

Christ in Prophecy

Christmas 6: “The Forgotten Promises of Christmas”

© 2012 Lamb & Lion Ministries. All Rights Reserved.

For a video of this show, please visit <http://www.lamblion.com>.

Opening

Dr. Reagan: Are you aware of the fact that there are some biblical promises related to Christmas that most Christians either don't know about or have forgotten? Stay tuned for a discussion of the forgotten promises of Christmas.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus our blessed hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. Last week we ended our program with the reference to what I call the forgotten promises of Christmas. In this program we want to take an in depth look at those promises. But first let me introduce my colleagues who are going to participate in the discussion with me. This is my friend Dennis Pollock, many of you are familiar with him because he served as my associate here at Lamb and Lion Ministries for 11 years before he decided to step out in faith and form his own ministry called Spirit of Grace; it focuses primarily on preaching the Gospel in Africa, although Dennis does go to other parts of the world like India, and the Philippines. Denise is also very much involved in the training of pastors in Africa. Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy Dennis.

Dennis Pollock: Well thanks Dave it is always a blessing to be with you.

Dr. Reagan: Well it is a blessing to have you; we always look forward to your great sense of humor. Also assisting me is my colleague Nathan Jones who serves as our Web Minister, welcome Nathan.

Nathan Jones: Great to be here, Merry Christmas.

Dr. Reagan: How about telling folks about our website.

Nathan Jones: Go to www.lamblion.com, lamblion.com, we've got all sorts of great articles on Bible prophecy; we've got all these Christ in Prophecy episodes listed there. We have a blog if you need a daily dose of Bible prophecy. A facebook group, you can talk to people and we have an e-newsletter twice a month you can sign up for that right there.

Dr. Reagan: Thank you. Dennis tell people how they can get in touch with your ministry.

Nathan Jones: Well our website is spiritofgrace.org, and they can shoot an e-mail directly to me by sending it to dennis@spiritofgrace.org. Or if they have a complaint or a criticism they can send it to davereagan@grumpycomments.org.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Well gentlemen I want us to jump right into a discussion of what I call the forgotten promises of Christmas and to get that discussion started let's go to a key Scripture that is found in Luke 1:26-33, and Nathan why don't you read that for us.

Nathan Jones: I would be happy to, "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth. Into a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph of the descendents of David and the virgins name was Mary. In coming in he said to her, 'Hail favored one the Lord is with you.' But she was greatly troubled at this statement and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be. And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid Mary for you have found favor with God, and behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, He will be called the Son of the most high, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and His kingdom will have no end.'"

Dr. Reagan: Thank you Nathan. Now folks I want you to note that this passage contains seven promises: (1) Mary will conceive and give birth to a son, (2) He will be named Jesus, (3) He will be great, (4) He will be called the Son of the Most High, (5) He will be given the throne of David, (6) He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, (7) there will be no end to His Kingdom. Now gentlemen of these seven prophecies which do you think have been fulfilled?

Dennis Pollock: Well the first four have definitely been fulfilled already. The idea that Mary would conceive and bear a son we know that is historically true; Mary a young Jewish virgin conceived bore a son. The next one said His name would be called Jesus; Jesus is the Hebrew

name that means the Lord is Salvation. Jesus actually Yeshua and that was fulfilled as well. The Bible goes on to say that “He would be great,” well there is no person that could ever be considered any greater, even by secular standards.

Dr. Reagan: We measure time by Him.

Dennis Pollock: We measure time by Him, He has affected history more than any other person ever has, and is the most famous person that has ever lived on the planet. He also happened to be God manifested in the flesh which makes Him great as well. And then finally the fourth one is that He would be called the Son of God, He of course is the Son of God, he made that plain, and the Scriptures make that plain, so those four have been fulfilled exactly as they were predicted.

Dr. Reagan: How about it Nathan, do you think so?

Nathan Jones: Definitely, I agree with you Dennis the first four have definitely been fulfilled because the last three have not.

Dr. Reagan: Well that is the interesting thing about this, and that is that I think everyone out there who calls themselves a Christian regardless of denomination, whether Protestant, Catholic, or whatever would agree that those four have been fulfilled and fulfilled literally for their plain sense meaning. But that leaves us with three that appear to be unfulfilled, and folks they are: Will He be given the throne of David, and second He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and third there will be no end to His Kingdom. What about it fellas have those been fulfilled.

Dennis Pollock: No Dave, they really haven't. One thing that's interesting in those promises particularly those first two that you mentioned, He will be given the throne of David, He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, is that they have a very Jewish sound to them. The throne of David was actually a literal place of government over the nation of Israel.

Dr. Reagan: In the city of Jerusalem.

Dennis Pollock: In the city of Jerusalem, and then the house of Jacob was clearly the Jews, it was the Jewish people, this was the house of Jacob. By no stretch of the imagination can you declare that He has reigned over the house of Jacob, or that He is reigning over the house of Jacob, and of course Scripture goes on to say this will go on forever, so those have not happened. And you are left with the conundrum of saying either they are not going to happen,

which is unacceptable, or some would say, well it is all symbolic and it doesn't really mean anything, or it means the Church. Or you could say it is going to happen which of course is the position that you and I would take.

Dr. Reagan: Well folks, I would agree that these three prophecies are unfulfilled. But I want to hasten to point out that the leaders of the Catholic Church and the leaders of the vast majority of Protestant denominations in the world today would strongly disagree. The fact of the matter is that the predominate Catholic and Protestant viewpoint is that these three prophecies like the first four have already been fulfilled. The argument goes like this, the first four prophecies were literally fulfilled in the life of Jesus, the last three have been figuratively or symbolic, or spiritually fulfilled in the life of the Church. What about it fellas, have these been spiritually, Nathan?

Nathan Jones: You know if you read other passages that talk about when Jesus rules and reigns here on earth it doesn't happen. If I go to Isaiah 24:23, "The moon will be abash, the sun ashamed because the Lord Almighty will reign on Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem before it's elders." Or Isaiah 40:4-5, "Every valley should be raised up, every mountain hill made low, the rough ground shall be made level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed in all of mankind together will see it, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Has any of these things happened in history? They haven't, so clearly it is a future event.

Dr. Reagan: Is Jesus sitting on the Throne of David today?

Nathan Jones: No, and it can't be argued that God's throne is the throne of David. It's God's throne not David's throne.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah the Bible says He sits on the right hand of His father on His throne, on the Father's throne.

Nathan Jones: Right.

Dr. Reagan: But this says that He is going to be given the throne of David, which is always as you said been in Jerusalem. And He is not in Jerusalem today sitting on the throne of David. And then the one about He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. Well I grew up in a church and this is what is normally taught in Christendom that means He is going to reign over the church, that He is reigning over the Church. Well yes He is reigning over the Church right now, but the Church is not the house of Jacob.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, there are a number of people sad to say that have a couple of stamps that they stamp prophecies with. One of them says, “Does not apply to the Jews, applies to the Church.” So you show them some prophecy that predicts glorious things for the Jews, Jesus reigning over the Jews, the Jews being raised up and they stamp it, “doesn’t apply, applies to the church.” The other stamp is symbolic; they will just stamp everything symbolic no matter what you give them. So they write off all these tremendous prophecies.

Dr. Reagan: And it is so, it’s not really logical to say that the first four are literally fulfilled and the last three are symbolically fulfilled. And particularly when you consider that the First Coming prophecies were all fulfilled in their literal plain sense meaning.

Dennis Pollock: Exactly.

Dr. Reagan: Not symbolically, not spiritually. Spiritualization people love to get involved in because you can play God when you spiritualize, because you can make the Scriptures say anything you want it to say.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah.

Nathan Jones: And it is a sad testament to our Christian faith if our hope is the Lord’s return, and we just kind of say that it’s not really happening, it was fulfilled in the past, we lose that hope that we have in Jesus. And we don’t have as depth of Christian life like we should.

Dr. Reagan: And another aspect of that of course that you hinted out Denise is Replacement Theology which says God has washed His hands of the Jews, has no purpose left for the Jews and therefore the Church has inherited all of the promises of Israel. In the original King James Version in 1611 in the Old Testament in many of the chapters in Isaiah they put in chapter headings that said, “God makes promises to the Church,” it didn’t have anything to do with the Church, they were promises to Israel, to the Jewish people.

Nathan Jones: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: And so we have this idea that the Church has replaced Israel therefore the Church has inherited all these promises and therefore the Church has fulfilled all these promises.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, it basically dilutes prophecy to the point where it almost means nothing. And prophecy is such a rich aspect of Scripture. There are so many specific details

about what God will do, and if you read them and you say to yourself, "God really means what He says here, He is really going to do this." You are enriched so immensely...

Nathan Jones: Exactly.

Dennis Pollock: ... in understanding, the future it is exciting, it's inspiring, it builds your faith. But if you just say that it is all symbolic, it doesn't mean anything, than all that prophecy, all these Scriptures, the Scriptures of Isaiah talking about the wolf and the lamb feeding together and the lion eating straw like the ox and all these other tremendous prophecies are diluted to the point where they mean nothing, and the details then are irrelevant. Imagine if I were to write a book on how to lose weight and the only words in the book were, "Don't eat so much." It would be just something that would be meaningless because it has not detail, no depth, no substance, it's true, but it is meaningless. And that is what people do with prophecy, they basically just condense it down to the point where all it means is in the end good will win over evil and don't try to figure anything out but that. And they have diluted it down to the point where it is not exciting, it is not inspiring, and it is essentially meaningless.

Dr. Reagan: It is all going to pan out in the end.

Nathan Jones: Yeah, Amillennialist.

Dr. Reagan: I remember one time you told me that so many pastors tell you, "It is just all going to pan out in the end." And you said those guys would be really good members of the no-nothing party back before the Civil War.

Dennis Pollock: Exactly.

Dr. Reagan: They don't know nothing and they are proud of not knowing nothing.

Dennis Pollock: That is the problem, it is one thing to not know anything it is another thing to be proud of it and go around making jokes about it and pokes about it.

Dr. Reagan: People always make the comment to me that the promises that God made to the Jewish people have now been transferred to the Church I always say, "Well does that mean that the promises He's made to the Church might be transferred to someone else?"

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, it is such a sad thing. It reminds me of something that happened with my son when he was, my youngest son when he was small. He got into some trouble and we were all gathered around to kind of, I went there to kind of deal with the problem. And he

thought that he could get out of it by 2 words, he looked up at me and he said, "I was just kidding," and made a little funny laugh and he thought that would solve everything. A lot of people think that is what God meant when He was talking to the Jews about all these tremendous promises, Amos 9 all these wonderful things that He says will happen. And they are saying well God just said, He actually wasn't telling the truth He was just kidding, it basically makes Scripture so weak. And you know when we put our faith in Christ we value the integrity of the Word of God.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Dennis Pollock: We believe it means what it says and if prophecy doesn't mean what it says who is to say anything means what it says.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Folks those who take the position that the last three promises made to Mary by the angel Gabriel have been fulfilled spiritually in the Church are called Amillennialist. These are the people who argue that there is not going to be any future reign of Jesus on this earth because we are living in the Millennium now. That's right; they are arguing that we are living in the Millennium now. In just a moment we are going to discuss this viewpoint but before we do so let's pause for a song by Sandi Patti called, "Bethlehem Morning," listen carefully to this song because it beautifully interweaves the First Coming of Jesus with the promise that He will come again.

Song

Dr. Reagan: Okay fellas I want to get right to the point here and the point is the Amillennial viewpoint; that is the one that spiritualizes all of these promises. And the Amillennial viewpoint is the one that is predominant among in the field of prophecy today both among Catholics and among Protestants. Most people think the Premillennial view, the Pre-Tribulational view is the predominate viewpoint. It's the one probably had the most publicity but it is not the predominate

viewpoint. The predominate view held by most churches is the Amillennial view, and one of the aspects of that viewpoint is that we are living in the Millennium right now. How about it, are we?

Nathan Jones: Go ahead Dennis.

Dennis Pollock: Well in Revelation 20 it describes the Millennium and gives us the number of years, and that is a 1,000 years which is why it is called the Millennium, six times it uses that number. And the Amillennialist says that's not really what its meaning. What its meaning is some indefinite period of time and we are already in it. There is just tremendous problems with that, but to me the biggest problem is this, if we are truly living in the Millennium then according to Revelation Satan has been bound, but not only bound but cast into a bottomless pit, the pit has been sealed up and the Bible plainly says He will deceive the nations no more. Deception is gone, there is no more deception. Dave I just got back from India where they were having a big celebration of the elephant god, I mean it was everywhere; people were celebrating Mr. Elephant God. I turned on the Indian television and there were parades with the elephant God. And millions and there are nearly a billion people and about 80% of those are Hindu and they love the elephant God. They are deceived. There are Muslims who are killing themselves, blowing themselves up, young men who are absolutely confident that the minute they die they will enter into a paradise and 70 virgins will be waiting for them and they will just have a marvelous time for eternity with those 70 virgins.

Dr. Reagan: What about our own nation? Where for the past few years the President of the United States has issued a proclamation in June proclaiming June to be the celebration of the gay and lesbian lifestyle.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, so deception abounds. And to say that the nations are no more deceived, it's beyond stretching the truth, it is just absolutely shattering the truth, there is no way you can say that with a straight face as far as I am concerned.

Nathan Jones: And the way the Bible describes the Millennium.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Nathan Jones: I mean it is totally different than reality of today.

Dr. Reagan: Book of Isaiah has a picture.

Nathan Jones: Oh, look at Ezekiel 47 for instance it says that a river runs out of the Temple that the Lord will have here. Well where is that temple? And the Temple dimensions are massive, the size of a city, and it says the Dead Sea will flourish again and people will be fishing. I've been in the Dead Sea; there is nothing alive in the Dead Sea. I mean if the Dead Sea is not alive today then we are not living in the Millennium. And like you said, Satan, you can go to the Bible you can go to 1 John 5:19, it says, "The whole world is under the control of the evil one."

Dr. Reagan: That was written after the cross.

Nathan Jones: That was written after, exactly. So Satan is still in charge today.

Dr. Reagan: Well what about the wolf lying down with the lamb and the lion eating straw with the ox? Does that mean anything at all? Is that happening now?

Dennis Pollock: No it's definitely not happening. The only way you can get around that it that it didn't mean what it actually said.

Nathan Jones: Yes.

Dennis Pollock: But you know there is a reason that we use words. Why is it we don't just grunt at one another? There may be some housewives that say, "Well that is what my husband does to me." But, most of us use words and the reason is words have meanings behind them. And life would be utterly chaotic if words weren't associated with definite meanings. And the idea of a 1,000 years, the idea of this Millennium is so clearly lined up in the Bible that you cannot get around it. You know I am reminded of Daniel when he prayed in Daniel 9.

Dr. Reagan: Right.

Dennis Pollock: One of the greatest prayers of Scripture.

Dr. Reagan: You are right.

Dennis Pollock: He prays for Israel, he is praying for the release of the captives of Israel who are captives in Babylon. Now what was it that motivated Daniel to pray that incredible prayer? Daniel had been reading the prophet Jeremiah. And Jeremiah had said very plainly that the desolations of Israel in their captivity would be over after 70 years. Daniel did not say to himself....

Dr. Reagan: Oh, that is 7,000 years.

Dennis Pollock: Oh, that is 7,000 or 7 million, who knows! I think I will take a vote and we will see what 70 years really means. No, Daniel immediately put on the sack cloth and ashes began to fast and seek the Lord, absolutely confident that what God had said through Jeremiah was literally the case.

Dr. Reagan: That's right, that's right. I had a fellow one time tell me, I said, "You know it says six times in Revelation 20." He says, "Yeah, but that is only one chapter in the Bible, it only says it one chapter in the Bible." To me if God says it in one verse in the Bible, that is sufficient.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah.

Nathan Jones: How much do we need?

Dr. Reagan: How many times does He have to repeat it? Then I had another fellow say, "Well you know over in the Psalms it says, "God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, are there only 1,000 hills? No, so therefore that is symbolic, therefore the word thousand is symbolic."

Nathan Jones: Well isn't that the basic problem with Amillennialism; bad hermeneutics, bad study of the Bible.

Dr. Reagan: It's also you have to keep in mind that the meaning of words is determined by context.

Nathan Jones: Exactly.

Dr. Reagan: In one context a word may be symbolic, but in another context it would be very literal. But you've got to consider the context. You know Amillennialist often say that there isn't one verse in the Bible, not one that even implies Jesus will ever put His feet on the earth again. I heard that in sermon, after sermon, after sermon. Is that true? Is there any verse that implies Jesus will put His feet on this earth again?

Nathan Jones: Let me read the verse for you Zechariah 14:4, "On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will split in two from east to west forming a great valley with half of the mountain moving north, and half moving south." Or Acts 3:21, "He must remain in Heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything as He promised long ago from the holy prophets." He hasn't come to and restored anything yet because He isn't physically here yet.

Dennis Pollock: And Revelation says that He will strike the nations, He will rule them with a rod of iron. He will rule the nations, not just rule over the Christians in Heaven, but He will rule the nations.

Dr. Reagan: I was talking about that Zechariah 14 passage with an Amillennialist one time and I mentioned that and he said, “Well all Old Testament prophecy has been fulfilled. There isn’t one prophecy in the Old Testament that hasn’t been fulfilled.” There are over 500 in the Old Testament about the Second Coming of Jesus. And I said, “What about this; when was it fulfilled?” He said, “I do not know, I have no idea, but it was fulfilled somewhere, sometime, some way.” It was like talking to a brick wall.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: And yet the Bible clearly says He is going to return to this earth.

Nathan Jones: How frustrating that must be for God. I mean He has given us all this insight into His future and His victory and our victory through Him, and so many people throw it out.

Dr. Reagan: There is also the position you hear so often that First Coming prophecies meant what they said and should be interpreted for their plain sense meaning, but Second Coming prophecies are all apocalyptic, and therefore that means you don’t interpret them for their literal meaning.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, but what right have they do say that?

Nathan Jones: Yes.

Dennis Pollock: Obviously we know that the First Coming prophecies were fulfilled literally. Who made them the decider to say that the Second Coming will not be fulfilled literally? Clearly they are meant. Imagine reading a history book on World War II where you knew only one thing, that nothing you read would be literally true. Every date would be coded so that it didn’t really mean what it said. Every battle that’s described wouldn’t be true at all. So you’re spending the whole time trying, “What did he really mean?”

Nathan Jones: Welcome to post-modernism Dennis.

Dennis Pollock: It would be a worthless book; I would trash it immediately and go get something that was literally true. And prophecy is essentially history written beforehand.

Dr. Reagan: Yes. But it is so much fun to say, “Well, it doesn’t really mean what it says. Let me tell you, let me tell you what it really means.”

Dennis Pollock: Well it reminds me of the Jesus Seminar when these guys went around the country saying, “Well we are going to vote and tell you whether this was actually said by Jesus or not.”

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Dennis Pollock: They ended up saying about 90% of the words of Jesus were not said. But I thought what arrogance! Who are you to tell us that the Bible is not true?

Dr. Reagan: Well I think the best approach to the whole Bible from beginning to end, not just prophecy, but all of it is what I call that golden rule of interpretation; if the plain sense makes sense don’t look for any sense or you will end up with nonsense. Just take it for its plain sense meaning. Sometimes it may be symbolic, but symbols also have a plain sense meaning.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: I mean Jesus is never called the tumble weed of Texas because that is a terrible image, He is called you know the Rose of Sharon because it is a beautiful image. That may be symbolic but it has a literal meaning behind it.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, and where there is symbolism, and granted there is symbolism in Scripture, but it is obvious symbolism, it’s not something you have to scratch your head and wonder. The Bible speaks about a harlot that is going to ride a beast in the last days, but we are not literally looking or expecting that a harlot will be on top of a beast, that was obviously symbolic. But the Scripture if it doesn’t obviously declare or make it appear to be a symbol there is no reason for us to say it should be one.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: Well folks that is our time for this program. The last three promises that the Angel Gabriel made to Mary are glorious ones for all believers. Don’t let anyone rob you of their glory by spiritualizing them with nonsensical arguments that they really don’t mean what they say, or that they have already been fulfilled in some strange mysterious, and spiritual way. Again the

first four promises were literally fulfilled; I think we can confidently expect the last three to also be literally fulfilled in history.

Nathan Jones: And let me ask you a question; are you an heir of these promises? Do you have the promise of living with God in His eternal kingdom? The Bible says there is only way you can become an heir of these promises and that is to become a child of the Father who made the promises.

Dennis Pollock: And the way you do that is by being born into the family of God by accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior. If you have never done that then all you need to do is pray a simple prayer to God in which you say something like this, "Dear heavenly Father I confess to you that I am a sinner, and that I am sorry for my sins, I ask you to forgive me as I accept your Son Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Thank you Father, in Jesus name amen."

Nathan Jones: And when you pray that prayer be sure to seek out a Bible believing Church where you can witness your faith through a public confession of Jesus and through water baptism.

Dr. Reagan: Well, folks, that is our program for this week. I hope you will be back with us again next week. Until then this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries' saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our redemption is drawing near."

End of Program