

Christ in Prophecy

Israel 24: Pilgrimage 9- Mt. Herzl

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: One of the most interesting and yet somber places in all of Israel is the Herzl Cemetery on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. It is Israel's equivalent of our Arlington National Cemetery. It's a place that pilgrimage groups rarely visit, but it's a place I always make a point to visit. You will understand why when you stay tuned to this program.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. Over the past 8 weeks I have been taking you on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Where we've covered a lot of territory, all the way from Tel Aviv to Akko in the north on the Lebanese border, over to Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee, and then up to Jerusalem, visiting Nazareth, Megiddo and Beit Shean along the way.

In this program we are going to visit the beautiful Herzl Cemetery on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. The cemetery was designed to house the graves of national leaders and fallen soldiers. It was dedicated in 1951. Both the cemetery and the mountain it is located on are named after Theodor Herzl, the George Washington of Israel. Herzl is the man who ignited the hearts of Jews all over the world with his vision of Jews returning to their homeland and establishing their own state. That vision was contained in a booklet of his that was published in 1896 called "The Jewish State." It prompted the first Zionist Congress held in Basel, Switzerland in 1897 and it motivated several groups of Jews to return to their homeland and establish communal farms. Herzl died in 1904 at the age of 44 and was buried in Vienna, but he specified in his will that he wanted his remains to be moved to Israel when the state was re-established. That happened in 1949, and today, his tomb is the focal point of the cemetery.

The cemetery also contains the graves of several Prime Ministers and Presidents of Israel. Here is the grave of Golda Meir, the only Prime Minister of Israel to grow up in the United States. Golda was born in Russia, but moved with her family to the USA in 1903 at the age of 8. She lived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for 23 years before moving with her husband to Israel in 1921. She served as Prime Minister of Israel during the terrible Yom Kippur War of 1973.

Another interesting grave is that of Yitzhak Rabin, the only Prime Minister of Israel to be assassinated. He is buried here, together with his wife, in a tomb that is marked by an eternal flame. The military section of the cemetery is particularly beautiful. In addition to the individual graves of soldiers, there are a number of group memorials, like this one which commemorates the loss of 140 Jewish soldiers who died at sea in 1943 aboard a troop transport when it was attacked by German bombers.

This memorial is shaped like a submarine because it memorializes 61 Israeli sailors who were lost at sea in 1968 aboard a submarine named Dakar. The sub had been sold to Israel by Britain and it simply disappeared en route to Israel. The wreckage of the submarine was not discovered until 1999. It was on the floor of the Mediterranean Sea between the islands of Cyprus and Crete.

This wall contains the names of soldiers missing in action whose bodies were never recovered. Of all the graves in the Herzl Cemetery, the one that is the most fascinating to me is this one. It is the grave of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's brother. For the story of his life, stay tuned.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and our visit to the Mount Herzl Cemetery in Jerusalem. And now let's go to that cemetery for a presentation about Jonathan Netanyahu.

Ilan Barkay: I was a soldier during the 1982 war that was my generation war. And when we were called to go and fight in Lebanon we knew what could happen to us, but we understood that if the soldiers fight and protect the borders of Israel our families will be safe at home. We came from the Holocaust Memorial Museum and you've seen what happened to the Jews in the Second World War. So, when we were called for our duty we were ready. I am not saying that it was easy for us because each one of our soldiers is precious. Each one of our young people is important to us but we realize that if we want to have our own sovereign state we need to protect it.

You can see names over here like this precious man Ehud Amir a Lieutenant that died at the age of 21 years old, he died in the early 70's. Raphael Rafi Jasinski also a Lieutenant 21 years old. You can see over here David Elazar, David Elazar is the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army, he was a General. And you can see that they are all buried together there are no different ranks in this cemetery, they all died defending Israel and that's why we bury them together. In Israel a very important concept was always that an officer was the one who went first to the battle and then his soldiers followed him. When you read the story about Gideon and the 300 men that he chose to fight the Midianites. Well it was the same thing Gideon went first and then his soldiers followed. And remember I told you about the British friend of Israel Orde Wingate that in the 20's he was one of the founders of the Israeli army. He thought that this was the most important concept that the officers go first and then the soldiers that trust them follow them to the battlefield. So, the fact that we trust our officers, the fact that they are buried with all the other soldiers show you that the Israeli Army is a different army from other armies in the world because this army that was founded to protect the state of Israel and we all dedicate to this mission.

And 23,000 Israeli soldiers are buried in the military cemeteries and each one of them is our hero. Of course Jonathan Netanyahu who we are going to talk about he was the most famous one. But there are many, many others that from a very young age were educated, were told that to serve the country is the most important thing.

Dr. Reagan: Thank you very much Ilan. I want to focus on this grave here that has the big wreath on it because this is the grave of the brother of the Prime Minister, the oldest brother Yoni Netanyahu. And I want to tell you the story of this man and I want to get into it by reading

to you a prophecy. This prophecy is taken from Zechariah 12 and it begins in verse 6 where it talks about the end times and things that are going to happen in this land. And it says, "In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a fire pan in the woodpile and like a fiery torch in the sheaves. They shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place in Jerusalem." And then in verse 8, "In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the Lord before them. It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."

One of the prophecies about Israel in the end times is that Israel will be a great military power. And that's a prophecy that has been fulfilled in our day and time and hard to believe because we are talking about a nation the size of New Jersey, and yet it is always ranked as one of the top four military powers in the world and probably number one in the effective use of its military power. There are many examples of that like the 1967 War even in the Yom Kippur War miraculous things that happened.

But I want to tell you one of the manifestations that has to do with this man Yoni Netanyahu. Yoni was born in New York City in 1946 while his father was serving as a Professor of History at Cornell University. He was the eldest of three sons. He joined the IDF in 1964 when he was only 18 years old and volunteered for the Paratroopers Brigade where he excelled. He was given command of a paratrooper company and he led them into battle in the Golan Heights during the 1967 Six Day War when he was 20 years old.

After the war he married and he and his wife moved to the United States at the urging of his father, again who was a professor and he attended Harvard University. But he did not like the scholarly life. He didn't like it at all. He only stayed at Harvard one year and then he decided to come back here he had a military spirit about him he wanted to be in the military, so he returned. In the early 70's he joined the Israeli Special Forces and led raids on terrorist groups and their leaders. During the Yom Kippur War in 1973 when he was only 27 years old he commanded the Special Forces unit against Syrian forces in the Golan Heights. And he earned the Medal of Distinguished Service which is the third highest medal that is given in Israel. He then volunteered to serve as a tank commander and was given command of the tank forces in the Golan Heights.

In June of 1975 he left the armored core and returned to the Special Forces as a unit commander. And hardly had he returned when we come to the great event in his life. In 1976 an airliner, an Air France airliner took off from Tel Aviv loaded with people in route to Paris, France. This airliner stopped in Athens to pick up passengers and let others off. When it stopped in Athens four terrorists, four terrorists got on the plane. They took over the plane and diverted it to Northern Africa where it was refueled and then they took it to Entebbe, Uganda and all of that was prearranged. Idi Amin was a conspirator in this, he knew they were going to do this he was fully cooperating in it. They took it to Entebbe, there they took all the people off the plane and they put them into an abandoned airport. They had just opened a new airport they put all of them in an abandoned airport. And then after a few days they released--what they did is they demanded the release of 40 Palestinians and 13 other terrorists who were being held in various countries. They released the non-Jews all the people on the plane who were non-Jews a total of 85 they released of 285 passengers, 85 were released. They offered to let the crew of 12 go but the 12 French people on that plane who were the crew members said, "We will not leave our passengers behind." And so they refused to go home and they stayed with the Jews. They then threatened to kill all the Jews if their demands were not met.

Israel agreed to negotiate with them to the astonishment of many people. But the reason they were negotiating with them was because they were delaying for time. And while they were negotiating they began to consider options. And one of the options that they considered was beyond anybody's imagination, anybody's imagination. Here's what they began to think about: sending a rescue crew to Entebbe, Uganda to rescue the Jewish hostages.

Now folks that was an eight hour flight one way with these big airplanes they were going to use. But they had three advantages, first they were able to interview the released passengers and find out how many terrorists there were, a total of eight. Where the people had been put, how they were being kept. And so they were able to get a lot of inside information. Secondly, and this is unbelievable an Israeli construction company was the one who built the old airport. And so this Israeli construction company had all the plans of the old airport. And when Yoni was appointed to be the leader of the group you know what he did? He took hay bales and put them on the ground and outlined the entire airport, entire airport so that they could practice attacking the airport and knew exactly how it was laid out, how every room was laid out. And the third advantage they had was that nobody under the sun including any Israeli ever thought of the possibility of a raid because it was just simply too far. Well the raid did happen and Yoni was the one who led it, he was in charge of it. It occurred on July the 3rd is when they left, July 3rd, 1976 they left Tel Aviv and they started flying to Uganda. They flew for eight hours at 100 feet, 100 feet trying to invade all of the radar. So 100 feet they flew. They arrived at midnight on July the 4th, 1976 when we were celebrating American history they arrived. They had four C-130 Hercules, some of you are familiar with those aircrafts. They carried the assault force with Yoni, they carried medical crews, they carried communication crews, they carried a military unit whose only purpose was to secure the parameter of the airport, they carried a military unit whose only purpose was to destroy all the MiG Fighters on the ground at the airport so nobody could pursue them, and they carried a crew that could refuel them once they landed in Uganda.

The first phase, the first airplane carried Yoni's assault group what they had done is they had gone all over Israel looking for a very old black Mercedes like the one Idi Amin always traveled in. Then they took two Land Rovers which always accompanied him. They filled the Land Rovers with soldiers, they filled the black Mercedes with Yoni and his assault crew and before the plane even stopped at the end of the runway the back was down they rolled out and they started going toward the abandoned airport.

What they did not know that the week before Idi Amin had bought a white Mercedes so as they approached the airport the guard seeing that knew that it was not Idi Amin they thought they would think that, they knew it was not and they stepped out of the road and told them to halt. When they did so one of the Israeli soldiers shot both of them with a pistol with a silencer on it, the first one was killed, the second was not and as they went by he picked up his automatic weapon and started firing. That alerted the people in the airport, they hit the ground running, Yoni said, "We got to get there, we got to go." And they started running as fast as they could.

They got into the airport and the results were literally amazing. Let me give them to you here precisely, the entire raid took only 53 minutes, all the hijackers were killed, 30 Ugandan soldiers were killed, 11 Uganda MiG's were destroyed on the ground, 3 hostages were killed because when they rushed in they immediately began yelling in Hebrew, "On the floor. On the Floor. Do not stand up." And some of them got confused and stood up and everybody who stood was shot. So three of the hostages were killed. Only one Israeli soldier was killed in the entire raid and that was Yoni Netanyahu, 30 years old, the leader of the raid.

Later the next day Idi Amin rushed to the area he was so enraged at what had happened he found out that a 75 year old woman had been taken to the hospital and she was still in the hospital. And so in his rage he ordered his soldiers to go over, drag her out into the hospital yard and shoot her point blank. Which they did. So they lost really a total of four hostages. The official book about the raid called, "The Raid at Entebbe," written by an Israeli Jew ends amazingly with a quote from the New Testament, it quotes John 15:13 which says, "Greater love has no one than this then to lay down his life for his friends." This was an amazing raid. It is one of the most incredible military performances in modern history. And it is a fulfillment of the prophecy that in the end times the Israeli Armed Forces will be like a fire among sheaves of wood and they will be like David against Goliath.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and our visit to the Mount Herzl Cemetery in Jerusalem. There are several very important people in the modern history of Israel who are not buried at the Mt. Herzl Cemetery. One is David ben Gurion who served as the nation's first Prime Minister. He is the one who shepherded the nation through its formative years during its revolt against British rule. And he is the one who read the Declaration of Independence in Tel Aviv on May 14, 1948. Ben Gurion is buried in the Negev desert on the land of the kibbutz, or collective farm, where he retired to in 1970. You know when I had the opportunity to visit that kibbutz several years ago, I was extremely impressed with the very plain and simple house that he and his wife lived in until his death in 1973. What a contrast it was to the mansions that world leaders usually retire to!

Ariel Sharon is another well-known Israeli military leader and Prime Minister who is not buried at the Mount Herzl Cemetery. He was one of Israel's most outstanding generals. In fact his leadership in the tank battles in the Sinai Peninsula is what saved the state of Israel during the Yom Kippur War in 1973. When he died in January of 2014, he was buried on his beloved ranch in the Negev Desert.

Two of the most important persons involved in the founding of the State of Israel and in its subsequent development are both buried on the Mount of Olives. I have in mind Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and Menachem Begin. Menachem Begin is buried there because he is the only person who has served as Prime Minister who was an Orthodox, observant Jew. Orthodox Jews desire to be buried on the Mount of Olives because they believe the prophetic passage of Scripture in Zechariah 14 that says that when the Messiah comes to reign, he will come to the Mount of Olives, and they believe that those buried there will be the first to be resurrected. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda is the man who revived the Hebrew language from the dead as a spoken language. He was also an Orthodox Jew and his grave and the graves of his family members are located inside this ornamental fence near the base of the Mount of Olives.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy. Thus far I have shown you the graves of many of the most important people in the modern day history of Israel, most of which are located in the Mount Herzl Cemetery in Jerusalem. But the most important grave site in all the land and, in fact, the most important grave site in the world is not located in the Mount Herzl Cemetery.

It is located a few blocks north of the Damascus Gate on the north side of the Old City of Jerusalem. It's called The Garden Tomb. This is the traditional Protestant site of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

Next week, the Lord willing, we are going to look at this site in detail and show you a worship service that we conducted there on the last day of our pilgrimage. This week, I would like to conclude this program by sharing with you a brief story I presented at the Garden Tomb to illustrate the meaning of Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross.

Each morning when I am home my wife and I have a devotional time together. We get a cup of coffee and we sit down and I read from the Old Testament and she reads from the New Testament. And then we make out a prayer list and we pray for Israel, we pray for America, we pray for our church, we pray for the ministry, we pray for sick friends. Oh, we always have a long prayer list, family members. And then we read a devotional and we use different devotional books. And probably 12 years ago we were using some devotional guide, I don't know what it was and I read this devotional and it impacted me so greatly that I made a vow right there I said, "Lord I am going to share this with as many people as I can until you call me home." And I want to share it with you.

It was the greatest illustration I've ever heard of what happened to Jesus on the Cross. Back in the 1840's when gold was found in California 300,000 Americans made the trip to California. 300,000 moved from the east all the way across America to the west. Many went by ship around the tip of South America but most went by wagon trains across three different trails in the United States. These were city slickers, they didn't know how to live in the wilderness. Their lives were in the hands of the wagon masters. And the fascinating thing is you can go on-line and you can find the logs of these wagon masters, day by day logs that they kept.

These men were very crafty they knew how to keep people alive but they knew that there were a lot of dangers as they went across the country. They were afraid of coming up on water holes that they knew existed but finding those water holes dried up or polluted. They were afraid of Indian attacks. They were afraid of natural disasters like tornados and thunder storms, the worst of all that destroyed a number of wagon trains completely were blizzards. One of the most mysterious things would be plagues that would seem to come out of nowhere and within a few days wipe out the entire wagon train, everybody died of the plague. One of the most horrendous things was when they would like be in the plains of Kansas with the grass this high and it is as dry as can be and they look on the horizon and they see smoke, maybe a lightning strike. And they knew from experience that those prairie fires could travel 50-60 miles an hour depending on how strong the wind was, they only had minutes to protect the wagon train. But there is never a record of a wagon train being lost. They had a way of protecting the train and here is how they would do it, if the fire was coming from that direction they would light the grass here and let it burn away. When it burned away sufficiently they would pull the wagon into the burned out area, take down the cloth tops, wait for the fire to come and the fire would just burn around them and go on.

And that is what happened to Jesus on the Cross. While Jesus was hanging on the Cross every sin that you have ever committed, I have committed, that you will ever commit was placed upon Jesus. The wrath of God that you and I deserve was poured out upon Him. The fire fell on Him. And when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior we step into the area where the fire has already fallen and we become immune to the wrath of God. What a glorious Savior. Praise God for Him.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: Well, folks, that's our program for this week, and I hope it has been a blessing to you. Incidentally, if you have missed any of the previous eight programs we have shown in this series about a pilgrimage to Israel, you can find them on our website at lamblion.com. You can also find them on other Internet sites like HisChannel.com and Lightsource.com. I hope you will be back with us again next week when we take a close look at the Garden Tomb. Until then, 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