

## Christ in Prophecy

### Galilee 1: Introduction to the Galilee of Jesus

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#### Introduction

**Group Singing:** Hallelu, Hallelujah, Hallelu, Hallelujah, Hallelu, Hallelujah, Hallelujah

**Dr. Reagan:** The Galilee of Israel. How familiar are you with it? Jesus loved it. It's the place where He selected His apostles, it's where He established the headquarters of His ministry, it's where He preached and healed. For a first hand introduction to this beautiful area of the Holy Land, stay tuned.

#### Part 1

**Dr. Reagan:** Welcome to Israel. I'm Dave Reagan senior evangelist for Lamb and Lion Ministries, and this is my colleague, Dennis Pollock. We're in the northern area of Israel in a part of the country called the Galilee. This is the area where Jesus grew up and where He concentrated His ministry for three and a half years.

**Dennis Pollock:** Below us is the Sea of Galilee, it's actually a very large fresh water lake that's 13 miles long by 8 miles wide. Its average depth is about 150 feet. It's fed by springs and by water that comes from the melting snows of Mount Hermon in the north on the border with Syria. At the south end it empties into the Jordan River and flows south to the Dead Sea.

**Dr. Reagan:** As you can see from this particular sign, another feature of the Sea of Galilee is that it's situated below sea level. In fact it is located far below sea level. It's situated in what is called the Great Rift Valley, the lowest point on the surface of the earth. The sea itself is 700 feet below sea level.

**Dennis Pollock:** In this program we want to introduce you to this Galilee area of Israel. We want to give you a sweeping overview of this area that was so important in the life of Jesus.

**Dr. Reagan:** So let's start with the largest city located on the shores of the sea, the city of Tiberius.

Modern day Tiberius is a town of about 40,000 people. It is the largest town located on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Its beautiful, modern hotels attest to the fact that its prosperity is heavily dependent upon tourism. The town was built by Herod Antipas between 18 and 20 A.D. about seven years before Jesus began His ministry. It was named Tiberius after the reigning roman emperor of that time.

**Dennis Pollock:** When selecting a site for his town, Herod was probably drawn to this area by these ancient hot springs. The water coming out of the ground here is about 140 degrees Fahrenheit! Yow! Even to this day, people come to Tiberius from all over Israel to enjoy the hot mineral baths. While the town was being built an ancient burial ground was discovered. For that reason Jews concluded that it was unclean and most refused to enter it.

**Dr. Reagan:** Tiberius was therefore strictly a Roman town. And you know, it's doubtful that Jesus ever entered it.

**Dennis Pollock:** However, we know for sure that Jesus had supporters in the city, because we're told in John 6:23 that the day after He fed the 5,000 a fleet of small boats full of people from Tiberius arrived on the eastern shore of the sea seeking to find Jesus.

**Dr. Reagan:** Let's take a look for a moment at a map of the Galilee before we continue. The sea is shaped like an ancient handheld Jewish harp, and because of this shape it was often referred to in the time of Jesus as the Sea of Kinneret after the Hebrew word "kinnor" for harp.

**Dennis Pollock:** The area known as the Galilee consists of more than just the sea. It includes all this area from the south end of the sea to the northern borders with Lebanon and Syria. And from the east coast of the sea to the Mediterranean here on the west. The area around the Sea of Galilee into the west is called the lower Galilee. And the area to the north is known as the upper Galilee.

**Dr. Reagan:** The two most important towns in the area with respect to the life of Jesus are Nazareth here where Jesus grew up and of course Capernaum here which served as the headquarters of His ministry. We are standing here in Tiberius amid the ruins of an ancient crusader fortress. Dennis, why don't you tell us what this area was like during the time of Jesus.

**Dennis Pollock:** Ok, Dave, well you know, Isaiah referred to this region as the Galilee of the Gentiles. That's because it was ruled by a succession of Gentile empires from the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. The region did not come back under Jewish rule until 80 B.C.

**Dr. Reagan:** By the time of Jesus, there was so much foreign influence that Galileans could be recognized by their distinctive accent. You know like in the United States, a southern drawl or a southwestern twang. For example, after the arrest of Jesus when Peter was confronted in the courtyard of the home of the high priest, he was told "surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away."

**Dennis Pollock:** Among the Roman administrators at the time of Jesus the Galilee had a reputation as a hotbed of subversive activity. Among the Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem it was regarded as a heathen province riddled with religious cults. For this reason, the attitude of the Jews toward the Galilee was best summed up by the expression, "Can anything good come out of Galilee?"

**Dr. Reagan:** On one occasion the Pharisees denounced Jesus by saying, "Search the Scriptures and you will see that no prophet arises out of Galilee."

**Dennis Pollock:** But they were wrong, for Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would come out of Galilee. In a beautifully worded passage in Isaiah 9, he wrote, "the people who walk in darkness will see a great light that will come out of the Galilee of the Gentiles and that light will be God's presence."

**Dr. Reagan:** The Jewish historian Josephus reports that at the time of Jesus, there were nine towns on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, all with a population of 15,000 or more. Today, there is only one town of any size and that is Tiberius located here on the west coast where we are right now. On the north coast, was Capernaum, the headquarters of Jesus' ministry, today it lies in ruins. We're going to start heading north now, up the shore, to the tiny village of Magdala and then we'll head on up to Ginenosar, a kibbutz or collective farm, it's located here. The village of Magdala or Migdal was founded around the First Century B.C. By the time of Jesus it had become one of the centers of Jewish life in the Galilee known primarily for its fishing industry. Well here we are in the ancient village of Magdala or Migdal. As you can see, today it's simply

ruins. This term 'Migdal' in Hebrew means tower. And it could very well be that what we see remaining behind us here are the remains of the ancient tower.

**Dennis Pollock:** In Christian history, this village is best known as the home town of Mary Magdalene. According to Luke 8, she was healed by Jesus of evil spirits and sickness. In fact the passage states that Jesus cast seven demons out of her.

**Dr. Reagan:** The same passage in Luke 8 says that another woman named Joanna became a supporter of Jesus at the same time. Amazingly it says she was the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward.

**Dennis Pollock:** Now since Tiberius was Herod's headquarters it's very likely that Joanna lived there, only four miles from this site. She probably knew Mary and became a believer when she witnessed Mary's healing.

**Dr. Reagan:** The two of them, Mary and Joanna were present at the cross and later they went to the tomb together to anoint Jesus' body.

**Dennis Pollock:** In Mark 16:9 we're told that after the Lord's resurrection, Mary was the first person to whom Jesus appeared. And in John 20 we're told that she ran to the disciples and proclaimed "I have seen the Lord!" Because of Mary's love for the Lord and her faithfulness to Him, this village became famous and will always be remembered.

**Dr. Reagan:** In 1986 the world was reminded of the village of Magdala when an amazing discovery was made right here along the shore of the town.

**Dennis Pollock:** The sea had fallen to its all time low in modern history, in January of that year, two fisherman brothers walking along here discovered the shell of a boat that was encased in the exposed mud.

**Dr. Reagan:** The boat was in very fragile condition. To keep the wood from disintegrating when being exposed to the air, it was encased in polyurethane foam. It was then floated to a kibbutz located on the north shore where conservation procedures were carried out. Today the kibbutz houses the boat in a very special museum. Let's make that our next stop. The Jesus boat is located at this collective farm named Kibbutz Ginnosar, which was founded in 1937. This kibbutz runs a first class motel facility that caters to tourists. This special building was constructed by the kibbutz to house the Jesus Boat. The boat is 26 ½ feet long by 7 ½ feet wide. Its construction, utilizing mortise and tendon joints indicates that it was built by a master craftsman. It was probably used for fishing, but it also could have been used as a ferry boat, accommodating up to 15 people. Some scholars speculate that the boat may have been sunk during the fierce sea battles between Jewish rebels and Roman legions that took place on the Sea of Galilee in 67 A.D. Ok, let's take another look at our map. We started here at Tiberius, our first stop was at Magdala, we're now at Kibbutz Ginnosar and we are ready now to start heading east along the north shore of the Sea of Galilee to visit some of the most important sights that relate to the ministry of Jesus. They are Tabgha, Capernaum, Bethsaida and the Hill of the Beatitudes. Our first stop will be here at Tabgha.

**Dennis Pollock:** Well here we are at Tabgha. This area was a prosperous fishing village in the time of Jesus.

**Dr. Reagan:** There are two churches located here. The first is called a The Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fish. It marks the traditional site where Jesus fed the multitude of 4,000.

**Dennis Pollock:** Here's a famous mosaic that was found at this site. It was on the floor of a Byzantine church that was built here in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century. As you can see, it depicts a basket of bread with a fish on each side.

**Dr. Reagan:** It was in this area that Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James and John to be His disciples. And you know folks, every time I think of that call, I am reminded of a great hymn by the 19<sup>th</sup> century American poet John G. Whittier, in which he referred to the Sea of Galilee as the Syria Sea. Here's how it goes: "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind, forgive our foolish ways. Re-cloth us in our rightful mind. In purer lives thy service find in deeper reverence praise. In simple trust like theirs who heard, besides the Syrian Sea. The gracious calling of the Lord, let us like them without a word, rise up and follow Thee. O Sabbath rest by Galilee. O calm of hills above, where Jesus knelt to share with Thee, the silence of eternity interpreted by love." Listen again to the words of the key verse. "In simple trust like theirs who heard, besides the Syrian Sea. The gracious calling of the Lord, let us like them without a word, rise up and follow Thee." Peter, Andrew, James and John met the Lord here and gave their lives to him. 3 ½ years later, they had another encounter with Him here, after His resurrection.

**Dennis Pollock:** The second church on this site commemorates that meeting. It's called the church of Peter's primacy. As you can see it was built of the black volcanic basalt rock that littering the hills of this region.

**Dr. Reagan:** The story of the disciple's post-resurrection meeting with Jesus here is told in the gospel of John. It seems the disciples were fishing one morning in this area, when Jesus suddenly appeared here on the shore. He called out to them and asked if they had caught any fish. They said no and then He then told them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat.

**Dennis Pollock:** And when they did, they caught so many fish they couldn't haul them all in. At that point, Peter suddenly realized the man on the shore was Jesus, and in his typically impulsive matter Peter jumped in the water and started swimming to the shore. He could not contain his excitement over seeing his risen Lord.

**Dr. Reagan:** When all the rest of the disciples reached the shore in the boat, they all sat down and enjoyed a fish fry with Jesus.

**Dennis Pollock:** It was during that breakfast that Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love me?" And each time, Peter assured the Lord that he did. Isn't that remarkable? Think of it. After Jesus is arrest, and before His crucifixion, Peter denied Him three times. Now, after the resurrection, Jesus gives Peter the opportunity to offset his three denials with three expressions of his love. Folks, that's what I call grace. This statue commemorates Jesus' restoration of Peter. Here is a view of the north shore of the Sea of Galilee from above. Just one hour's walk from Tabgha along the seashore was the most important town in the ministry of Jesus, his home base of Capernaum. This was the hometown of the Apostle Peter's wife, and their home is where Jesus probably lived during His Galilean ministry of 3 ½ years. The Basalt structure is a modern catholic monastery. It is built near the traditional site of Peter's house. The lovely red dome church building to the left was built by the Greek Orthodox in 1931. It serves as a monastery today.

**Dr. Reagan:** Jesus performed many of His most memorable miracles in Capernaum. Later in our series we'll visit this town up close and consider in detail its significance in the life and ministry of Jesus. The hill we are standing on is the traditional site of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. It's called The Mount of the Beatitudes. At the top is a beautiful chapel called The Chapel of the Beatitudes. Let's go take a look at it. This lovely chapel located on the top of The Mount of the Beatitudes was built in 1937 and was constructed of the local black basalt rock that

covers the hills of this area. The chapel is octagonal in shape. Each of the eight walls commemorate one of the beatitudes that Jesus spoke in His Sermon on the Mount.

**Dennis Pollock:** Jesus began His famous sermon here with these words, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the gentle for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” What a contrast to the attitude of the world. The world says blessed are the beautiful, the intelligent, the wealthy and the powerful. Jesus on the other hand says, “Blessed are the humble, the meek, the gentle, the merciful, and the pure in heart.” Let’s go to the back side of the chapel for a panoramic view of the Galilee before we proceed back to the shores of the sea.

**Dr. Reagan:** As we take one last look at the Galilee from the top of this mount. I want to share with you some additional words of Jesus from the magnificent sermon that He delivered here. “Do not be anxious for your life as to what you shall eat or what you shall drink. Nor for the body as to what you shall wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the flowers of the field grow. They do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. If God arrays the grass of the fields which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into a furnace, will He not do much more for you, O men of little faith? Do not worry then, saying what will we eat? Or what will we drink? Or what will we wear for clothing? But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be added until you.”

**Dennis Pollock:** Well let’s return now to the seashore at keep heading east from Capernaum. As we do so we’ll come to the area where the Jordan River enters the sea.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well, believe it or not, I am wading in one of the most famous rivers in the world, the Jordan River. And as you can see, it’s not much of a river. It’s actually just a small stream. In fact, in Texas, we would call it a creek. Dennis, come on in brother.

**Dennis Pollock:** Dave, I’m going to let you have all the fun this time. Folks, this is where the river enters the Sea of Galilee on the North. The river originates 25 miles north of here at a place called Caesarea Philippi, where it simply bubbles up out of the ground. That site is at the base of Mount Hermon, Israel’s highest mountain. The water comes from natural springs and from the melting snow on the mountain.

**Dr. Reagan:** Just on the other side of the river to the east is the site of another town where Jesus focused His ministry, the town of Bethsaida. Let’s take a look at it. This is a site, which in 1987 was proclaimed by the Israeli government to be the ancient village of Bethsaida.

**Dennis Pollock:** For 2,000 years Christian pilgrims earnestly searched for this site. After the birth of archaeology as a science, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, two of the three cities of Jesus’ Galilean ministry were quickly discovered, namely Capernaum and Korazin. But the location of Bethsaida remained a mystery.

**Dr. Reagan:** Even now, archaeologists are divided on the issue, but most agree this was the site. But others argue that a site nearer to the sea is the actual one. The Bible indicates that the

town was located on the shore of the sea, and near the Jordan River. As you can see, this site is almost 1 ½ miles from the sea and it is not adjacent to the river.

**Dennis Pollock:** But geological experts say that during the 2,000 years since the time of Jesus, deposits from the Jordan raised the ground level, the course of the river changed, and the sea itself receded. Let's go take a look at the gates of the city. Well, here we are at the gates of the town. The name of this town, Bethsaida, means "house of the fisherman". And much evidence has been found that it was, in fact, a fishing village. Which means that in the time of Jesus, the sea must have come up to this area.

**Dr. Reagan:** This is the hometown of Peter. He moved to Capernaum later in life, probably after he got married. It was also the hometown of Andrew and Philip.

**Dennis Pollock:** Several significant events occurred here in the ministry of Jesus. It's here that He performed a unique miracle by restoring a blind man's sight in stages. And on the plain just below the town, Jesus fed the 5,000 with five loaves and two fish.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well it's time for us to start heading south along the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. We plan to make three stops. First we will visit the site here called the Gadarenes. This is where Jesus cast demons out of two men. Then we will proceed to the southern end of the sea to one of the oldest, the oldest Kibbutzim in all of Israel, called Kibbutz Degania. From there we will go to our last stop, Yardenit, the Christian baptismal center. Our next stop will be in the area called the Gadarenes, or the Gerasense, where the mountains come down to the sea. What you see here are the remains of an ancient Byzantine church in a place called Kirsee, located at the foothills of the Gadarenes. This is the traditional site where Jesus miraculously healed two demon possessed men. Above us are the Golan Heights, where were occupied by Syria until the Six Day War in 1967. The Syrian's used to shoot from those heights at anything that moved down here, and that included lobbing shells at boats on the Sea of Galilee.

**Dennis Pollock:** According to Matthew 8, Jesus was confronted here by two demon possessed men who were so wild and so strong that no one could subdue them. When one of the men saw Jesus, he ran to Him, bowed down and the demon within him cried out, "You are Jesus, the Son of the Most High God."

**Dr. Reagan:** And when Jesus asked the man his name, he said it was legion because he was possessed by a great host of demons.

**Dennis Pollock:** Jesus immediately ordered the demons to depart from the men. They obeyed, but when they departed, they entered a herd of swine that was grazing nearby. When they did so, the pigs went crazy. They rushed off a steep bank and fell into the sea, and 2,000 of them drowned. Here's some good news, the Bible says that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. That means He's still interested in the people who are possessed, and He's still willing to deliver them. What about you? You may not be possessed by a demon, but you may be possessed by lust, money, alcohol, drugs, or power. If so, I urge you to turn to Jesus, confess your obsession and cry out to Him for deliverance.

**Dr. Reagan:** Thank you Dennis for that powerful word. We really appreciate that. And I think we're ready now folks to go to Kibbutz Degania.

**Dennis Pollock:** Right.

**Dr. Reagan:** Wait a minute, wait a minute. Before we go there is one lighthearted observation that I would like to add. Are you ready for this?

**Dennis Pollock:** I guess I'll have to be.

**Dr. Reagan:** Ok. I once heard a preacher read this story that you were just talking about, about what happened here.

**Dennis Pollock:** Uh-huh.

**Dr. Reagan:** And he told about how the demons entered the swine, they ran down and all, and then he looked up from the reading and he smiled very broadly and he said, "Now you know the origin of deviled ham."

**Dennis Pollock:** Oh, Dave, that's terrible!

**Dr. Reagan:** These are the grounds of Kibbutz Degania, located at the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee.

**Dennis Pollock:** This is a very historic place, because it was the very first kibbutz, or collective farming community to be established in Israel. That was in 1910. This kibbutz became a model for many other collective communities that were established from one end of Israel to the other. These communities served as fortresses to protect the Jews from hostile Arabs. They quickly became the economic foundation of the nation.

**Dr. Reagan:** It was through the labor of these communities that the land was reclaimed in fulfillment of the prophecy in the book of Ezekiel where it says that in the end times, when the Jews return to their homeland, the desolate land will become like the Garden of Eden. And the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities will be fortified and inhabited.

**Dennis Pollock:** Today, approximately 530 people live here, and they earn their living in a variety of ways, primarily through agriculture, and the manufacture of high tech cutting tools for diamonds. Incidentally, this kibbutz was the birthplace of one of Israel's most famous generals Moshe Dayan. He was one of the architects of Israel's overwhelming victory in the Six Day War of 1967.

**Dr. Reagan:** Ok, let's complete our introductory tour of the Galilee by visiting the Christian baptismal site called Yardenit. It's located right around the corner from here. This is the beautiful site called Yardenit, where most Christian pilgrims come to witness their faith in baptism.

**Dennis Pollock:** Some consider this place to be the traditional site of the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, but that simply could not be true because John preached in the wilderness of Judea, and did his baptizing in that area near where the Jordan River enters the Dead Sea, and that's many miles south of here.

**Dr. Reagan:** I praise God for this great facility because I can remember what it was like before this place was built. When I first started coming over here in the late 70's, we had to wade out in the river and sink ankle deep in the mud and try to baptize people without losing them in the river's current. There was no place to change clothes or to dry off afterwards. I tell you what let's do Dennis. Why don't we go down to one of the baptismal places and I'll baptize one of the members of the crew.

**Dennis Pollock:** Sounds great.

**Dr. Reagan:** Ok. This is Sam McCullough, from Owasso, Oklahoma. Sam is one of the volunteer members of our video crew and also a trustee of Lamb and Lion Ministries. I'm going

to baptize him now in the Jewish style, as a witness of his faith. Many, many years ago, Isaiah the prophet said that the Messiah would be born of a virgin, and that His name would be called Emmanuel, meaning God with us. He also said that the Messiah would be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace. Sam, do you believe that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled those prophecies of Isaiah?

**Sam McCullough:** I do.

**Dr. Reagan:** I know you do, and brother, I'm going to baptize you now, in the name of Yeshua Hamashiah as a witness of your faith.

**Sam McCullough:** Hallelujah!

**Dr. Reagan:** Praise the Lord!

**Dennis Pollock:** When Dave baptizes people here, he always likes to mention Jesus' fulfillment of prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures. And he likes to baptize in the Jewish name of Jesus, and in Jewish style, because there are usually Jewish people here who are observing. Well, folks, it's late in the afternoon and the sun is about to set here on the Sea of Galilee.

**Dr. Reagan:** And as the sun sets, I'd like to share with you a poem that was written by one of America's greatest poets, Carl Sandberg. The poem is entitled "Epistle", and it reads like this: "Jesus loved the sunsets on Galilee. And Jesus loved the fishing boats forming silhouettes against the sunsets on Galilee. But most of all, Jesus loved the fishermen on the fishing boats forming silhouettes against the sunsets of Galilee. And when Jesus said, 'Goodbye, goodbye, I will come again,' He meant that goodbye and that promise for the fishing boats, the fishermen, the silhouettes, all and any against the sunsets of Galilee. And that goodbye, and that promise meant all or nothing at all."

**Dennis Pollock:** Well, what does that promise mean to you? If you are a Christian, it should mean everything, and your response to it should be a commitment to holiness and evangelism. And if you are not a Christian, then the promise means nothing, and that's sad, because my friends, Jesus really is returning. He's going to fulfill the second coming prophecies just like He fulfilled all the prophecies about His First Coming.

**Dr. Reagan:** And when He returns, He's going to be either your Blessed Hope, or your Holy Terror. You will either greet Him with rejoicing or you will run from Him in fear.

**Dennis Pollock:** That's because our Heavenly Father, being a just God, must deal with sin, and He does so with either grace or wrath. All of us have sinned and that means all of us are subject to the wrath of God unless we place our faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. When you do that, you're delivered from wrath into the glorious grace of God, and you are sealed for redemption. I urge you to do that now. Confess to God that you are a sinner, repent of your sins, and cry out to God for salvation, placing your faith in Jesus. And from that moment on, you will live looking for the glorious day when Jesus will return to this earth as the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well folks, that's our program for this week. We hope you will be back with us next week when we will take a close-up look at Nazareth the village in the Galilee where Jesus grew up and began His ministry. 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**

