his wife and made her permanently under his authority. So this is a wonderful story not only because Ruth was a Moabite who should never have had any part of the lineage of Jesus, and yet, she made herself a part of the covenant and the promises of God, through Boaz and the authority of Boaz. And in that, she was honored because she is of the line of Jesus as she was married and made the great-grandmother of David the king.

Dr. Reagan: A beautiful example of how understanding Hebraic roots and the culture and the lifestyle in the time of Jesus helps us to so much better understand and appreciate the stories of the Bible. With all this talk about tabernacles, I must end by

saying that it reminds me of a promise of Jesus. That one day very soon He's going to return to tabernacle among us, and the signs of the times indicate that's going to happen any moment. Maranatha, come quickly Lord Jesus.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: Folks I hope you found the information in this program about biblical living to be as fascinating as I did when we were shooting it. This is the first in a series of programs that we're going to present about what it was like to live in biblical times. Next week, the Lord willing, we're going to take a look at the last supper that Jesus had with his disciples. Our hostess, Annie Thrasher, will explain how the Passover meal got started and how it was conducted in the time of Jesus. She will also analyze for us Leonardo DaVinci's painting of the last supper and explain why almost everything in the painting is depicted in an improper manner. If you'd like to find out more information about the Bible Times Learning Center, you can find it at the website address you see on the screen. It is a wonderful place to visit and it is a ministry that could use your financial support. If you'd like to make a donation to the work of this ministry, just send your check to us here at Lamb and Lion Ministries at the address you see on the screen. Designate it for the Bible Times Learning Center, and we will see that it gets to Annie Thrasher and her staff. Well, that's our program for this week I hope you can be back with us again next week when we focus on the last supper. Until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries saying, Look up! Be watchful! For our redemption is drawing near.

End of Program