

Christ in Prophecy

Israel 14: “The Eastern Gate in Prophecy”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: One of the most exciting aspects of Bible prophecy is the literal fulfillment of end time prophecies in Israel today. For an overview of these fulfilled prophecies, and for an in-depth look at one of them, stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy! As I said at the beginning of this program, one of the things that excites me the most about Bible prophecy is that we are living in a time when we can see many of the Bible’s end time prophecies fulfilled before our very eyes. In the 20th Century, seven of the end time prophecies related to Israel were either fulfilled or were in the process of being fulfilled. They were:

(1) The Regathering of the Jewish People from the four corners of the world. (2) The Re-establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. (3) The Reclamation of the Land from a barren wasteland to an agricultural land of abundance. (4) The Revival of the Hebrew Language from the dead. (5) The Re-occupation of the City of Jerusalem on June 7, 1967. (6) The Resurgence of Israeli Military Power. (7) The Re-focusing of World Politics on the nation of Israel.

All of these events represent the fulfillment in whole or in part of very specific end time prophecies that can be found in the Hebrew Scriptures. In this program, we are going to take a look at a prophecy whose fulfillment began before the 20th Century. It was not in the list of the seven that I just gave you. It is an amazing prophecy whose fulfillment began in the 16th Century and has continued to this day. It has to do with the Eastern Gate that you see here on the picture behind me on the wall. For the remarkable story of this gate and its relationship to end time Bible prophecy, let’s go to Jerusalem.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: In 1967 when the Six Day War broke out I was a professor of International Law and Politics, and because I was following international politics I followed that Six Day War very carefully. I will never forget that when the war was over I read a very interesting news article one day that said that when the Israeli’s decided that they were going to take this Old City which was under the occupation of the Jordanian forces, the logical way to do it was to hit it from the west over at the Joffa Gate, certainly not here because all this territory was under Jordanian control. But the Israeli’s always relying on surprise decided no we are going to hit from this side, we’ll come around under the cover of darkness and hit from this side. And it said that while they were discussing that they discussed the possibility of blowing open this gate with satchel charges and

catching the Jordanians by surprise. Then it said that when that suggestion was made an Orthodox Rabbi was there who said, "No, you will do that over my dead body because that gate is supposed to be closed until the Messiah returns." Well I had no idea what that was all about folks. I had grown up in a church that did not teach Bible prophecy. I knew nothing about Bible prophecy. So I got out a concordance and I looked up the word gate and I started looking at verses and guess what? I discovered Ezekiel 44 which has a prophecy that says, "This gate is going to be closed, and it will not reopen until the Messiah comes."

Then I got out the Encyclopedia Britannica and I started reading about the Eastern Gate and it said that no one knows for sure why this wall was closed. But the best story is that when these walls were being rebuilt in the 1500's by Suleiman the Magnificence that a rumor swept Jerusalem that the Messiah was coming. And they called the Rabbis in and said, "What does this mean?" "When the Messiah comes He is going to come from the east, He is going to go through the Eastern Gate and He is going to run all of you aliens out and He is going to become the Messiah the ruler over the earth." They dismissed the Rabbis and the order was given, "Seal up the Eastern Gate. Put a Muslim cemetery in front of it, that will take care of the Messiah because He won't walk in a Muslim cemetery and He can't go through a gate that's closed." Well folks that is a special story for me because that is what got me interested in Bible prophecy. I was hooked from that point on. I could not believe that I was seeing a prophecy fulfilled before my very eyes in the 20th century at that time. And so I started studying Bible prophecy intently. That is why I call this gate the gate to prophecy as far it concerns me personally.

Let's continue our consideration of the Eastern Gate in Prophecy by going to the pinnacle of the Mount of Olives where we will begin with a view of the Temple Mount from inside the Dominus Flevit Chapel.

Part 3

I'm standing about halfway up the Mt. of Olives on the grounds of the Dominus Flevit Chapel. I love to come here because of the fact that it has so much significance in the history of Jesus Christ. When Jesus would come to Jerusalem He would always stay in the little town of Bethany on the other side of this mountain. And then He would walk over and probably stop somewhere around here in the morning and pray looking over the city and the Temple, and then go on down to the Temple Mount. During the last week of his life when He made his Triumphal Entry here into Jerusalem He rode into this town on a donkey and He was hailed Hosanna the Son of David. But that same crowd was yelling for His crucifixion a week later. But He is going to return. And His return is going to be very different from His first coming.

Let me just contrast the two for you for a moment. The first time Jesus came He came humbly on a donkey. He is going to return on a white war charger the symbol of a victorious General. The first time He came He came humbly to walk to a cross and die for the sins of mankind, but He is coming back to pour out the wrath of God upon those who have rejected the grace, mercy and love of God. The first time He came He came with eyes filled with tears; He wept at the tomb of Lazarus, He wept over the city of Jerusalem. But it says when He returns His eyes will be like white hot coals of fire because He is coming in judgment. First time He came He was given one crown, a crown of thorns which was pressed down upon His head until the blood ran down upon His shoulders. But when He returns He's going to come back with all the crowns of all the kingdoms of the world. Every time I bring a group up here to this particular spot I give them that teaching and talk about how the second time Jesus comes He is going to ride down

into that Kidron Valley and He is going to ride up to that Eastern Gate and it is going to blow open supernaturally as we are told in Psalm 24. He is going to go up on that Temple Mount and He is going to be coroneted the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

Back in about 1987 I brought a good size group over here not only to give them a tour of this land. But I brought them over here to attend the International Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. About 4,000 to 5,000 Christians a year attend that. I brought that group up here to Dominus Flevit and I presented the teaching that I just gave to you in a more extended form. And then that evening we went to get ready for the final evening of the celebration. They had a special thing for us to do; 4,000 to 5,000 Christians walked around the Old City of Jerusalem. We had bands that were playing, we were singing, we were waving banners, we were waving the flags of our country. We walked around the city to illustrate to the Jewish people that there are Christians in the world who stand behind Israel. And we ended that march around the city by walking up this very steep Mount of Olives. When we got to the top we stood there and watched the sunset over the city. And thousands of pilgrims sang hymns as the sunset, it was a very moving time. One of the persons that we had in our group was a man by the name of Terry Gibson. Terry was a trustee of our ministry at the time, pastor from the Houston, Texas area. When he got back to his room that night Terry was so moved by what he had experienced here at Dominus Flevit and in that march around that city and in that sunset that he experienced over the city of Jerusalem, that he sat down and began to write. He wrote a poem about the Eastern Gate. And that poem has since been published in several books. Here is what he wrote:

There is a gate in waiting
In the City of the King
It waits above the valley
And adorns a tranquil scene

Jerusalem is churning
On the north, south and west
Yet the Eastern Gate waits quietly
Above multitudes at rest

On Olive Mount, I stood one day
And viewed this Golden Gate
Amid singing saints and setting sun
In the spirit was my state

Looking o'er this glorious Gate
From atop that blessed mount
Two scenes of great events
I saw, and I now recount

One scene took place in ages past
The other is soon to be
In both there was the Son of God
And this Gate of Destiny

The first scene was triumphant
They hailed Him as a King
There were thousands in the valley
And "Hosannas" loud did ring

Many miracles of greatness
Had He done before their eyes
Giving sight to the blind
Calling forth the dead to rise

His disciples were elated
As they joined this happy throng
But little did they know
That their hopes would soon be gone

So long ago the prophet told
That lowly, He would come
Riding on a donkey's colt
Unbefitting the Righteous One

Yet thousands upon thousands
Stood in the valley on that day
And up the path to the eastern Gate
With palm branches did array

"Save us Son of David"
The multitude did cry
When suddenly, the crowd did change —
And they shouted "Crucify!"

Oh! What price our God did pay
While sinners yet were we
The mocking ones — The crown of thorns
Pierced hands — what agony!

And so the only Son of God
Was hung upon a cross
He'd come to earth in Godly love
To save those who were lost

Then the scene did fade away
And another took its place
For Jesus had said He would return
To redeem mankind's disgrace

On Olive Mount I stood again
I viewed the Eastern Gate
Yet it was closed, sealed with stone
Awaiting a King to coronate

Ezekiel long ago had said
The Gate would thus be so
Until the Prince returned to earth
Then all the world would know

Around the city armies stood
From nations of the world
And smoke and fire were everywhere
The armaments were hurled!

Yet the Golden Gate still quietly stood
While looking upward it seemed
Suddenly the trump did sound
It was the coming of the King!

And then I saw the Lord of Lords
Descending from on high
With multitudes of Heavenly Hosts
Behind Him in the sky

He came and stood on Olive Mount
And then the earth did shake
He spoke and all the armies fell
And the evil power did break

Upon a white and valiant steed
Down Olive Mount did ride
Through Kidron Valley up to the Gate
While the Jewish remnant cried

They looked on Him
whom they had pierced
And grieved as for a son
So bitterly they wept in shame
Yet with grace He did respond

And all the while the numbers grew
Of Angels and the Saints
Millions upon millions
Joined Him in the ranks

They sang "Hosanna to the Son of David"
"Hosanna to the King"
Throughout all heaven and the earth
The loud Hosannas ring

The Gate in waiting trembled
And the stones then blew apart
As the Holy One did enter
His eternal reign to start

Oh! What sweetness in that Day
The redeemed of God shall know
From Mount Zion in Jerusalem
The living waters flow

Are you yearning for that day
When the Lord of Hosts shall come?
Or do you flee in fear
Before the Holy One?

Call upon His name!
Before that coming day
Flee into His loving arms
He will wipe all the tears away.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: Wasn't that a powerful poem? You know folks I have read that many times to our pilgrimage groups, and each time, it just blesses my soul.

I want to shift gears here for a moment and point out that the Eastern Gate is not only significant in Bible prophecy, it also plays a key role in a debate that literally rages among archaeologists.

That debate concerns the location of the ancient Jewish Temple. The majority viewpoint today is that the Jewish Temple was located here, on the Temple Mount where the Dome of the Rock sits. Now no one knows for sure where the ancient Temple was located because the Temple Mount is under the administration of Muslims, and they will not allow any excavations.

The main reason this is the accepted position or location is because the Dome sits directly over an out-cropping of bed rock where there is a drainage system for blood. Thus, it is obviously an ancient altar. Those who disagree with this proposed location of the Temple point to the Eastern Gate as evidence that the Temple was really located about 250 feet north of the Dome of the Rock. They emphasize the fact that every year a red heifer was sacrificed on the Mount of Olives over here and then burned to get ashes for the purification of the Temple Mount.

The Dead Sea Scrolls say that when the red heifer was sacrificed, the High Priest stood on the steps of the Temple looked directly over the Eastern Gate to the pinnacle of the Mount of Olives. Well that would, of course, place the Temple to the north of the Dome of the Rock.

Now, those who believe the Temple was located here where the Dome sits, always argued that the Eastern Gate must have been moved to the north, after many destructions of the city of Jerusalem. But in 1969, evidence was accidentally discovered that the current Eastern Gate is located directly over the ancient gate. For that story, let's return to Jerusalem.

Part 5

Dr. Reagan: The debate about the location of the Temple relates to this particular gate which is called the Eastern Gate, or the Beautiful Gate, or the Golden Gate. Here's the reason it relates to it. When the Dead Sea Scrolls revealed that the High Priest stood on the steps of the Temple and looked directly over the Eastern Gate to the pinnacle of the Mount of Olives while they were sacrificing the red heifer. Those who believe that the Temple was located at the Dome of the Rock responded by saying, "Well what happened is the Eastern gate was moved

north about 250 yards when the walls were rebuilt by Suleiman the Magnificence in the 1500's." But in 1969 an American student named Jim Fleming, who later became a renowned teacher of biblical archaeology, accidentally discovered that the ancient Eastern Gate is located directly beneath this one.

Here's what happened: Jim was a student here in Jerusalem in 1969 and he decided to come over here one morning and photograph this Eastern gate. But it had been raining for like 3 days and the ground was very soft, and these limestone coverings on the tombs had absorbed a lot of water and so when Jim got ready to photograph he climbed up on one of those tombs and the limestone gave way and he fell 8 feet into a mass grave. Now I don't know about you, that been me I would have climbed on air to get out. But he realized he had a great opportunity and so he whipped out his camera which had a flash on it, and he started photographing in a circle, just like that. Later on when the film was developed the picture he took looking directly at the wall showed the tops of the arches of the ancient Eastern Gate sticking up above the skulls and bones in this mass grave. So we now know for certain that the Eastern Gate was located directly underneath this one.

Now that we know that the Ancient Eastern Gate was located directly beneath this gate, the argument that the Temple might have been located some 250 feet north of the Dome of the Rock is a much stronger argument, of course it is not proved but it makes the argument much stronger. If so that means the Jewish Temple could be rebuilt without touching the Dome of the Rock. And the Dome of the Rock would be in the Court of the Gentiles. It is going to be interesting to see how that all plays out.

Part 6

Dr. Reagan: A couple of years ago I had the privilege of interviewing Jim Fleming right here in our studio. I asked him about his amazing discovery of the ancient Eastern Gate, and here's how he described it.

Dr. Fleming: I can't take any credit for it. I would like to be able to say after years of study and research I finally found it. It was a heavy night of rain in the spring.

Dr. Reagan: This is 1969 now?

Dr. Fleming: It is, I was a student in Masters level in Archaeology. And I thought I'd take some pictures of Jerusalem's City Gates. And as I was walking through the Muslim cemetery on the east side of the city I got close enough to look up, I was taking a picture of the arch, and I didn't realize the rain the night before had loosened the stones at the top of a tomb there.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah, limestone absorbs water.

Dr. Fleming: Well, and it was pretty heavy rain too. But just as I went click, the tomb collapsed, so the actual phrase need to be, stumbled upon...

Nathan Jones: There you go that sounds better.

Dr. Fleming:discovering the Eastern Gate.

Nathan Jones: You fell into this tomb?

Dr. Fleming: Yes, and those that know me well think I landed on my head, but no. Fortunately enough stones fell in with me that I could stack them up, climb on it, jump up, and chin myself and get out, because it was nowhere.

Dr. Reagan: How far down did you fall?

Dr. Fleming: It was an 8 foot drop.

Dr. Reagan: 8 foot.

Dr. Fleming: And it actually was a mass burial grave. There were 46 skeletons. Actually I didn't count them right away that was after I found out there was enough stones to get out and there wouldn't be 47 skeletons.

Nathan Jones: There are bones all around you, when you were down there?

Dr. Fleming: Probably it had been some disease. I would guess by, there was still some cloth and some cartilage, I would guess it was about 100 years previously, that that burial had been put there. There were not records for that particular grave.

Dr. Reagan: Did you realize immediately the opportunity you had?

Dr. Fleming: Well, as my eyes got used to the dark, I could see beyond the skeletons the back wall of the tomb was the earlier wall, the same line as the one we looked at for Dr. Reagan's introduction, continued 8 feet below ground. And what was amazing is completely preserved stones in nice wedge shape of the top of an earlier gate, meaning that gate is fully preserved.

Dr. Reagan: Do you have any evidence of this? Did you photograph it for example?

Dr. Fleming: Fortunately not only did I get a picture or two but they came out, because an uncharacteristic Middle East efficiency when I brought my archaeology teacher back the next day after class they had already cemented over the tomb.

Nathan Jones: No, really.

Dr. Fleming: And it is because it is a Muslim cemetery, a sensitive place, so I was glad the picture came out. My archaeology teacher, Dr. Kohavi didn't seem that impressed. I think he thought I had landed on my head, until back in these days it was slides you know it took a while to get the picture developed and back, until he saw the picture, and then we realized, that yes. And the spring of that arch coming up is exactly under the left hand arch today which means that the present gate preserves what was probably two arches, because it is the first quarter of that semicircle, exactly below the first quarter of the semicircle above.

Dr. Reagan: You know I guess it really wasn't too surprising to find the ancient gate directly below the current one because in most of the excavations in Israel don't they find that they built right on top, and the gates were right on top of each other.

Dr. Fleming: Gates have good memories.

Dr. Reagan: Yes. There is a reason for putting a gate where you put a gate.

Dr. Fleming: And yes, that is usually a road to an important site, like Joffa Gate, or Damascus Gate. And so they tend to be in the relative same part of the wall. What is remarkable is that it is exactly under it, and that this earlier gate is well preserved.

Dr. Reagan: I know some questions that are in our viewer's minds who don't know anything about this part of the world. That one thing would be: How do you end up building gates on top of a gate, are you talking about debris piling up or something? What is going on here?

Dr. Fleming: Yes, you tend to have dumps outside the city. So outside the city wall builds up and so cities need; and the closets we get to that in the US is a new layer of asphalt in front of the house. But in ancient times cities getting higher because the city is getting higher.

Dr. Reagan: But this was particularly true of the Temple Mount, because when for example when they destroyed it, when the Romans destroyed it for example, and well even when the Babylonians did, they pushed debris off the Temple Mount and it built up, and built up, didn't it?

Dr. Fleming: Picture the Temple is on the eastside of the city, and when the Romans cleared it after 70 AD destruction to build a temple to Jupiter they couldn't dump debris north, west, or south because that was still city. But on the east was a steep slope in the Kidron Valley. So the eastern side of the city became a dump.

Part 7

Dr. Reagan: Isn't archaeology fascinating? I love the way it consistently affirms the historical accounts contained in the Bible.

As we conclude this program about the Eastern Gate, I want to point out that the discovery of the ancient Eastern Gate has not settled the location of the Jewish Temple. The debate rages on.

One question that arises is this: If the Temple really was located to the north of the Dome of the Rock, then what in world is the altar that is under the Dome of the Rock? You know the Bible gives us a clue in 1 Kings 18 and 2 Chronicles 7 where we are told that Solomon had so many animals to sacrifice on the day of the dedication of the Temple that he built a special altar in the middle of the Temple court. Perhaps the altar under the Dome was that altar. We will never know for sure until there is an opportunity to excavate the Temple Mount. And as I said before, that is not possible because, even though the Israelis have sovereignty over the Temple Mount, they allow the Muslims to administer it, and the Muslims will not allow any excavations. And the reason they refuse to allow excavations is that they take the position that no Jewish Temple ever existed on the Temple Mount! And thus they do not want archaeologists to dig up any proof of the Temple's existence.

Incidentally, their rejection of the existence of a Jewish Temple is a new position for them because that was not their attitude prior to the Six Day War when the Jews regained control of Jerusalem for the first time in over 1800 years. Here is a copy of a pamphlet printed by the Supreme Muslim Council in Jerusalem in 1924. It is a guide to the Temple Mount. And on page 1, there is this comment, "This identity with the site of Solomon's Temple is beyond dispute. This, too, is the spot, according to the universal belief, on which 'David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.'" And so, despite all their current propaganda about there never being a Temple on the Temple Mount, one of the Muslim's own official publications says otherwise.

One final point the location of the Eastern Gate and its relevance to the location of the Temple may still be a matter of debate, but one thing that cannot be disputed is that the Eastern Gate is closed in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. And Bible prophecy says that one day soon, the Gate will be reopened when the Messiah returns. Here's how Psalm 24 puts it:

Lift up your heads, O gates,
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
That the King of glory may come in!
Who is the King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O gate,
And lift them up, O ancient doors,
That the King of glory may come in!
And who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
He is the King of glory.

The Eastern Gate may have been slumbering for a long time folks, but it is about to awake and come alive with the return of Jesus.

Are you ready for His return? If He were to appear today, would you go forth rejoicing, or would you try to hide in terror? The wrath of God is about to be poured out on this world. And the message of the Holy Spirit for unbelievers is "Flee from the wrath that is to come by fleeing into the loving arms of Jesus right now."

Well, that's our program for this week. Until next week, the Lord willing, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries, saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our Redemption is drawing near!"

End of Program