

Christ in Prophecy

Israel 17: Pilgrimage 2 - The Israel Coast

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Welcome to the second program in a series we are presenting as we take you on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Last week we focused on Independence Hall in Tel Aviv. But in this program we are going to take you up the Mediterranean coast of Israel, from Tel Aviv all the way to the city of Akko, located on Israel's northern border with Lebanon. For a fascinating journey in the land of the Bible, stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Well here we are on the second day of our pilgrimage here in the Holy Land and today we've got an exciting day ahead of us. We are going to take off in Tel Aviv and start driving north up the coast and we'll stay right by the coast all the way up to the border of Lebanon. We are going to stop first at Caesarea Maritime which was the capital, the Roman capital of this land at the time of Jesus. Jerusalem was the Jewish capital, the Roman capital was Caesarea. And it was a huge city of 200,000 people so there's a lot of archaeology excavations there that we'll see. From there we'll go up into the mountains to Mount Carmel where we will see the traditional site where Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal. Then they'll just go down the Mount Carmel range to Haifa and you will see one of the most beautiful cities in the world. They have a saying over here that you go to Tel Aviv to play, and you go to Jerusalem to pray, but you go to Haifa to stay. And you'll see why when we get there. And then from there we'll head on up to the Lebanese border to the city of Akko which was the Crusader capital. And from there over to the Sea of Galilee where we'll spend the night in Tiberias. Now Gary, you've heard the schedule, you've been there many times tell me which of these sites that we are going to visit today is the one that is most meaningful to you and why.

Gary Fisher: I think Caesarea.

Dr. Reagan: Ok.

Gary Fisher: Caesarea is one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the 20th Century. It used to be all covered with sand and they discovered it by accident during the 60's. And they've uncovered what we see today as the Caesarea Maritime. And to me one of the greatest points about this place is that it shows that the Romans were here, they were big, they were powerful, they were impressive. But today the Romans are gone and the Jewish people are back here to discover that little city that was here. It wasn't little at the time they claimed there might have been over 200,000 people. They had running water, they had running sewer, life was impressive here. But God was bigger than the Romans and today God has thrown the Romans out and the Jewish people are back here where they belong and that is on display here. Also the Resurrection was declared here by Peter and by Paul in one of the greatest features of the Christian faith is the Resurrection that was declared here in power before

dignitaries and so forth, and so on. So, this place is so special because it shows that God is bigger than the Romans. And Jesus was resurrected from the dead.

Dr. Reagan: Ok, thank you very much. Let's get on the bus and head there.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Caesarea Maritime is located about 35 miles north of Tel Aviv on the Mediterranean coast. It was built by Herod the Great and became the Roman capital of Israel during the time of Jesus. It was 1½ square miles in size, it had a population of 125,000. This is the city where the Roman soldier, Cornelius lived who became the first Gentile convert to Christianity. The theater was excavated in the 1960's and has been partially rebuilt. It could seat 4,000 people. We paused there for some songs, a devotional service, and a testimony by one of our pilgrims.

God is an awesome God He reigns from heaven above with wisdom, power and love our God is an awesome God. Our God is an awesome God He reigns from Heaven above--T'was grace that taught my heart to fear and grace--

If we had time I would go through the book of Acts and show you every sermon in the book of Acts. And every sermon without exception the focal point of the sermon is the resurrection of Jesus Christ because as Paul later wrote, "If He was not resurrected we have no hope whatsoever." The Resurrection validated Him as the Son of God. The Resurrection is what it's all about. Mohammad was not resurrected. Abraham was not resurrected. We have a resurrected Savior and that is the focus of the Gospel preaching.

Female Pilgrim: When Dr. Reagan taught--did his devotional yesterday on Cornelius I approached him afterwards because two weeks ago I had done a devotional--had for a woman's group and it was on the tenth chapter of Acts, Cornelius. And basically what he was sharing was kind of like my story because I wanted to share that with him and he asked me if I would share it with you. I myself was saved when I was 11, I was filled with the Spirit and God saved me, but I wasn't disciplined. I went right on trying--I was raised in a legalistic church, as was Dr. Reagan. And that's what they taught legalism. They taught me to read the Bible but I never understood anything about grace. It was all legalism. I had to work.

Dr. Reagan: When the theater was excavated, this stone was found that contained the name of Pontius Pilate. It is the only archeological evidence of Pilate that has ever been discovered. Next to the theater is a large hippodrome that was used for horse and chariot racing. Just north of the hippodrome is a Crusader fortress with a dry moat. The fortress was built at the site of Caesarea's ancient port which has been filled in today. In the First Century the water came up as far as where the cameraman is standing. It is from this port that the Apostle Paul sailed to Rome. This is the incredible aqueduct that carried fresh water to Caesarea from Mount Carmel about ten miles away.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Our next stop was on top of Mount Carmel at a Carmelite Monastery that marks the traditional site where the prophet Elijah had his confrontation with the false prophets of Baal. This statue of Elijah marks the spot. Gary Fisher presented a devotional about that event.

Gary Fisher: Verse 19, "Therefore send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel." That's where we are sitting right now, this place. This is not a tourist recreation this is where they were. You are in the spot. And the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, I had that backwards a minute ago, I apologize for that. "But who eat at Jezebel's table." So all these guys have the blessing of the first lady, here's the king and Elijah says, tell you what we're going to do Elijah--or Ahab let's call a conference. Let's have a spiritual conference on top of Mount Carmel and we will just see who's real and who's not. And Ahab thought that was a pretty good idea. So what we have is a picture of that conference being held up here. Verse 20, "So Ahab sent all the children of Israel, gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people and said something very, very important. I don't want you to miss this, I have it highlighted in my Bible in yellow and I have the words themselves underlined in red. And it is something that we ought to be asking ourselves as people of God in the United States of America today. He says, "How long would you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God follow Him, but if Baal follow him."

Dr. Reagan: First of all one of my favorite preachers who has ever lived is Peter Marshall. Peter came here as a Scotsman at a very young age and he became the Billy Graham of the first half of the 20th Century. He was a very eloquent man. He was known as the poet preacher not because he did poetry but because his sermons were so eloquent. And he became the Chaplain of the US Senate and then died suddenly in his 40's of a heart attack in the late 1940's. There are only a few recordings of his sermons available and I have all of them. And one time I was driving down the highway and I was listening to one of these sermons, it was about Elijah and the prophets of Baal. And he every once in a while he'd stop in the sermon and he would say, "If the Lord--which is your God? If Yahweh is your God follow Him, if Baal follow him." He'd go on he'd preach a little bit and he would stop he'd say, "Alright I've got a question for you: If the Lord is you God follow Him, if Baal follow him." He got right to the end of the sermon and the last thing he said was so startling to me I nearly drove off the highway. He ended the sermon by saying, "I want to ask you one last time: If Yahweh is your God follow Him, if Baal is your God follow him and go to Hell." The other thing I wanted to share with you is we put that sermon in written form and we printed it in our magazine. And about a month after we printed it a lady called me from Corpus Christi, Texas and she said, "I read that article and it really blessed me." And said, "You know last week I taught the lesson of Elijah and the prophets of Baal to my first and second graders at church. And when I got through I said, 'Now I got a question for you: Why in the world did Elijah have them pour all that water on his sacrifice?'" And she said, "Immediately a little girl put her hand up and started waving it, said, 'Honey why was it?' She said, 'That was for the gravy.'" Well let's go see a breath taking scene.

Before leaving the Mount Carmel site, we went to the roof of the monastery to get a breathtaking view of the Valley of Armageddon where the last battle of the Tribulation will be fought. Our next stop was for lunch.

Well folks, Gary and I are here in a Druze village on top of Mount Carmel and we are eating a light lunch they call it here in Israel. And Gary why don't we tell people what we are eating. It's called a falafel sandwich. Now, we are going to tell them about that. You know folks a falafel sandwich to Israeli's is like a hamburger to Americans this is the national sandwich of Israel. And the way we do it here is we take a piece of pita bread like this.

Gary Fisher: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: And we slice it open and we take these little balls, they look like hushpuppies they are made out of chick peas, they feel like a hushpuppy, they taste like a hushpuppy.

Gary Fisher: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: And you put them down in the bottom in then you take this thing and you just start cramming salad down in the top of it, as much salad as you want.

Gary Fisher: Stuff like this.

Dr. Reagan: In fact this is all that is left of Gary's falafel sandwich. So he needs another one. But I haven't started on mine yet and that is what it looks like to start with, and you just take a great big old bite. I love them. My wife hates them but I love them.

We made a quick stop in Haifa to view the city from the top of Mount Carmel a view that included the world headquarters of the Bahai faith. As you can see this is one of the most beautiful cities in all of Israel.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: We next headed for our final destination of the day, the Crusader capital of Akko, located on the border with Lebanon. This is the location of a massive Crusader fortress. We visited one of the huge halls in the fortress and then we walked through one of the escape tunnels built by the Crusaders. At this site I always present a lesson about anti-Semitism.

What I have to share with you here is something that is not very pleasant but I think that it should be shared because most Christians are not aware of it at all. And the reason I am sharing it with you here is because this is a Crusader castle, Crusader fortress and that directly relates to what I'm going to talk about. I am going to talk with you for a few minutes here about anti-Semitism. Satan hates the Jews, he hates them with a passion. He hates the Jews because it was through the Jews that God gave the Bible. It is through the Jews that God gave the Messiah. The Jews are the chosen people of God and still are to this day in the sense that they are witnesses of God. And God has made a promise that in the end times He is going to bring a great remnant of the Jews to salvation. And Satan knows that promise, He hates it. He is determined to kill every Jew on planet earth so that not one could ever respond to the Messiah. That's what the Holocaust was all about. And there is a greater holocaust coming. The Hebrew Scriptures themselves say in the book of Zechariah that during the Great Tribulation two-thirds of all the Jews will die as the Antichrist once again tries to kill all of them. Now what most Christians are not aware of is that although there has been anti-Semitism throughout history. There's been Arab anti-Semitism. Atheists have hated Jews. I think anti-Semitism is supernatural; Satan puts it in people's hearts. I remember a few years back of the top ten best-selling books in Japan five of them were virulently anti-Semitic blaming all the problems of Japan on Jews. And they don't have enough Jews in Japan to count on one hand, but that's the nature of anti-Semitism.

But what most Christians are not aware of is the greatest source of anti-Semitism has always come from Christianity. In the year 100 only 70 years after the Church was established there were Church leaders who were speaking out vehemently against the Jews and forming the anti-Semitism that came to represent Christianity. For example Justin Martyr claimed that God's covenant with Israel was no longer valid and that Gentiles had replaced the Jews, and folks this was in 100 AD. I'm quoting here from--I've done a lot of research on this, this is an article that I wrote about this. Irenaeus in 130 declared Jews were disinherited from the grace of God. Tertullian in 155 blamed the Jews for the death of Jesus and argued they had been rejected by God. The greatest orator of the Church in the early years was a man by the name of John Chrysostom, John the Golden Voice, and this man was made a saint by the Roman Catholic

Church to this day is a Saint. And in 400 AD he preached a series of sermons against the Jews, a whole series in which he stated, now I'm quoting him, "The synagogue is not only a brothel and a theater it is also a den of robbers and a lodging place for wild beasts. Jews are murderers possessed by the Devil. Their debauchery and drunkenness gives the manners of a pig." He denied that Jews could ever receive forgiveness. He claimed it was a Christian duty to hate and persecute Jews. He claimed that Jews worshipped Satan. And this man was canonized as a saint. Most Christians are not aware of this. St. Augustine who was the greatest theologian of the Roman Catholic Church was vehemently anti-Semitic.

And in the Middle Ages this anti-Semitism was continually fueled in many different ways. For example first of all by the Crusades themselves. The Crusaders when they left Europe and marched across to the Holy Land decided that in the process they might as well kill every Jew they can so when they get there they'll be good at killing and they can kill all the Mohammedans as they put it. And so they slaughtered Jews all across Europe as they came over here. And one of the things they would do is that they would herd all the Jews into a synagogue, block all the doors, surround them with the Crusader army and set the synagogue on fire and burn them alive while standing there in a circle around the synagogue singing, "Fairest Lord Jesus," which was their greatest hymn that they sang as they crucified and martyred these people. The only thing that you can say on behalf of the Crusaders is that the average Crusader could not read or write. Remember this is the Middle Ages the only people could read and write were priests and scholars. So the average Crusader could not read or write. The only thing that he knew about the Bible was what the Church had told them and the Church had basically told them the story of Jesus and told them it was his obligation and duty to hate Jewish people. So I would say that in their defense but nonetheless the blood on their hands was unbelievable. Not only that but during the Middle Ages the anti-Semitism was propagated by the passion plays, that's what the passion plays were all about. All throughout Europe they put on passion plays every year at Easter time and the Jews would come out on the stage with big hook noses around their head. And when they would come on the stage the people would boo, and hiss, and throw things at them and all the passion plays the whole design of the passion play was not to glorify Jesus Christ it was to hate Jews, that's what it was all about.

Also there were myths that were circulate by the Church during the Middle Ages that were horrible in nature. One of the greatest myths was called the blood libel, it came out every year at Passover the Church would say to the people, "Do you know that the Jews are going to kidnap Christians? And they are going to cut their throats to get blood, and they are going to use that blood in the Passover feast." This was called the blood libel. And people believed them. Not only that but they argued that Jews would sneak into the Catholic Churches and steal the wafers, and they would take a knife and stab the wafers. And the wafers of course were supposed to be the living body of Christ so they were killing Christ again, and again and again. And people believed this nonsense. The Black Plague was also used against the Jews. It's interesting that during the Black Plague when you had millions and millions of Europeans dying hardly any Jews died. And the reason the Jews did not die is because they followed the sanitary regulations that had been laid down in the Law of Moses. But the people looking at this not knowing that, not understanding it said we're dying Jews are not therefore Jews must be poisoning our wells. Jews must be the cause of all of this. And during the Black Plague Jews were terribly persecuted because Christians said, "They're the cause of the Black Plague."

So you had all of this going on during the Middle Ages until finally, thank God, the Reformation came and Martin Luther had had enough of the Church selling salvation so he nailed his Thesis on the door and said, enough is enough, is enough we've got to get back to the Word of God. The press came at that time, the printing press. The Bible was translated into the languages of

the people. People began to get the Bible. People began to read the Bible. And people began to rise up and revolt against what they had been taught. Martin Luther is a great hero of the Christian faith and rightfully so because he had the courage to stand up against the greatest institution of the Middle Ages. And that took a lot of courage because at that time if you stood against the Church you were burned alive at the stake, and he knew that could happen to him. So he was a great hero of the Church. But unfortunately he also turned out to be the greatest anti-Semite in the history of Christianity and most people are not aware of that. Right before he died he published a pamphlet, and you can find it on the Internet it is all over the Internet, just type in "Martin Luther Jews" and it'll come up immediately. He wrote this pamphlet right before he died and you will be shocked at what he said in the pamphlet. He said, "The Jews are a miserable and accursed people. They are stupid fools. They are miserable, blind, and senseless. They are thieves and robbers. They are the great vermin of humanity. They are lazy rogues. They are blind and they are venomous." And having dehumanized them he then proceeded to tell what people should do with the Jews. Here is what he said, "Their synagogues and schools should be burned. Their houses should be destroyed. Their Talmudic writings should be confiscated. Their Rabbis should be forbidden to teach. Their money should be taken from them. And they should all be compelled into forced labor." Does that sound familiar? That was the blueprint of the Holocaust.

Needless to say the Nazi's gleefully quoted Luther as they rose to power. In his book, "Mein Kampf," Hitler wrote in 1925 he wrote, "Martin Luther is the great warrior, a true statesman and a great reformer." Do you understand that Hitler professed to be a Christian? All the Nazi's professed to be Christians. In 1924 at a Christian gathering in Berlin Hitler spoke to thousands and received a standing ovation when he made the following proclamation. "I believe that today I am acting in accordance with the will of Almighty God as I announce the most important work that Christians can undertake and that is to be against the Jews and to get rid of them all once and for all." Later on Hitler proceeded to talk about the influence of Luther on his life, he said, "Martin Luther has been the greatest encouragement of my life. Luther was a great man he was a giant with one blow he heralded the coming of the dawn of the new age. He saw clearly that Jews needed to be destroyed and we are only beginning to see that we need to carry on this work." Did you know that the Nuremberg war crime trials that the Nazi leaders presented two defenses. Number one we were only following orders. And number two we were only doing what Martin Luther told us to do. That was their defense at the Nuremberg War Crime Trials. You must understand that in the Jewish mind the Holocaust was a Christian event. It was a Christian event by people who professed to be Christians. And therefore when you try to witness the Lord Jesus Christ to a Jewish person they consider it very offensive because you have the blood of their ancestors on your hands. And if a Jew accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior then he is considered to be a traitor to the Jewish people. For the Orthodox Jew they hold a funeral and pronounce him dead. But you have to understand where you are coming from when you're trying to talk to Jewish people and their understanding. And you know their understanding is correct because these people claimed to be Christians. They weren't real Christians but they claimed to be Christians. And they did what they did in the name of Jesus.

So, I think what we need to keep in mind is that this is still going on today, in the Church today it's called Replacement Theology. Did you know that the majority of Christendom today, the majority of all Churches including the Roman Catholic Church and the majority of all Protestant Churches teach Replacement Theology? They teach that God washed His hands of the Jewish people in the First Century because they killed the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He has absolutely no purpose left for them whatsoever that the Church has replaced Israel, and there is no purpose left for Israel. And that the regathering of the Jews and the re-establishment of the State of Israel it's all just an accident of history that has no biblical meaning whatsoever.

I want to end with two comments. First of all in Acts 4:27 you might want to make a note of that in your mind, Acts 4:27 it tells who killed Jesus. Here's who killed Jesus, "both Herod, Pontius Pilot, along with the Gentiles, and the peoples of Israel." Who killed Jesus? The Jews, the Gentiles, Pontius Pilot, and Herod. Folks, all of us, every one of you and myself killed Jesus Christ. We all have the blood of Jesus on our hands. He went to that Cross to die for us to make it possible for our sins to be forgiven and us to be reconciled to Him. That's why the great painters of the Middle Ages, the really great painters who really understood the Word always painted themselves in the picture at the foot of the Cross because they realized that they were guilty of the crucifixion. But the Church always blamed it on the Jews; all of us were responsible. Psalm 129:5-8, says, "All who hate Zion shall be put to shame." And it further says, that God is so upset by those who would commit anti-Semitism that it says in Psalm 129, do not even pronounce a blessing on anyone who is involved in anti-Semitism.

Part 5

Dr. Reagan: Well folks, that's our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you. Next week, the Lord willing, we will continue our pilgrimage to the Holy Land by taking a look at the beautiful area of the Galilee. If you missed our first program in this series you can find it on our website at lamblion.com. Until next week, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries saying, "Look up, be watchful for our redemption is drawing near."

End of Program