

Christ in Prophecy
Easter 2: “The Passion in Bible Prophecy”

© 2009 Lamb & Lion Ministries. All Rights Reserved.
For a video of this show, please visit <http://www.lamblion.com>.

Opening

Dr. Reagan: Did you know that one of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible describes the death of Jesus in detail? And what makes it particularly remarkable is that it was written more than one thousand years before Jesus was born. And more than 700 years before the Romans perfected crucifixion as a method of execution. For more information, stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus our blessed hope. I'm Dave Reagan, Founder and Director of Lamb & Lion Ministries. Behind me here you see Skull Hill, one of the possible sites of the crucifixion of Jesus. This hill is located in Jerusalem, just north of the Old City's Damascus Gate. As you can see, there is an image on the front of the hill of what appears to be a skull. You can see two eye sockets and the bridge of a nose. During Old Testament times, leading up to the time of Jesus, this was a place of execution, where people were stoned to death. This site fronts on the highway to Damascus. The Romans always crucified people along such major highways in order to maximize exposure to what happened when you challenged Rome. But you know, regardless of where the crucifixion took place in Jerusalem, whether here or some other site, the event itself was prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures over one thousand years before it occurred. In just a moment, we will consider that remarkable prophecy in detail.

Well, welcome once again. I am delighted to have with me one of my colleagues, Don McGee, who is the founder and director of Crown & Sickle Ministries in Amite, Louisiana. Thanks for being with us, Don.

Don McGee: Delighted to be here, Dave.

Dr. Reagan: There are many reasons to study Bible prophecy. One of the most important is that it validates Jesus as God in the flesh.

Don McGee: There are over 300 prophecies concerning the First Coming of the Messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures. One hundred and eight of these are separate and distinct. The odds of only seven being fulfilled accidentally in the life of one person are 1 in 10 to the 17th power or one in one hundred quadrillion. Such fulfillment is beyond the realm of possibility.

Dr. Reagan: Boy, you can say that again Don. You know folks a mathematician by the name of Peter Stoner, in his book, *Science Speaks*, illustrates the meaning of 1 in 10 to the 17th power. Now, I have never met Peter Stoner, but I tell you one thing, I know he must be a good man because he uses the state of Texas to illustrate his point. Stoner says that if you want to get an idea of 1 in 10 to the 17th power, you must start by filling the state of Texas knee deep with silver dollars. Then you fly over the state and you drop out one silver dollar from the airplane that has a black check mark on it. Then you turn about 10,000 bulldozers loose and let them just rampage around the state for several years to get those silver dollars really mixed up very good. Then, you take a blindfolded man and you turn him loose in the sea of silver dollars. And the odds that on the first draw he will reach down and pick up that silver dollar with the black check mark is 1 in 10 to the 17th power.

Don McGee: Folks, we're not talking about mere coincidence here. This is beyond the realm of coincidence. And keep in mind, Stoner was only talking about seven of the prophecies fulfilled in the life of Jesus. The total that was fulfilled was 108!

Dr. Reagan: In addition to the fact that Bible prophecy validates Jesus as God in the flesh, it also helps us to better understand Jesus, to understand who He was and what He did.

Don McGee: One of the most remarkable prophecies in that regard is contained in Psalm 22. This Psalm was written by David one thousand years before the birth of Jesus. Get your Bibles ready, and in just a moment we will take a look at it.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Let's take a look at Psalm 22, one of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible, and as we do so, keep in mind that it was written by David 1,000 years before the birth of Jesus. The psalm begins with a cry of lament with these words, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer; and by night, but I have no rest." Well, as you can see, the psalm begins with an agonizing cry of despair. David cries out, "Where are You, God?" He bemoans the fact that although he has been seeking the Lord's help both day and night, all he has received in response is silence.

Don McGee: Have you ever had that experience? Well, if you pray regularly, I know you have. It happens because God answers prayers in three ways: Yes, No, and Wait. Yes and no we can deal with. It is the waiting that wears on our nerves. We usually desire instant gratification rather than God's will in His perfect timing.

Dr. Reagan: David had experienced this feeling before. An example can be found in Psalm 6 where he wrote, "I am weary with my sighing; every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears. My eye has wasted away with grief; it has become old because of all my adversaries." David is saying here, "Lord my bed is wet from my tears. My eyes are weary from my grief. When are you going to hear me and respond?" Well folks this type of statement is not evidence of a loss of faith. The psalmist would not even bother to cry out to God if he had lost his faith. It is more an expression of impatience and a verbalization of a sense of desperation.

Don McGee: In fact, after issuing his cry of despair, David immediately reaffirms his faith in God. He reminds himself of God's faithfulness by proclaiming, "Yet, You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel. In You our fathers trusted; they trusted and You delivered them. To You they cried out, and were delivered; In You they trusted, and were not disappointed." As if to preserve his sanity in the midst of suffering, the psalmist reminds himself of God's faithfulness in responding to the desperate needs of his forefathers.

Dr. Reagan: It is one thing for David to cry out to God in desperation in his frail humanity. But how can the fact be explained that Jesus, the Son of God, exclaimed the same plaintive cry while hanging on the cross? Listen to what it says in Matthew 27:46. Matthew writes, "About the

ninth hour, 3pm, Jesus cried out in a loud voice saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" Again, how can such words coming from the mouth of the Son of God be explained? I believe, as with David, this expression was not related to a loss of faith. Rather, it was a desperate cry of inexpressible agony and lament over the separation from God the Father that Jesus experienced on the Cross.

Don McGee: You see folks, the greatest suffering that Jesus experienced in His passion was not physical or emotional, it was spiritual. Think of it. He had experienced eternally a perfect fellowship of love with God the Father. Then, suddenly, that sweet communion was broken because your sins and mine were placed on Jesus, and the wrath of God, which we deserve, was poured out on the Son. Here's how the apostle Paul put it in 2 Corinthians 5, "He (that is God the Father) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Dr. Reagan: The perfect fellowship between Father and Son was broken because our sins were placed on Jesus and the holiness of God cannot countenance sin. God the Father had to turn His back on His Son, prompting Jesus to cry out from the depths of His soul, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Don McGee: Verse 6 of Psalm 22 the psalmist shifts from the Messiah's spiritual suffering to His physical and emotional distress. Verse 6, "But I am a worm and not a man, a reproach of men and despised by the people. All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, 'Commit yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.'" The Hebrew word translated worm in verse 6 is *tola*, it's the word for crimson or scarlet. It is also a word for a certain type of worm. In this context it is most likely referring to the bloody red condition of the Messiah after His flogging, when He would have been so mutilated and swollen that He would no longer even resemble a man and would be an object of derision.

Dr. Reagan: So, this passage describes the intense physical suffering of the Messiah combined with the emotional suffering He would experience as onlookers sneered at Him and cried out caustic taunts. We find the fulfillment of this prophecy in Matthew 27, "And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him (Jesus on the Cross) wagging their heads, and saying, 'You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are

the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him, and saying, 'He saved others; but He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we shall believe in Him.'"

Don McGee: This brings us to verse 9 of Psalm 22. In this verse, and the one following, the psalmist has the Messiah reaffirming His faith in the midst of His intense sufferings. Verse 9, "Yet, You are He who brought me forth from the womb; You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts. Upon You I was cast from birth; You have been my God from my mother's womb." Folks this reaffirmation of faith is an incredible act of will, and it is an example for all of us. Our tendency is to wallow in self-pity when the going gets tough. But David refuses to do that. In fact he takes the opportunity to reaffirm his faith and indicates prophetically that the Messiah will do the same in the midst of His passion.

Dr. Reagan: You know folks, it reminds me of the tough faith of Paul. You know, when he was in prison in Rome, awaiting execution, Paul wrote in the Philippian letter, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice!" He proceeded to urge his fellow believers to "be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." He then revealed the secret of his positive attitude in the midst of suffering. He wrote, "I can do all things through Him (through Jesus) who strengthens me."

Don McGee: In other words, Paul was saying that we should keep our eyes focused on the Lord rather than upon our troubles, and, as he put it, "the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard our hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Dr. Reagan: Before we continue with our verse-by-verse analysis of Psalm 22, let's pause for a song by Jack Hollingsworth of Act's 29 Ministry.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Thank you, Jack, for that great song.

Don McGee: Okay folks, before the song we had arrived at verse 11 of Psalm 22, the great prophetic psalm about the Messiah on the Cross. This is where the psalmist returns to the

Messiah's emotional suffering. He writes, "Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help."

Dr. Reagan: This is a prophecy concerning the solitude the Messiah would experience in His passion. This verse says He will suffer emotionally from His desertion by all His disciples. And the fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded over in Matthew 26 where it says, "While He (Jesus) was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a large crowd with swords and clubs. Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, 'Hail, Rabbi!' and kissed Him. And Jesus said to him, 'Friend, do what you have come for.' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. Then all the disciples left Him and fled."

Don McGee: At verse 12 of Psalm 22 the focus shifts back to the Messiah's spiritual suffering. The psalmist resorts to symbolic language to describe a spiritual attack the Messiah will experience during his passion. Verse 12, "Many bulls have surrounded me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. They open wide their mouth at me, as a ravening and a roaring lion." I believe this is a prophecy that the Messiah in His passion would be surrounded by demonic hordes gloating over his approaching death. In the New Testament, in First Peter 5:8, Peter describes Satan as "a roaring lion seeking someone to devour."

Dr. Reagan: Although there is no recorded fulfillment of this prophecy in the New Testament, I have absolutely no doubt that it happened. The people who were witnesses of the crucifixion could not see the demons with their physical eyes. But Jesus, with His spiritual eyes could undoubtedly see them as they danced around the Cross and gloated over their "victory" in orchestrating the murder of God's Son.

Don McGee: At verse 14 of Psalm 22 the psalmist begins to describe the Messiah's physical suffering in gory detail. He writes, beginning with verse 14, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and You lay me in the dust of death." His bones are out of joint. He is suffering from extreme thirst. His heart is stressed to the point of bursting. Death just hovers about Him. In fulfillment, here's how the Gospel of Mark describes the suffering of Jesus, beginning with verse 15 there: "after having Jesus scourged, he (that is Pilate) delivered Him to be crucified. And the soldiers took Him away, they dressed Him up in

purple, and after twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him. They kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting on Him.”

Dr. Reagan: John in his gospel adds that Jesus suffered extreme thirst while he was hanging on the cross, and when He cried out, "I am thirsty," the soldiers taunted Him by putting a sponge to His mouth that was full of sour wine.

Don McGee: When we come to verse 16 of Psalm 22, we encounter one of the most remarkable prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures, “For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and feet.” Keep in mind folks, that these words were written 1,000 years before the birth of Jesus. This means that they were also written 700 years before the Romans refined crucifixion as a method of execution. Yet, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, David prophesied that the Messiah would die by having His hands and feet pierced!

Dr. Reagan: Keep in mind also folks, that the Jewish method of execution at the time that David wrote the psalm was by stoning. This was still true one thousand years later when Jesus lived. But the Jews had lost the power of implementing capital punishment under Roman rule. So they turned Jesus over to the Roman authorities when they decided that He should be executed. All four of the gospel stories record the execution of Jesus by crucifixion. The Gospel of Mark describes it succinctly as follows. Mark writes, “Then they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. And they crucified Him.”

Don McGee: The prophet concludes his observations about the suffering of the Messiah in verses 17 and 18 of Psalm 22, “I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.” All the Messiah's rib bones are laid bare as He gasps for air while hanging on the execution stake. And the emotional suffering continues as no one shows any compassion. Instead, while His life ebbs away, those carrying out the cruelty pass the time by gambling for His clothing. Matthew describes the fulfillment of this prophecy in this manner, "And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots."

Dr. Reagan: In verses 19-21 of Psalm 22, the psalmist records a final prayer uttered by the Messiah. It is a plea for deliverance from Satan. In verse 19 he writes, “But You, O Lord, be not

far off; O You, my help, hasten to my assistance. Deliver my soul from the sword, my only life from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth; from the horns of the wild oxen You answer me." None of the Gospels record Jesus uttering such a prayer on the Cross, but undoubtedly He must have done so, perhaps silently or in a whisper. In the prayer, the Messiah affirms that God the Father is near to Him, although He seems distant because the Father cannot countenance the sin that the Messiah must bear in our behalf. He ends the prayer by asking for deliverance from Satan (the lion) and his demonic hordes (the wild oxen).

Don McGee: Now, in Psalm 22, between verses 21 and 22, the greatest miracle in history occurs, the resurrection of the Messiah. The event is not specifically stated, but it is certainly inferred. Verse 21 ends with a prayer for deliverance from Satan's attack. Verse 22 begins with a song of celebration, thanking God for answering the prayer. "I will tell of Your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You. You who fear the Lord, praise Him; all you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel. For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from him; but when he cried to Him for help, He heard. From You comes my praise in the great assembly; I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him."

Dr. Reagan: I praise God for the promise of the resurrection that is clearly inferred in these verses! Incidentally, the most direct prophecy concerning the resurrection in the Old Testament is one that is found in Psalm 16:10 where David wrote, "You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."

Don McGee: In the New Testament, Jesus repeatedly told His disciples that He would be killed and resurrected. It was one of His most frequently stated prophecies. For example, in Matthew 17 He is quoted as saying, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day." Luke records the fulfillment of these resurrection prophecies in the following way in Luke 24, beginning with verse 1, "But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they (a group of women) came to the tomb bringing spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling apparel; and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, 'Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He

was still in Galilee, and saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

Dr. Reagan: The last six verses of Psalm 22 give us a glorious summary of the consequences of the Lord's passion on the cross. The first one is the most important. It is salvation for all who put their faith and trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Here's how verse 26 reads, it says, "The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the Lord!" The apostle Peter sums up the meaning of this verse in 1 Peter 2 verse 24. He writes there these words, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."

Don McGee: The second blessing of the Cross that is mentioned in Psalm 22 has to do with the obedience of Jesus. It says that His submission to the humiliation of the Cross will result in His glorification before all the nations of the earth when He returns to reign over the world. Here's how the psalmist expresses it, "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations."

Dr. Reagan: When the Lord's glorious reign begins, all the Redeemed will be prospered, while those who are condemned by their unbelief will bow before Him and confess Him as King of kings and Lord of Lords before being consigned to Hell. Verse 29 says, "All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship, all those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, even he who cannot keep his soul alive." Isaiah puts it this way, he says, "Every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." This is affirmed in the New Testament in Romans 14 and Philippians 2.

Don McGee: Think of it, folks - a day will come when Hitler and Stalin will bow and confess the lordship of Jesus. As will Madeline Murray O'Hare, Charles Darwin, and ever other nefarious person who has ever lived, but it will have no impact upon their eternal destiny. Only those that make the confession in this life will receive the blessing of having their hearts live forever.

Dr. Reagan: The final consequence of the Cross that is mentioned in Psalm 22 is that during the millennial reign of Jesus, the Redeemed (who will be in glorified bodies) will teach those who are born during that time of the righteousness of Jesus and of the all-sufficiency of His

sacrifice on the Cross. The psalm concludes with these two verses. Verse 30, "Posterity will serve Him; it will be told of the Lord to the coming generation. They will come and will declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has performed it." Notice again the last phrase of Psalm 22, "He has performed it." In the Hebrew, it literally says, "It is finished." This fact has prompted some scholars to theorize that as Jesus hung on the Cross, He quite likely quoted all of Psalm 22, beginning with the words, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" And ending with the words, "It is finished." The witnesses then simply wrote down the opening and closing words, which were recorded in the Gospels.

As we conclude our consideration of Psalm 22, one thing is certain - the fulfillment of all the prophecies of Psalm 22 in the life of Jesus confirms Him to have been the promised Messiah. This fact raises a crucial question - the most important question of your life: "Who is Jesus to you?"

Don McGee: When Jesus was tried by the Roman authorities, the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, asked the assembled mob, "What shall I do with this Jesus who is called the Messiah?" My friends that is the most important question in the whole universe. So, let me put Pilate's question to you. "What will you do with Jesus?" Will you accept Him as Lord and Savior, as did the thief on the cross? If so, then you will have received the same promise as did the thief. Jesus said to him: "You shall be with Me in Paradise."

Dr. Reagan: Or, will you simply wash your hands of Jesus, as did Pilate? If so, then your destiny will be one of eternal separation from God in Hell. Your eternal destiny, Heaven or Hell, depends upon your answer to one question, "Who do you say that Jesus is?"

Don McGee: The Bible says that every person on planet earth is under either the wrath of God or the grace of God because those are the two ways in which God deals with sin. Are you under wrath or grace? You can move from wrath to grace by putting your faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Do it today. Don't delay. And when you do so, seek out a Bible believing church where you can manifest your new faith in public confession of Jesus in water baptism. You need to get involved in the fellowship of a local church where you can begin to grow in the image of Jesus through systematic Bible study and prayer.

Dr. Reagan: Well, folks, that's our program for this week. We pray it has been a special blessing to you and your household. I hope that you will be back with us again next week. Until then, this is Dave Reagan and Don McGee speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our redemption is drawing near!"

End of Program