

Christ in Prophecy Israel 26: Pilgrimage 11- Abu Gosh

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: One of the most unusual places in all of Israel is an intersection in a small town named Abu Gosh, which is located about seven miles outside the city of Jerusalem. You will not believe what is located at this intersection. It varies from the ridiculous to the deeply spiritual. For an up-close look, stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy! This is going to be the last in a series of 11 programs that have taken you on a pilgrimage throughout the Holy Land.

We started in Tel Aviv at Independence Hall, and then journeyed up the coast of Israel to the Crusader capital of Akko, located on the border with Lebanon. From there we went to Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee where we spent two days exploring the towns Jesus ministered in that are located on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. From Tiberias we headed south toward Jerusalem making stops in Nazareth, the ancient fortress of Megiddo, and the incredible archeological site called Beit Shean. After arriving in Jerusalem, we explored the Old City, including the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the sites on Mt. Zion, and the fascinating Jewish Quarter. The next day we headed to the Dead Sea where we explored King Herod's fortress of Masada, and visited the site where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. The next days we visited sites in the new part of Jerusalem, including the Mt. Herzl Cemetery, the Holocaust Museum, called Yad Vashem, and the Dead Sea Scrolls Museum. We spent a free day exploring Jerusalem on our own. And then, on our last day, we spent the morning at the Garden Tomb, which is the Protestant site for the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Later that day, en route to the airport for our flight back home, we stopped off in the small Arab village of Abu Gosh to visit the Church of the Ark of the Covenant, and to eat lunch at a Messianic Jewish community called Yah Hashmonah.

If you have missed any of these past ten programs, you can find them on our website at lamblion.com, or on sites like hischannel.com, or lightsource.com. In this last program we are going to focus on the tiny Arab village of Abu Gosh that is located about 7 miles west of Jerusalem on the highway to Tel Aviv.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and the pilgrimage we are taking through the Holy Land.

Now for the rest of this program, I want to focus on the small Arab village of Abu Gosh that is actually a suburb of modern day Jerusalem. And even more specifically, I want to focus your attention on an amazing intersection in the village that is famous for the variety of things that are located there.

But first, let me give you a little background about the town. In the Bible, the village of Abu Gosh is known as Kiriath-jearim. It is the place where the sacred Ark of the Covenant came to rest for many years after it was stolen by the Philistines in the battle of Ebenezer. According to 1 Samuel 7, the Ark was stored "in the house of Abinadab on a hill." That site is marked today by a church that is located on the highest point of the village.

The village's name was changed in the 16th Century after an Arab clan called Abu Gosh settled there and took over the highway from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, charging travelers tolls to pass through the village.

Now, with that brief background about the village, I want to shift our attention to one intersection in the village. The first thing located at this intersection, believe it or not, is the Elvis Presley service station. That's right, it is a gasoline station and diner that is dedicated to the memory of Elvis Presley. In the parking lot are two oversized statues of Elvis. Inside, the walls are plastered with Elvis album covers. And Elvis music is played 24 hours a day. Directly across the street from the Elvis service station is the location of Israel's Hollywood, where the many TV shows and movies are made.

Also at this same intersection you will find a Messianic Moshav, or communal village that looks like an Alpine village because it is constructed entirely of lumber donated by Christians in Finland. The village is called Yad Hashmona. But, the site at this intersection that we want to explore in depth is the Church of the Ark of the Covenant.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and our pilgrimage thru the Holy Land. We are about to visit The Church of the Ark of the Covenant that was built in 1924 in the small Arab village of Abu Gosh, located about 7 miles west of Jerusalem. The Church is maintained and operated by a very hospitable order of French nuns. And now, let's go to the church.

We will begin with the story that Ilan was telling you out there before we came inside, our guide. You will find this story in 1 Samuel beginning with chapter 4 and it says there in 1 Samuel 4:1, "Israel went out to battle against the Philistines." Now this was before they had a king, this was before King Saul this was in the final years of Samuel's ministry. And instead of trusting in God they did something incredible, they decided to trust in the Ark of the Covenant using it like a rabbit's foot; as a good luck charm. Their reasoning was, "You know if we go into the Holy of Holies and violate it, take the Ark out, take it out into battle God would never allow us to lose." They had a surprise in store. So, they raided the Holy of Holies, took the Ark of the Covenant out into battle and God of course was enraged by this. And so He allowed the Philistines to capture the Ark.

They took the Ark on a long journey and that journey is recorded here in 1 Samuel 4 through 1 Samuel 7, or 1 Samuel 6. They took it mainly down to their capital city of Ashdod where they put it in their temple next to their fish god named Dagon. And every morning they would come in and the fish god would be on the floor on his face and the Ark would be sitting there. They would put the fish god back up and come back the next morning and he was on his face. They

finally decided there was something about this box, they decided it was a hot box and they wanted to get rid of it. So they put it on a cart and started it on its way. It arrived in one village you remember and people came over and opened it and looked in and they were struck immediately by all kinds of tumors. So it really was a hot box.

They finally decided to just point it in the direction of Israel and just let it go on its way with the oxen pulling the thing. And ultimately it ended up right here and what we say in English is Kiriath-jearim but there is no "J" in Hebrew so they call it Kiriath-yearim, and this is where it landed. You will see there in 1 Samuel 6, the Ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines for seven months. And then you will see in chapter 6:19, "He struck the men of Beth Shemesh because they had looked into the Ark of the Lord." They sent it on to Kiriath-jearim verse 20, "The men of Beth Shemesh said, 'Who is able to stand before this Holy Lord God? To whom shall it go up from us? So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim saying, 'The Philistines have brought back the Ark of the Lord come down and take it up with you.' And then the men of this city, Kiriath-jearim, came and took the Ark of the Lord and brought in into the house of Abinadab on the hill." Notice on the hill. "And consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the Ark of the Lord."

This is the traditional site of where they put the Ark. It is up on the hill overlooking the whole area. And there's some good archaeological evidence that this is where it was. And they have built this Catholic Church in this site, it's called The Church of the Ark of the Covenant. And it says in the next verse there, "It was that the Ark remained in Kiriath-jearim a long time." It was there 20 years and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.

We know that it was here more than 20 years when it refers to it being there 20 years this is Samuel writing. And it was during the 20 years, the last 20 years of Samuel's life that the Ark was here. But it continued to remain here for a total of 70 years. It was here during the last 20 years of Samuel's life. It was here during the 40 years that Saul reigned. And it was here during the first 10 years that David reigned before he became the king of all of Israel when he was just the King of Judah.

And then it is quite a testimony of the spiritual apostasy of the time of how far these people had strayed from God. Because when they conquered the Ark the Philistines went on to Shiloh and destroyed the Tabernacle of Moses. So it had to be rebuilt and it was put up in a short place just about five miles from here. Yet, nobody cared enough to come over here and get the Ark of the Covenant and take it five miles over there and put it in the Holy of Holies. They could just care less.

It was shortly after this that they demanded of Samuel a king. And Samuel said, "You have a king. You're King is God Almighty." And they said, "Yeah, but we want to be like all the other nations around us." And he said, "Yeah, and you get a king and he is going to tax you to death. He is going to send your children into war. He is going to mistreat you and he is going to do all these horrible things to you like all the kings around." They said, "We don't care we want to be like everybody else." It's been a cry of the Jewish people throughout their history. "We just want to be like everyone else." You know have you ever seen the movie or the play of "Fiddler on the Roof?" What does he sing over and over and over? "Why did you choose us? Why didn't you choose somebody else? Why can't we be like everybody else?" And that's what they were saying at this time. They had really strayed a long way from the Lord.

But then Saul passes from the scene. David is made King of Judah. Then a few years later he is made king of all of Israel. And when that happens a very significant things occurs David makes

a vow before the Lord that I referred to a number of times it's in Psalm 132, you might want to take a look at that and mark it because it is an important vow. Psalm 132 David makes a vow he says, "Yahweh remember David and all his afflictions. How he swore to Yahweh and vowed to the mighty one of Jacob, surely I will not go into the chamber of my house or go up to the comfort of my bed, I will not give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids until I find a place for Yahweh a dwelling place for the Mighty one of Jacob."

To me that sort of indicates very strongly what it means was a man after God's own heart. I have already talked about that at Ein Gedi but here is another illustration. He is now the King of all of Israel and usually when you King of all of Israel, of any nation the first thing you are going to do is do a census. You're going to do a computation of how much wealth you've got. You're going to look at your military resources. You're going to think about going out and conquering new lands. Not David his first thought was God. He first thought was getting that nation back to God, getting them on the right track with God. Getting the Ark of the Covenant to a place where it should be.

And it is interesting what he did, he came here to this place and he took the Ark and he took it to Jerusalem to Mount Moriah and he put a simple tent and put the Ark in it and it said he had the opening in front of it opened at all times. So instead of the High Priest going in once a year and sprinkling the blood on it for a period of time there David would go and they would dance before the Ark, they would sing before the Ark, he would lounge before the Ark and write poetry and write songs. David began to change radically the whole worship of Israel.

Prior to David the worship of Israel had always been ritual worship, it was a heavy worship. It was a worship of sacrifice, sacrifice, after sacrifice, after sacrifice. There are only spontaneous times in the history of Israel where there was any joy in celebration in worship. Like when Miriam broke out in joy after the destruction of the Egyptian forces in the Red Sea and she began to dance with a tambourine and to sing. There were spontaneous times like that but that was not a part of the ritual of Israel. It was not until David that they introduced shouting, dancing, hand clapping, singing. And if any of you as elders or as Pastors have ever been involved in a church where you tried to change the worship you know that it is like walking on dynamite. You've got to take it very slowly, very carefully.

I always get amused and very sad at young guys right out of Seminary who go out to some little country church, and it is the first time they're the pastor. And the first thing they do is take all the song books out, and throw them away, and they put up a screen and a projector. And the next thing they know they're having everybody please stand through the entire worship service and sing these words on the screen. And the next week they are looking for a new job because you can't do that without a lot of teaching and a lot of preparation. Changing worship is just dynamite in most congregations. And it was in Israel. I mean think of this David changing radically the whole worship of the nation.

And it's interesting that we are told over in the Chronicles that God affirmed his change through two prophets, Nathan and Gad. That God spoke to those prophets and said, "Tell the people that the innovations that David is putting into worship are approved by Almighty God." And I think that is interesting because David was a prophet. He wrote prophetic literature. He wrote Psalm 22 a detailed description of the crucifixion of the Messiah. He was a prophet. But when it came to changing the worship God spoke to two other prophets Nathan and Gad and said, "You tell the people David is justified in doing this." The Old Testament principle the witness of two or people. God knew that it was going to be a very delicate thing. So, David began to introduce passion into the worship of Jerusalem. And for a time, for a period of time there were two

worship centers, one here in Jerusalem and one a few miles north of Jerusalem. And at Jerusalem there was joy and there was celebration. At the other place they had rebuilt the tabernacle of Moses and there was the ritual and the sacrifices but there was joy in celebration in Jerusalem where David was leading in the worship.

We have the story of David moving the Ark and if you will turn over to 2 Samuel 6 you will find the story of him moving it. He came out here and started moving it as you know as they were walking along with it Uzzah put his hand on the Ark and was struck dead. And they just put the thing down and walked away and left it for a while. And then David I guess sat down with them and talked about the proper way to handle this. And they came back verse 12, "So David went and brought up the Ark of God from the house of Abinadab to the City of David with gladness." And look at what a passion this man had for God. "David danced before the Lord with all his might, and David was wearing a linen ephod." In other words he took off his kingly garments. He took off all his majestic garments and only had on the undergarment, the ephod. And he's dancing before the Ark.

David and all the House of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord with shouting, with the sound of trumpet and as the Ark of the Lord came into the City of David Michal, who was David's wife, Saul's daughter looked through a window and saw King David leaping, and whirling before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart. I mean the king out there acting like a crazy man. Verse 20, "Then David returned to bless his household and Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet David and said, 'How glorious was the King of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself.' And so David said to Michal, 'It was before the Lord who chose me instead of your father and all his house to appoint me ruler over Israel. Therefore, I will play music before the Lord.'" Then his next statement, "And I will be even more undignified than this and will be humble in my own site." Honey you ain't seen nothing yet. I am really going to cut loose. And you know she was stuck barren because of that because she criticized the worship of David she was stuck barren.

And you know I really think that we need to take that very, very seriously. I remember when I was a kid growing up probably 10, 12 years old there was a Pentecostal church down the street from us that was back in the 40's. That was back when Pentecostals were considered to be ignorant and uneducated people, people who lived on the wrong side of the railroad track. And we made fun of them, terrible fun of them because they had the audacity to stand while they were worshipping, or to raise their hands while they were worshipping. And just made terrible fun of them. Well let me tell you something don't ever, ever make fun of someone else's worship. That is between them and God and not for us to judge because when you get into judging somebody else's worship the Lord can take some actions that might not be very happy for you as He did with David's wife.

Well we've done a lot of filming here at this place it is a very special place. I even did a dance out here one day to show how David danced before the Ark or at least how I imagined him dancing before the Ark. But one of the most unusual experiences that I've ever had here is I had a group a number of years ago one of the first times we came here. And for some reason or other I just suddenly got the impulse to lead a particular song. And the song is #61 on your list it is one we listened to, I loved it, we listened to as were coming over here. "We are Standing on Holy Ground" John Starnes was singing that. And so I asked the group, I said, "Why don't we stand and sing this song." Now notice the words of it. I'll never get over this, "We are standing on holy ground, and I know that there are angels all around. Let us praise Jesus now, we are standing in His presence on Holy ground." Folks as I began to sing that I said, "We are standing

on holy ground," I lifted my eyes and hands up and said, "and I know that there are angels all around," I nearly fainted. Look at the ceiling, completely solid with angels. I still get goose bumps every time I think about it. Let's stand and let's worship the Lord. We are standing on holy ground, and I know that there are angels all around. Let us thank Jesus now, we are standing in His presence on holy ground.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: I sincerely hope that our series of 11 programs about a pilgrimage to the Holy Land has been a blessing to you. And I hope they have whetted your appetite to go to the Holy Land and see the sites for yourself.

You know folks, I have been 45 times, and I still get excited about each visit, and I still discover and learn new things each time I go. I went the first time in 1979, and it has been amazing to watch the development of the nation over that period of time. Forests have been planted. Valleys have been drained of swamps and turned into agricultural production centers. Cities have been built. The desert has been reclaimed. And major archeological discoveries have been made that confirm the historical records contained in the Bible. And all this has happened in the midst of constant wars, terrorist attacks, and unrelenting international opposition. Can there be any doubt that God has his finger on this nation?

Well, I have said it before, and I will say it again, a pilgrimage to the Holy Land can be a very spiritually enriching experience. If you have never been, I hope you will make it a point to go. It will bring the Bible alive for you, it will strengthen your faith, and it will draw you closer to the Lord.

I want to share some pilgrimage testimonies with you, but before I do so, let me say I hope our program has been a blessing to you and that you will be back with us next week, the Lord willing. Until then, this is Dave Reagan saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our Redemption is drawing near."

Jean Yeats: This trip to Israel was the most amazing trip I have ever been on, it really and truly is. Much more than I expected. It was just awesome. I would love to come back again. It was on my bucket list and I'm just so glad I came. Even from the first day when we were in Tel Aviv, I believe, and went up to that prayer room that was just so serene. And I have such a deeper appreciation for the Israelites and what these people are going through surrounded by these countries that are just so awful, and so evil. And I know that I will be praying for them every day. And there is such a soft spot in my heart now for them. And going down last night it was so exciting with everybody dancing, and spraying each other with shaving cream and they had such joy. And for the Memorial Day experience, I think about our country--and I think about their love for the people who fight and their caring and how they celebrate, and really take care of each other. And they really want to honor each other and be a part of it. Never forget. And we do that also but they just seem to do it even more so than we do back home. And I just, I just love being here. I didn't expect it to be so green and beautiful, the flowers and the greenery and what they've done. They are an amazing people. And one of my biggest prayers is that just so many more of them will come to know Jesus in their heart. And that word can spread and that their hearts will be on fire for our Lord. And Shalom.

Julia Copper: We decided, my sister, my friend and my brother-in-law rather suddenly to make this trip. At least we thought it was suddenly. But I expect the good Lord had been

planning it for a while. And we came thinking one thing about Israel and one thing about the Bible. And it just came up like a picture book that things folded out of. It became so three-dimensional. It became so meaningful. And we were astounded. We kept saying, "I didn't know that. I never knew that." And suddenly we were all scrambling for our Bibles. And what we thought we knew sometimes wasn't quite right, but we just learned constantly. But it wasn't just learning, it was fun. And the people that were on the tour with us were such a delight and we just all fit together just so beautifully. And I guess you know the thing for me was, the big thing is that I was walking across the Temple Mount and it was like the world fell away and I realized Peter walked here, Jesus walked here, Paul walked here. Now Julie is walking here, what an amazing thing. And I think that might have been my high point of the whole trip. But every day we would say that and we would have a new high point. So really it was the best trip I've ever made. And I can't imagine another one ever being this good. And another thing we did devotionals and we prayed. I've never been on a tour where we did that so it was just the best of experiences.

Marvin Eli Lorenz: I've been fortunate to be on two pilgrimages with David and they've both been awesome. And it's like an onion the first time you're peeling layers and you are learning things. And you come the second time and there is just as many things you are learning. It is very valuable, it is very enriching to any Christian to enrich their walk with Christ.

End of Program