

Christ in Prophecy

Profiles 3: “Profiles in Righteousness - David”

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Dr. Reagan: Welcome to Israel. You have been viewing the shepherd's fields of Bethlehem where David, the son of Jesse, grew up and where he tended sheep. David became the King of Israel, and he proved himself to be a skilled military leader and a gifted poet and song writer. But David was also a liar, an adulterer, and a murderer. How then, could he be described in the Bible as, “a man after God's own heart?” And what is the relevance of his life to you and me today? Stay tuned.

We are going to begin our search for understanding of King David here in the city of Jerusalem. I'm currently standing on Mount Zion, the highest point in the city, and behind me is the Zion Gate which is currently undergoing renovation. The Zion Gate is heavily pock-marked from bullets because some fierce battles were fought here during the War of Independence in 1948 and 1949. There are many landmarks on this mountain. The most distinctive is the church called Dormition Abbey. It is a Catholic church that was built by Kaiser Wilhelm in the early 20th century. It supposedly marks the spot where Mary, the mother of Jesus, fell asleep before being taken to Heaven.

Another church about half-way down the mountain is called the Church of St. Peter Gallicantu. In Latin that means the Church where the cock crowed. I have a colleague named Arnold Fruchtenbaum, who refers to the church as the church of the cock-a-doodle-doo! The church is built on the site of the house of Caiaphas, the High Priest at the time of Jesus. It is where Jesus was taken after His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, and it is where Peter denied the Lord three times before a cock began to crow.

Not far from this church is a Protestant cemetery where a man made famous by Hollywood is buried. His name was Oscar Schindler. He was a German businessman from Czechoslovakia who was a member of the Nazi Party. But whose heart was moved by the plight of the Jews, so he saved the lives of almost 1,000 of his Jewish employees. The stones you see on his grave represent the way Jews honor the memory of their dead. They are called “stones of remembrance.” Each stone represents a visitor to the

grave. Horatio Spafford, the writer of the great hymn, "It Is Well With My Soul," is also buried in a cemetery here on Mount Zion. Next to the Dormition Abbey is a medieval building that was constructed by the Crusaders. The crusader building occupies a very historic site; it is the place where the Last Supper of Jesus and His disciples was held. It is also the site of the first church in Jerusalem, the Messianic-Jewish church headed up by James, the brother of Jesus. On the same site is the traditional tomb of David, located on the first floor directly below the Upper Room that marks the site of the Last Supper. This, of course is not the true site of David's tomb since the Bible says he was buried inside the ancient City of David, which is some distance from here. This tomb was constructed by the Crusaders who were thoroughly confused about Biblical history and Biblical sites. Nonetheless, let's step inside and visit the traditional tomb of David. Before entering the tomb it is necessary for all males to wear a hat. So, I'm going to put on this yarmulke and we'll be ready to go. Let's go.

Normally, when I come here, I read David's psalm 23. But this time I want to read something different. It's taken from Psalm 27 verse 1. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?" He then proceeds in verse four to say, "One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to meditate in His temple." Let's go take a look at the tomb.

I want to talk with you for just a moment about a very important event in the life of David. And I thought this would be a good place to do it because that tower behind me there is called the tower of David. We're on the west side of the old city near the Jaffa Gate. This morning during my personal devotions I turned to Psalm 144 and I was reminded of this site. David wrote, "Blessed be the Lord my rock, He is my lovingkindness and my fortress. He is my high tower, and my deliver. My shield and the one in whom I take refuge."

You know folks nearly all Christians are familiar with the story of how God gave David's son Solomon one request before he succeeded his father as king. His request was a selfless, magnanimous one that he might be given wisdom so that he could rule wisely. Just think, he could have asked for wealth, he could have asked for military power, or an

empire that encompassed the then-known world. But no, he asked for wisdom, and God was pleased.

What most Christians do not know is that David also made one basic request of God, and what he requested was a thousand times more profound. As Psalm 27 reveals, David requested intimacy with the Lord. Let's read it again, Psalm 27:4, "One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, And to meditate in His temple." This overwhelming desire to experience the Lord's presence was a constant theme of David's poetry. For example, in Psalm 26, he wrote, "O Lord, I love the habitation of your house, and the place where your glory dwells." Likewise, in Psalm 69 David cries out, "Zeal for Your house (the Temple) has consumed me." David loved the Lord with all his heart, and he yearned for fellowship with the Lord above all other things.

Now, of course, it is one thing to write such sentiments, and it is quite another to live them. Our actions always speak louder than our words, and truer than our words. So, what about David's actions? Did they reflect his words? Did they demonstrate an intimate relationship with God? I think they did, and I want to give you three examples. The first occurred when David was a teenager. The event took place in a valley about 15 miles to the west of here. Let's go there.

Well, folks, here we are in the Valley of Elah. Those of you who are familiar with Biblical geography will recognize that name immediately. It is the site where David confronted the Philistine giant named Goliath. The Israelite army was located on these high bluffs over here. Then there was the Valley of Elah in between and over on those bluffs was where the Philistine army was located. When David arrived on the scene, the two armies had been camped here facing each other for a period of 40 days. Each day the Philistine giant, Goliath, would come down into this valley and taunt the Israelites, daring any of them to come out and fight him, promising that if they could kill him the whole Philistine army would surrender. But King Saul and all his men were terrified of the giant, and no one would accept his challenge. That is, no one until David arrived on the scene. You see, he had walked from Bethlehem to deliver food to three older brothers who were soldiers in King Saul's army. And when David heard the giant's taunt, he was bewildered by the fact that no one was willing to take him on. David cried out, "Who is this

uncircumcised Philistine that he should taunt the armies of the living God?" David immediately went to Saul and requested permission to confront Goliath. But Saul refused. He said David was too young and too inexperienced in warfare. David responded by pointing out that he had killed both a lion and a bear while protecting his sheep. He then declared, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, he will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul then agreed for David to go. But first, he clad him with armor. The resulting scene must have been absolutely hilarious, for young David was so burdened down by the heavy armor that he could hardly walk! David decided to cast the armor aside and get five stones, smooth ones, from the creek bed.

Now folks, I've been here many times, and because I've been here many times I know how hard it is to find five smooth stones. Because over the years, tens of thousands of tourists have come and walked up and down this river bed, this stream bed here, and they picked about every smooth stone you can find. In fact, I don't even know why there are any stones left. So, I positioned five smooth stones here, make sure I would have them. David got them, these are really five smooth ones, and then what he did was to take a shepherd's bag, like this one, and he pulled out his sling, put the five stones in the bag, and then he went forth confidently to meet Goliath. David came running at Goliath with a sling shot in his hand and when Goliath saw him, he said "What am I a dog that you should come at me like this?" That's when the young teenager made his famous declaration, "You come with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted." Then David declared, "The battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into my hands." David took one of his smooth stones from his shepherd's pouch, he put it inside of his sling, he began to put it around his head like this, he threw the stone and it hit Goliath right in the center of his forehead. Goliath fell on the ground dead, David went over and took his huge sword and chopped his head off. And at that, the Israelites cheered and attacked and chased the Philistines all the way back to their coastal cities, killing many of them along the way.

The contest with Goliath revealed that David had a deep, intimate relationship with the Lord and a great trust in him. But you know what? David's exceptional relationship with the Lord was also often manifested in another way, through worship. Let's go to an Arab

town called Abu Gosh to find an example of what I'm talking about. And while we are traveling there, let's have a song by Chuck King entitled "Those Who Trust in the Lord."

Well, here we are in the village of Abu Gosh, an Arab village. But in Biblical times this was a Jewish town named Kiriath Jearim. We're about 7 miles west of Jerusalem. Believe it or not, the village of Abu Gosh is best known today as the site of the Elvis Presley service station. It features two bigger than life statues of Elvis. The interior walls are plastered with Elvis album covers, and Elvis music plays 24 hours a day.

Across the street from the station is the Hollywood of Israel where Israeli movies are made in huge sound studios. Behind the movie lot is the location of a lovely moshav called Yad Hashmona. A moshav is a collective village like a kibbutz, but the difference is that at a moshav people own their own houses. This moshav, which looks like an Alpine village, was built with lumber supplied by Christians in Finland. The moshav is occupied by Messianic Jews who make their living by building furniture. Up a hill from the moshav, and adjacent to the movie studios, is a French Catholic Church called the Church of the Ark of the Covenant. The steeple of the church features a statue of Mary holding the Christ child while standing on the Ark of the Covenant. It is symbolic of the fact that Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophetic significance of the Ark.

You see, folks, everything about the Ark of the Covenant was prophetically symbolic of the Messiah. The Ark was made of wood, which was a symbol of the fact that the Messiah would be human. It was overlaid with gold, which was a symbol of the fact that the Messiah would be also divine. And inside the ark were three items: one was a pot of manna, the other was the tablets of Moses that the Ten Commandments were written on, and a third was Aaron's rod that budded. Each one of these had prophetic significance. Take for example the pot of manna; it was symbolic of the fact that the Messiah would be the Bread of Life. And then there was Aaron's rod that budded, which was symbolic of the fact that the Messiah would die and come back to life, just as that rod did. And that third thing, the tablets of Moses, was an indication that the Messiah would perfectly obey the Law of God and fulfill it in every respect. Now on top of the Ark of the Covenant there was a lid that was called the Mercy Seat. On each end there was an angel and their wings touched over and once a year the high priest would walk in and he would sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat. This was a prophetic prophecy that one

when the Messiah died that His blood, the spilling of His blood, would make it possible for all of us to be reconciled to God, because the spilling of that blood would make it possible for the mercy of God to cover the Law of God. This church marks the spot where the Ark of the Covenant was stored in a farm house for almost 70 years. And you know the very first time that I ever visited this church, I had a startling experience. I'd like to tell you about it. Let's go inside.

I had a pilgrimage group with me, and when I finished my lecture about the site, one of the pilgrims requested that we sing the song, "We Are Standing on Holy Ground." So, we stood and started singing that song. Well, the second phrase of that song is, "And I know that there are angels all around." As just as we began to sing that, I lifted my hands, looked up at the ceiling, and lo and behold there were angels all over the ceiling!

Let's review for a moment how the Ark of the Covenant came to rest here in the farm house of a man named Abinadab. During the period of the Judges, the Children of Israel became increasingly rebellious toward the Lord. Near the end of that 400 year period of time, the Philistines sent an army against Israel. Incredibly, the Israelites decided to take the Ark of the Covenant out of the Holy of Holies and carry it into the battle with them. They believed that if they did that, God would not allow the Philistines to win. In short, the Israelites treated the Holy Ark like it was a rabbit's foot that would bring them good luck.

Needless to say, the Lord was outraged over this desecration of the Ark and the fact that the Israelites were putting their faith in an idol rather than God. In the ensuing battle of Ebenezer, the Philistines routed the Israelites. They captured the Ark; they proceeded to Shiloh where they destroyed the Tabernacle of Moses. Thus began the strange odyssey of the Ark. The Philistines took it to their capital of Ashdod where they put it in the temple of their fish god, Dagon. But each morning, they found the statue of their god lying face down on the ground. Then, people began to experience a plague of tumors. That's when the Philistines decided the Ark was a hot box they needed to get rid of. They sent it first to Gath, then on to Ekron, but both towns suffered calamities. Finally, they decided to put it on an ox cart and just head it back toward Israel. The ox cart wandered from town to town until it finally ended up right here in Kiriath Jearim, where the Ark was stored in the farm house of Abinadab.

The book of First Samuel says the Ark stayed here for 20 years, but you know folks that must be a reference to the last 20 years that Samuel served as a judge of Israel. I say that because we know it continued to remain here during the 40 years of Saul's reign and during the first 7 years of David's reign. So it was here a total of 67 years! Now the amazing thing is that the Tabernacle of Moses had been rebuilt in Gibeon, which is only 2 or 3 miles from here, yet no one cared enough to come get the Ark and return it to the Holy of Holies. The forgotten Ark became a symbol of Israel's apostasy. But David had never forgotten it. And after he became king of all of Israel, 7 years after he had been crowned King of Judah, he decided that the first priority of his kingship would be to bring the Ark to Jerusalem as a symbol of his determination to bring God back into the heart of his nation. According to Psalm 132, David took an oath that he would not sleep indoors or on a bed until the Ark of the Covenant and had been returned to its proper resting place. David's top priority as the king of all of Israel was to lead the nation into a spiritual revival with their God. And so, David came here to Kiriath Jearim.

The priests put the Ark on their shoulders and they headed toward Jerusalem. And David, in his delight, took off his outer robe, his priestly robe, and he began to dance before the Ark. He skipped and he shouted, he clapped his hands, he turned in circles. And he began to shout "Hallelu et Adonai! Hallelu et Adonai!" Now I'm sure that some of you viewing this program are sitting there saying to yourself, "This guy, Reagan, is making an absolute fool out of himself!" Well, that's exactly what David's wife, Michal, thought when she saw him dancing before the Ark as he entered Jerusalem. She was mortified by his un-kingly behavior, and she told him so in no uncertain terms when he got home. And you know I love David's reply. He said to her, "Honey, you ain't seen nothing yet!" In short, he was more than willing to be a fool for the Lord's sake.

The story ends with a sobering thought. We are told that because of her criticism of David's worship, Michal's womb was struck barren by God. The message is that God takes worship very seriously, and we had better be very cautious about criticizing anyone's worship. And so you have it, David in the Valley of Elah and David here in Kiriath Jearim, two examples of David's incredible dedication to God. There is a third event in David's life that clearly demonstrated his intimacy with the Lord. But for that story, we must go to the Dead Sea.

This stone was placed here many years ago to mark the lowest point on the surface of the earth. When I first came here in the 1970's it read 1,291 feet below sea level. But folks, if we were to bring this up to date, first of all we would have to move it a quarter of a mile behind me and then we would have to change the reading to 1,378 feet. That's a drop of 87 feet since the 1970. The reason for that drop is the Dead Sea is rapidly receding. And it's receding because it receives very little water anymore. And the reason for that is that the water coming down from the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River is pulled out on both sides by the Israelis and the Jordanians and used for irrigation. The Dead Sea is 42 miles long and 11 miles wide. It is still over 1,000 feet deep despite the fact that its level is dropping rapidly. Its mineral and salt content is so high that nothing can live in it. As you can see, it is a dismal body of water surrounded by a barren wilderness.

When you are in this part of Israel, the only thing you can think of is water, not this water, but drinking water. The heat here is so oppressive that one can die of dehydration very quickly. Now King David used to come to this area frequently to hide out from King Saul. And when he was in this area, he was always thinking about water. Amazingly, there is an abundant supply of fresh water not far from here at a place called Ein Gedi. Let's go there. Ein Gedi is located just up this path. As we go there, let's keep our eyes open for Ibex because they can often be seen grazing in this area.

Isn't it amazing to find such an abundant supply of fresh water out here in the middle of this terrible wasteland? This water comes from two spring-fed streams. And just think it's been flowing for over 3,000 years. Often, when David was pursued by his enemies, like King Saul, would flee out into this area, knowing that this water was here. But so did King Saul and often the king would cut him off, so that he and his mighty men ended up in the desert, living in caves, with only the water that they had brought with them. After David was crowned the king of Judah, before he was crowned the king of all of Israel, the Philistines attacked both Hebron and Bethlehem and drove him out of those towns. He began to flee in this direction but they knew of this water so they cut him off and he and his mighty men were left stranded out in the desert, living in caves using only the water they had brought with them.

One night as David and his mighty men sat around the camp fire, David grew nostalgic. He began to think about his hometown of Bethlehem and sort of in an off-hand nostalgic moment he said, "You know what I would like more than anything else in the world right now? I would like a taste of the water from the well in my home town of Bethlehem." And after saying that, he crawled into a cave and went to sleep. His mighty men looked at each other and said, "Well if that's what David wants, that's what David's gonna get!" And so the three of them spent the rest of the night going across the desert, sneaking through the Philistine lines at the threat of their lives, getting a pail of water. Coming back through the Philistine lines again, and marching back across the desert. The next morning when David got up, he looked off into the sun rise and he stretched and he rubbed the sleepy from his eyes and then he looked down and there were three of his mighty men sitting with silly grins on their faces. He looked at them and he said, "What's up, guys?" And they said, "David, look at your feet." When David looked down, he saw a pail of water. And he said to his men, "What is this?" And they said, "David that is a pail of water from your hometown of Bethlehem." He said "You mean you went across the desert last night and risked your lives to get this water for me?" And they said, "Yes David, that's what you said you wanted." And just like that, without even thinking, instinctively, David reached down, picked up the pail of water, and before the astonished eyes of his men, he poured the water out on the ground as a drink offering to Almighty God. And then he said to his men, "This water is too valuable to drink. The only thing that can be done with it is to give it as a sacrifice to God." Wow! That's what I call a man with a heart for God!

People always ask, "How could David be considered a 'man after God's own heart,' when he was such a sinner? After all he committed adultery with Bathsheba, he lied about it, and then he arranged to have her husband killed." Well, folks David was human like you and me. And like you and me, he was a sinner who sinned mightily. But he never made excuses for his sin nor did he wallow in sin, as did his son, Solomon. When he sinned, David always turned back to God in genuine repentance. Consider for example the prayer of repentance he wrote after his adultery with Bathsheba. It is recorded in Psalm 51, "Be gracious to me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O

God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” Keep in mind also that during most of his life, David lived in a constant awareness of God, with God as his first priority.

I think the message of David’s life for you and me is that there is no sin so dark and hideous that it can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ if you we are willing to repent and reach out to God in faith. And that, my friends, is truly good news! Let’s end where we began, with Psalm 27. It begins with these words, “The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life, whom shall I dread?” David was not afraid of life. The Psalm concludes with these words, He writes, “I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” David was not afraid of death. The two greatest fears of Mankind are life and death. David feared neither because he trusted in the Lord.

Well, folks, that’s our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you, and I hope you will be back with us again next week. Until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries, saying, “Look up, be ready, for our Redemption is drawing near!”

End of Program