

Christ in Prophecy
Mountains of Jerusalem 3: “Mount Zion”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: What do you think when you hear the term, Mount Zion? Do you think of the City of Jerusalem or the Heavenly City Jesus is preparing for the Redeemed? When I hear the term, I always think immediately of an actual mountain by that name that exists in Jerusalem today. For a visit to that mountain and the fascinating sites located on it, please stay tuned.

Part 1

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. During the past two weeks we have visited two mountains in modern day Jerusalem, and we have considered their historic and prophetic significance. The first one we focused on was the Mount of Olives from which Jesus ascended into Heaven and the mountain to which He will return. Last week we took a look at the most important mountain in the world, the Temple Mount, where the ancient Jewish Temples stood and where Jesus will one day reign over all the world. In this program, we want to take a look at a third mountain Mount Zion. But before we do so, let me orient you as to its location and the origin of its name.

Here is an outline of the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem as they exist today.

This vertical line over here represents the Kidron Valley a deep valley that separates the Old City from the Mount of Olives over here on the East.

This trapezoid here is the Temple Mount. And here is the Dome of the Rock where it is located. This is about 35 acres in size.

Down here to the South is Mount Zion just outside the walls of the Old City.

So in summary: we have the Mount of Olives here; the Temple Mount here, and Mount Zion down here at the southwest corner of the Old City.

Part 2

Before we start exploring Mount Zion in Jerusalem I also want to provide you some orientation

about its history and its name. The area that is called Mount Zion today, the area I just showed you on the map, was first populated during the First Temple period of King Solomon, but it was not included within the city walls until the time of the Second Temple, about 500 years before Jesus.

In the Middle Ages, during the 16th Century, when the walls were rebuilt by Suleiman the Magnificent, Mount Zion was not included within the walls, for some unknown reason. The story is that the wall's two architects cheated on the job and pocketed the money that was to be used to enclose Mount Zion. The result was that they were both beheaded, and their bodies were buried just inside the Jaffa Gate where their tombs can be seen to this day. Whatever the reason may have been, the mountain is outside the walls today. One very interesting thing about this mountain is that no one knows for sure how it got its name.

The first reference to Zion in the Bible is in 2 Samuel 5:7 where it says, "David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David)." So, the Jebusite city of Jerusalem was known as "the stronghold of Zion" when David conquered it. Later, the name began to be applied to other areas. First, it became a synonym for the Temple Mount. For example, in Psalm 2:6 the Lord's "Holy Mountain," which would be the Temple Mount, is referred to as "Zion." Sometimes in Scripture the name is applied to the whole city of Jerusalem. An example can be found in Isaiah 33:20 where it says: "Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet home." Sometimes the name, Zion, was used in reference to the entire Jewish nation, as in Isaiah 33:14 where reference is made to "the sinners in Zion." The term is also used to refer to the Millennial Jerusalem from which Jesus will reign over all the world. Thus, in Isaiah 2, speaking of the Millennial Jerusalem the comment is made that "From out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." Finally, in the New Testament, Zion is used to refer to the New Jerusalem that will be the eternal home of the Redeemed on a new earth. For example, in Hebrews 12:22 Mount Zion is identified as "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." It is believed that the name, Zion, was first applied to the Mount Zion of today by Byzantine pilgrims who mistook it for the site of the ancient Jewish temples, first because it is the highest point in the city and second because it has a flat summit. They thought the Temple Mount was a place that had been prepared for a future temple!

So, in summary, you can find the name Zion used in the Bible in 6 different ways: First the Jebusite city of Jerusalem that King David conquered; second the Temple Mount; third the whole city of Jerusalem; fourth the entire Jewish nation; fifth the Millennial Jerusalem; and sixth the New Jerusalem or Eternal Jerusalem where the Redeemed will live forever. Let' go now to Jerusalem for a tour of Mount Zion.

Part 3

Welcome to Israel and the city of Jerusalem. The hill you see behind me is called Mount Zion the big building on top the Dormition Abbey. We're going to be exploring that mountain today and some fascinating sites on it. And we are going to begin at the top of the mountain at the

Zion Gate that leads into the Old City of Jerusalem. These are the walls of the Old City that were rebuilt by Suleiman the Magnificent in the 1500's. And right up here before me is the Zion Gate that leads into the Old City. As you can see the gate is terribly pocked marked from ferocious fighting that took place here in the 1948-49 War of Independence. The Israelis lost that battle to the Jordanians, and the Jordanians immediately sealed off the Eastern Gate; and began to blow up all of the buildings in the Jewish Quarter, including the synagogues. They also violated the cease fire agreements by refusing to allow any Jews into the Old City to worship at the Western Wall.

The gate was closed for 19 years, from 1949 to 1967 when the Jews reoccupied the Old City of Jerusalem and regained control of this area in the Six Day War. Today, the Zion Gate is a pedestrian and vehicular entrance into the Old City of Jerusalem it leads directly into the Armenian and into the Jewish Quarters. Down this street from here just around the corner are some very interesting sites for Christian pilgrims. Let's take a look at them.

This building here contains two important sites. On the ground floor is the Tomb of David. And upstairs is the Upper Room the traditional site of the Last Supper. Let's take a look at the Upper Room first.

Part 4

The very first thing I want to make clear is that was not the room where the Last Supper took place. This room dates back to the Crusader times about the 12th and 13th Centuries. But we know this the site is authentic because we know that the Last Supper did occur here on Mount Zion in this area. And directly below this room is the traditional Tomb of David. In archaeological excavations there have shown that was the site of the very first Church in Jerusalem; the one that was pastored by James the brother of Jesus.

As I said before the Tomb of David is located directly beneath this site but it is the traditional site of the Tomb of David. The Tomb of David we know was in the Old City of Jerusalem, we are told that in 1 Kings 2:10 and that is quite a distance from here. The site below is traditional because it was the site determined by the Crusaders, but the Crusaders were biblically ignorant, they knew very little about the Bible. For example, when they arrived at the Temple Mount, they thought that the Dome of the Rock was Solomon's Temple. If they had known that it was simply a Muslim shrine they probably would have torn it down or burned it. Instead they climbed up on top and removed the half moon and replaced it with a cross.

Before we leave this room there are a couple things that I would like to remind you of : First of all let's consider the words that Jesus spoke here at the Last Supper, in John 17:1 it says, "That He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may also glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

You know folks there are many Christians today who desperately need to hear those words; I am talking about professing Christians. The fact that you profess to be a Christian does not make you a Christian. Being born into a Christian family does not make you a Christian. Being baptized does not make you a Christian. Going through certain rituals does not make you a Christian. The important thing is that you be born again. That you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, that and that alone makes you a Christian.

The second thing that I would like to remind you of is something that Jesus at the Last Supper. It is recorded in 1 Corinthians 11 by Paul and it was given directly to him by Jesus, in verse 24 it says, "And when Jesus had given thanks He broke the bread and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Folks when we take the Lord's Supper we need to not only look back at the Cross for it is a reminder of the great sacrifice of Jesus. But we also need to look forward to the future and His promise that one day soon He will return and He will drink that cup with us. Let's go now to the tomb of David.

We are ready now to enter the tomb of David. Okay, we have arrived here at the tomb of David. Let's go inside. This is a prayer room adjacent to the Tomb of David and it is currently under renovation. Before we go into the tomb I want to read you from the greatest poem that has ever been written one of David's greatest certainly, Psalm 23 it reads as follows: "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever."

Let's take a look now at the tomb.

There are several other tombs here on Mount Zion I would like to show you. And the first is located in this massive church behind me called Dormition Abbey. It was built by Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany about the beginning of the 20th Century. It is supposedly the site where Mary, the mother of Jesus, died. Let's go take a look at it.

As you can see the interior of the church is spectacular. In the basement of the church is the crypt with a statue of Mary showing her in a peaceful repose. Of course, no one knows for sure where Mary died. The most probable site is in Western Turkey and I say that because while Jesus was hanging on the Cross, He entrusted the care of His mother into the hands of the Apostle John. And later we know for certain that John became the bishop of the Church at

Ephesus and he probably took Mary with him to Ephesus which is located in Western Turkey. We do know this today right outside the city of Ephesus there is a tomb of Mary.

We are now in one of several Protestant cemeteries that are located here on Mount Zion, and the tomb I want to show you is right over here. That is the tomb Horatio Spafford a Chicago businessman who decided in the 19th Century that he was going to take his family on a holiday trip to Europe. He was a very wealthy man, and he was also a very devote Christian. But at the last minute some business matters arouse so he decided to send his family on ahead of him and join them later. Unfortunately as they got near to England their ship was rammed by another, and 226 people died in that calamity; all four of his daughters. Only his wife survived. Spafford sailed for England immediately and when the ship reached the spot where the ship carrying his wife and children had sunk, he looked down in the waters and the Spirit of God began to move upon Him and lyrics came to his mind. He wrote a poem that became one of the greatest hymns in all the history of Christianity: "It is Well With My Soul." It reads like this:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.
Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.
(Then a great verse about our sins.)
My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
(And then, the last great and glorious verse about the Second Coming)
And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back like a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

What an incredible statement of tough faith! It reminds me of a similar statement that we find in the saddest book of Bible the book of Lamentations. If you remember Lamentations is a funeral lament that Jeremiah wrote as he walked through the streets of Jerusalem and saw the destruction of his Temple, and the destruction of everything that had been dear to him. And he begins to write this funeral lament. And right in the middle of it as if to keep his sanity, he suddenly makes this statement of tough faith; "This I recall to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion' says my soul. Therefore I will hope in Him."

Horatio Spafford is buried here on Mount Zion because after he joined his wife in England they decided that they would move here to the City of Jerusalem and devote the rest of their lives to philanthropic work. They did that they formed a hospital, they formed the American Colony, they ministered to Arabs and Jews until they very day that they died. Thus he is buried here on Mount Zion.

And now let's go to another tomb on this mountain of a man who was made famous by Hollywood.

This is the tomb of Oskar Schindler, the man made famous by the movie, "Schindler's List." The first time I came to this cemetery several years ago looking for this particular tomb we had no idea where it was located and we looked all over; this is a very large cemetery. Finally we had an idea, let's look for the tomb that has the most stones on it. And as you can see this one has a lot of stones, and that is how we found it. The reason there are so many stones is that over here in this country instead of putting flowers on the grave, people put a stone. It is called a stone of remembrance and it indicates that someone came to this tomb who wanted to honor Oskar Schindler.

Schindler was an ethnic German from Czechoslovakia who joined the Nazi Party. And during World War II he became sickened by the way in which the Jew were being treated by the Nazis. He decided, at great risk to himself, to try to do everything he could to protect the Jewish workers at his enamelware and ammunition factories. In the process, he saved more than 1200 Jewish lives. Schindler died in poverty in Germany in 1974 and was buried here. In 1963 Schindler was honored by Israel's Holocaust Museum, called Yad Vashem. He was declared to be a "Righteous Gentile," and a tree was planted in his honor on the grounds of the Museum. He is the only member of the Nazi Party to ever be so honored. I would like to conclude our visit here to the Tomb of Oskar Schindler by placing a stone of remembrance of my own on his grave. And now I'd like us to go visit a church right next door to this cemetery and that will be the conclusion of our tour of the Mount Zion area.

Below us here is a beautiful church known as the Church of St. Peter Gallicantu. On the steeple of the church they do not feature a cross, they features a rooster for a very good reason that I will explain in a moment. The name Gallicantu is a Latin term that means "where the cock crowed." I have friend back in the States by the name of Arnold Fruchtenbaum. He is not only a friend but he is a Bible prophecy teaching colleague, and he told me one time, he said, "David I can never remember the name of that Church, so I just call it the church of St. Peter of the cock-a-doodle-do!" The rooster on the steeple, together with the name of the church Gallicantu where the cock crowed, are reminders of the fact that this is the traditional site where Peter denied Jesus three times while the cock crowed twice. Now if this is that traditional site it is also the site of the House of Caiaphas, the High Priest, where Jesus was taken to and tried after He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. Let's take a look at the church now.

Part 5

Here in the basement of the church are some rock cells where Jesus could very well have been imprisoned while He waiting to be tried by Caiaphas the High Priest. We're told that when He was taken before Caiaphas that Caiaphas asked Him a very important question, he said, "Are You the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus responded, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." While that trial was going on, something very important was happening outside this church.

As I said before, while Jesus was being tried by Caiaphas the High Priest, Peter had followed Him in the darkness and was out here in the courtyard of the High Priest's. When he was confronted by a servant girl, a servant girl who said, "Hey you are one of the follower of Jesus aren't you?" And he said, "Oh, no, no, no. I'm not one of His followers." He denied the Lord. Over here we have a statue of that event. You can see a Roman soldier in the background. Here is the servant girl here is Peter saying, "Oh, no, no, no, not me." And above it all is the rooster crowing! Well, hardly had those words come out of the mouth of Peter denying Jesus then a bystander said, "Oh, no, no. I know you are one of those who are following Jesus." He denied a second time. Hardly had he spoken that second denial then another bystander said, "Oh, yeah I think you are one of those guys from the Galilee. You must be a follower of Jesus." And for the third time he denied the Lord. And the moment he did that third denial the cock crowed for a second time. And we are told in Mark 14:72, "Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.' And Peter thought about it, and began to weep."

Let us be thankful that we have a God of loving kindness who is always willing to forgive and forget whenever we are willing to repent. Peter later repented of his denial. And Jesus after His resurrection forgave him three times for having denied Him. My what a glorious thing that was. The grace of God is something that is beyond our comprehension. And I tell you after that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and became a fearless proclaimer of the Word of God.

Part 6

This ancient staircase outside the Church of St. Peter Gallicantu dates back to the First Century and leads down to the Kidron Valley. I'd like to go back for a moment to something that Jesus said when He was questioned by the High Priest Caiaphas. You remember Caiaphas asked, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." Jesus made a promise there that one day He would return to this earth. And folks the signs of the times indicate that is something that is going to happen very, very soon. And when He comes He is coming back to this city and this city will be called Mount Zion, and He will reign over all the nations of the world from here.

There are many descriptions of this in the Scripture, but one of my favorite is in Isaiah chapter 2. Here's how the prophet Isaiah put it in Isaiah chapter 2, he wrote: "It shall come to pass in the latter days, (the days we are in). That the mountain the kingdom of the LORD's house, Shall be established on the top of the mountains, above all the nations. And shall be exalted above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it. And many people will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

The prophet Zechariah makes the same promise in chapter 8 and verse 3 of his prophecy he says, "Thus says the Lord, 'I will return to Zion and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the mountain of the Lord of hosts, and it will be called the Holy Mountain.'" The vision produced by those words stirs my heart and fires my soul, and makes me want to cry out, "Maranatha! Maranatha! Maranatha! Come quickly, Lord Jesus!"

Part 7

Can you join with me in crying out "Maranatha! Come quickly Lord Jesus!?" I hope so, because the signs of the time indicate that Jesus is at the very door of Heaven waiting for His Father's command to return at any moment. The Bible says that those who are ready for the Lord's return will go forth like calves released from a stall, rejoicing over the Lord's coming for His church.

But it says that those who are left, those who are left behind will experience the greatest period of tribulation in the history of the world, so great, in fact that one half of humanity will be killed in the wars of the Antichrist during the first three and a half years of the Tribulation. Everyone seems to know John 3:16 which says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." But few seem to be familiar with John 3:36. It is a verse from a sermon by John the Baptist in which he says: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

This verse makes a point that most people simply do not want to hear. The point is that God must deal with sin because He is a righteous God. And He deals with sin in one of two ways: either grace or wrath. Every person on planet earth this moment is under either the grace of God or the wrath of God one of the two. It is a glorious thing to be living under God's grace. It is a fearsome thing to be under God's wrath.

What is your situation? Are you under grace or wrath? If you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you are under grace. Your sins have been forgiven, your sins have been forgotten and you have been sealed for redemption. But if you have rejected Jesus, you have no hope, for you are subject to the wrath of God.

There is no other way to God except through Jesus. That may sound intolerant to you, but it is the truth. Jesus Himself, who was God in the flesh, said it in John 14:6. These words, "I am the way and the truth and the life; and no one comes to the Father except through Me." Peter proclaimed the same truth in one of his sermons, when he said, "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." That means there is no salvation in the name of Mohammed, there is no salvation in the name of Abraham, or the name of Buddha. None of those men were God in the flesh. None of them died for your sins. None of them was resurrected from the dead. Their tombs are occupied. The tomb of Jesus is empty. Well, that's our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you.

Please be back with us next week when we visit Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. Until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries, saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our Redemption is drawing near!"

End of Program