

Christ in Prophecy

Conference 1: “Jeffress on Relativism”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: The Bible teaches that there are absolute truths. The world says everything is relative, that what may be a truth to you, may not be a truth to a person in another culture. What are the dangers of relativism? For a dynamic and insightful response to this question, stay tuned for a presentation by Dr. Robert Jeffress, Pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. Every year during the last weekend of June, we host a Bible conference in the Dallas, Texas area. The theme of our most recent conference was, “Spiritual Apostasy in the End Times.” In this program, and in the five to follow, we are going to be presenting excerpts from the presentations that were made at that conference. I believe you will find these fascinating, insightful, and informative. We always have a featured musician at each of our conferences, and the one at this conference was the great Messianic worship leader, Marty Goetz. He began the conference with his song, “Oh Lord, Our Lord.”

Dr. Reagan: Well folks, needless to say, Marty prepared our hearts and minds for the great preaching we were about to hear at our conference. The first sermon from the conference that I want to share with you is by Dr. Robert Jeffress, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas. His presentation was entitled, “Absolute Truth.” The excerpt we are about to show you focuses on the issue of relativism. Dr. Jeffress clearly exposes the dangers of relativism, condemns it in no uncertain terms, and calls on professing Christians to stand up and be counted for the absolute truths revealed in God’s Word. And now, here is Pastor Jeffress.

Jeffress Presentation

Dr. Jeffress: Being on television is both a blessing and a curse. A few years ago, most of the time people have something nice to say, but a few years ago a lady called into our 800 number and she said, "You know we enjoy your pastors message but somebody has got to tell him he's got the worst toupee we have ever seen on television." I don't wear a toupee okay. So anyway, deacons and television viewers will keep you humble all the time. So anyway, thank you for those of you who watch our broadcast and pray for us.

It was the 17th century Jesuits priest Baltasar Gracián who said, "Truth is abhorred by the masses." And if you don't believe that I want to encourage you to engage in an experiment this next week. I want you to try making any one of the following statements around the break room at work or even in your classroom in Sunday school, and just sit back and see what the reaction is. Just try making this statement, "I believe only Christians are going to Heaven, everybody else is going to Hell." Or try saying, "I believe homosexuality is a perversion." Or try saying, "I believe that husbands are to be the leaders of their families." Sit back and watch the fireworks. You'll be called everything from ignorant to bigoted to intolerant and those are just some of the nicer things people will say to you. And by the way don't be surprised if the charges don't come just as strongly from Christians as they do from non-Christians.

We are living in a culture right now that has bought into the idea of relativism and they no longer stand for the truth of absolute truth. By the way if you think that is preacher hyperbole, listen to this survey that George Barna did, he did among Christians. And George Barna discovered that 68% of born again adults, and 91% of born again teenagers said there is no such thing as absolute truth. No such thing as absolute truth. Instead we have bought into the idea of relativism. And relativism can be summarized by the simple dictum everything is right sometime, and nothing is wrong all of the time. Everything is right some time, nothing is wrong all of the time. We have bought into absolute truth, and that is why Barna says that activities such as homosexuality, co-habitation, pornography have now become permissible and preferable among Christians. Barna says without some firm and compelling bases for suggesting that some acts are inappropriate people are left with the philosophy such as; if it feels good do it, or as another writer says, being good is now defined as feeling good. You may say, "Okay Robert so what? I mean we are sorry that people don't believe in absolute truth, but how does that affect me?" What I want to suggest to you this morning is there are 3 consequences of refusing to believe in absolute truth that are going to effect you and me sooner rather than later.

First of all embracing relativism instead of absolute truth encourages immorality, it encourages immorality. After all if we jettison absolute truth and say there is nothing that

is wrong all of that time. What's to keep us from permitting all kinds of sexual activity? And by the way this is the result of relativism that is most likely to strike your family. If there is no such thing as absolute truth why shouldn't all kinds of sexual activity be permitted? For example what's to keep us from saying that pedophile really is okay? Sex with children. You say, "Now Robert that is over the top, we know that is wrong, sex with children. Everybody knows that raping a child is wrong." Oh really, well who says it is wrong? If there is no such thing as absolute truth why is raping a child wrong? Well the relativist will say because society has determined that it is wrong. And every society can determine what is right and wrong in its particular situation. Do we really want to let society determine what is right and wrong?

Remember 150 years ago society, our culture said it was okay to own another human being that slavery is okay. Is society always a good arbitrator of what is right and what's wrong? May I remind you that it was only 40 years ago that society said homosexuality is a psychological aberration, that most states in our country outlawed homosexual activity. And yet today it is generally accepted even among Christians that while homosexuality may be wrong and not preferable it certainly should not be considered illegal. 40 years from now what's to keep our society from saying the same thing about pedophile? 40 years from now can't you hear people standing up and saying, "Well pedophiles don't choose to be pedophiles, it is just part of who they are." Or some people saying, "Well you know pedophiles that is their preferred sexual choice why should pedophiles have to hide who they are? Why shouldn't they be allowed to live out their sexuality? Don't pedophiles have the right to happiness through the full expression of who they are?"

By the way that is not as fully far fetched as you may think. In April of 2002 the United State Supreme Court ruled that child pornography in the virtual realm, virtual child pornography is now permissible. Some psychiatrists are now jumping on the bandwagon to normalize pedophile, sex with children. In July of 1998 the American Psychological Association published a paper that said, "Sex with a child may not always be harmful to the child as long as the child enjoys it." That is the American Psychological Association. Now in all fairness the APA still maintains a no child molestation policy. But the fact that they would even publish such a paper shows they are opening the door ever so slightly to this idea of normalizing pedophile. And quiet frankly what's to keep them one day and over night, changing their designation of pedophile just like they did about homosexuality in the 1970's? I was in college when it happened I remember very well. Over night the American Psychological Association which had said homosexuality is a psychological aberration, removed that designation. Not because of any new scientific evidence but simply because of the efforts of the pro-homosexual lobby. The same thing I believe will happen to other kinds of sexual perversion as well. Relativism promotes immorality.

Secondly relativism discourages evangelism, it discourages evangelism. I was watching a cable program not long ago and the topic of the cable program was: Is there only one way to Heaven? And so the talk show host a well know liberal was going out among the audience and everybody was giving the usually stuff about, "Oh, that is intolerant to say that and so forth, and so forth." But finally one poor soul this lady raised her hand and the talk show host went over to her and she said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven because my Lord and Savior said, 'I am the way the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by me.'" The talk show host said to her, "My dear," in his most condescending voice, "My dear that is fine if you want to believe that. But you have no right to force you beliefs on me."

And I want you to listen to what that talk show host is saying, he is making 2 conclusions, one obvious and one not so obvious. The first conclusion he is coming to is, if you want to believe Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven that's fine, truth is whatever you want it to be. But just because you believe its truth, doesn't mean it is truth. In other words absolute truth is only truth to those who believe that it is absolute. I'm going to talk about how ridiculous that argument is in just a moment. But the second part of that argument is if you say an absolute truth you are guilty of coercion of hate speech. To say that Jesus Christ is the only way for anyone to go to Heaven is to be guilty of coercing people into your form of belief.

And that leads to the third and I think the most dangerous affect of relativism and that is relativism promotes persecution, it will promote persecution. You know in a culture that rejects absolute truth the only vise that can not be tolerated is the sin of intolerance. Or as one high school principal said actually with a straight face, he said, "We will not tolerate intolerance." That is exactly the lunacy that we are dealing with today. In a culture that refuses to accept absolute truth the only vise that can not be tolerated is the sin of intolerance. Even among Christians it is the sin of intolerance that can not be tolerated.

Some of you have been very kind during the break you know that if you live in the Dallas-Fort Worth area you may know that last Fall I preached a series of messages called, "Politically Incorrect" based on my book, "*Outrageous Truth.*" And I took 7 of the most politically incorrect beliefs that Christians can articulate in today's world and gave the rational for why we as Christians believe these particular incorrect, politically incorrect truths. Well one of them dealt with homosexuality and so the title of the message was originally, "Homosexuality is a Perversion." And so every Monday morning they put out my sermon title on the marquee there at First Baptist Church on Ervay Street. So Monday morning I was walking into the office and I saw that sermon title up there, "Homosexuality is a Perversion." And I thought you know the average person driving down Ervay Street in downtown Dallas you know might not understand. And so I decided to soften the title just a little bit and I changed the message to, "Why

Gay is not Okay.” Trust me that didn’t satisfy anybody. [Laughter] If you were around at that time, you know we had hundreds of protestors for the 2 Sundays that I preached the message down there, the blog were filled up with all kinds of things. I received a death threat, we had to have the police in there and all of these things. I mean it was all going on around. You know I expected all of that I expected all of the non-Christians, but here is what continued to surprise me. Some of the most vicious attacks came from other Christians. One man a leader and a well known denominational church in Dallas wrote to the Dallas Morning News and he said, “Dr. Jeffress should not be allowed to preach this kind of message, he must be silenced whatever the cost.” Now that is a professing Christian from a main line church who believes that the greatest sin is the sin of intolerance.

And by the way this effort to silence Christians who stand for the truth not just me, but people like Dr. Reagan and people like you who take a stand wherever you are. That silencing process is already begun. Remember back in May of 2002, 56% of the law makers in Sweden passed a bill that would label, that said that pastors who labeled homosexuality as immoral will be subject to prison terms up to 4 years. By the way you don’t have to go across the pond to see that kind of persecution talking place. A few years ago in our own continent in Canada, a man names Hugh Owens placed an ad in the Saskatchewan newspaper that said, “Homosexuality is an abomination before God and he listed the Bible verses that said homosexuality is an abomination.” The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission fined him \$4,500 because some homosexuals said when they read that ad, “It cut their feelings to the quick.” And so Hugh Owens was fined \$4,500. You say, “Doesn’t he have the right to express himself?” The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission said his wrong was not that he said homosexuality is wrong. The mistake he made was attaching Bible verses to his position, because the court said to site Bible verses infers that this applies to everyone and we will not tolerate that. They fined him \$4,500.

By the way this same thing is happening in our country as well. If you are a reader of the “*Dallas Morning News*” you probably know the name of the Federal Judge Samuel Kent, he is the first judge to be indicted in 20 years. He was indicted on sexual abuse charges and is having to resign his position, thankfully. Back in May 5, of 1995, Judge Kent who was the judge over the District Court for the Southern District of Texas mandated that anyone in the Galveston High School any student who dared mention the name of Jesus Christ in a graduation prayer would be sentence to 6 months in jail. Now I want you to listen to what the judge said in his ruling this is a United States Federal Judge who is threatening anyone who mentions the name of Jesus Christ. Judge Kent said, “And make no mistake the court is going to have a United States Marshall in attendance at the gradation. If any student offends this court that student will be summarily arrested and will face up to 6 months incarceration in the Galveston

County jail. Anyone who thinks I am kidding about this order or I am expressing any weakness or lack of resolve in that spirit of compromise, better think again. Anyone who violates these orders, no kidding is going to wish that he or she had died as a child when this court gets through with it.” How’s that for the First Amendment rights of Americans. Apparently Judge Kent believed the only people who have First Amendments rights are those who don’t believe Jesus Christ is God’s Son. Apparently the First Amendment applies to everyone except Evangelical Christians. And I believe that we are going to continue to see this kind of persecution of Christians continue to intensify.

I am preaching through the book of Ecclesiastes right now. And tomorrow morning I am coming to Ecclesiastes chapter 8 and the title of the message is, “Mr. Solomon goes to Washington.” And it is going to be an evaluation of what old Solomon would say about our current administration. May I remind you that we right now have the most liberal President with the most liberal agenda in United States history. If you don’t believe this just listen to what our President has done in his first 100 days in office. During the first 100 days in office Barack Obama signed an executive order allowing tax payer funding to go to international groups that promote or provide abortions. He lifted a seven year ban on tax payer funding of the United States population fund that is linked to forced abortion programs. He nominated one of the most pro-abortion Governors in this country as the Secretary of Health and Human Services. He nominated a man who ordered the Indiana legislature to end its historic practice of beginning each session with prayer he nominated this man to the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. He appointed the former executive director of the pro-abortion Emily’s list to a major communication post at the White House. He expressed support for a hate crime legislation, and will sign it he says, if it reaches his desk. Those accused of inducing a federal hate crime could be held responsible for the actions of another person. For example pastors preaching against homosexuality could be charged with a crime if someone listening committed a hate crime against a gay individual. He released a Department of Homeland Security Watch List that included those Americans who were simply pro-life in their beliefs.

Let me tell you what is happening. Whenever you have a charismatic leader with a defined agenda, the most liberal agenda in the United States history, when you have that kind of leader with that kind of agenda operating in a culture that has bought into relative truth you have the prescription for persecution. Someone as our government is now that is intent in acting this agenda, the only thing that is stopping them are Christians like you who are willing to stand up and say, “No, this is an affront to Almighty God.” And that is why I believe that this government at some point and time is going to put a target on all of our backs to completely eliminate the opposition to their agenda. And I believe that time is coming more quickly then we can possibly imagine.

Last week in Louisville, Kentucky Chuck Colson was addressing the pastor's conference at the Southern Baptist Convention. And at that conference he said to these pastors, "Are you willing to say no to Caesar, when Caesar says, 'You can not preach the Bible?'" I believe the time is coming when Lamb and Lion Ministries or First Baptist Church of Dallas are going to lose their tax exempt status if they stand up and preach the truth of the Word of God. Christians are you willing to keep supporting ministries like this one, when the government says you don't have the opportunity to deduct that contribution?

A time of persecution is coming, if it doesn't we will be the only Christian culture that has escaped persecution, and I don't think that is going to happen, it's coming. I want to tell you what really concerns me, is not non-Christians who have bought into relativism that is to be expected. What I am concerned about are wishy-washy, wimpy Christians, who will not stand up for the truth of God's Word, and you see them all around us, I mean they are all around us. A world wide known evangelist appears on a television talk show and the host asks him, "Dr. so and so, do you believe that Muslims are going to Hell if they haven't accepted Jesus Christ as Savior?" And instead of giving the clear Biblical answer he waffles and wavers and said, "Well I can't make that judgment, only God can make that judgment."

Ladies and Gentlemen God has already made that judgment. Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father, except by me." Or here's a Christian mother who is encouraged to, invited to offer a prayer at a local PTA meeting. And she comes to the conclusion of her prayer and so to not offend people around her, instead of praying under the only name by which there is salvation, the only name that allows our prayers to go into the Throne Room of God. Instead of praying in the name of Jesus Christ, she says, in your name we pray oh God. She wimps out, she wimps out. Here is a Christian serving on the local school board and he caves into pressure to reject a science text book because it has some questions about Darwinism, Evolution. This is not a text book that preaches Creationism, it's simply a text book that says, "You know what there may be some problems with that ludicrous teaching called Evolution and here are some things to consider." And yet the Christian caves in and he says, "Well you know I don't believe in Evolution but after all science belongs in the classroom, and faith belongs in the Sunday School room." He wimps out. It is time for Christians to have the guts to stand up and say, "This is what we believe."

Closing

Dr. Reagan: I want to thank Pastor Robert Jeffress for his great presentation. I hope it blessed you as much as it did me. Next week, the Lord willing, we will continue sharing with you excerpts from sermons presented at our conference. Specifically, we will be

sharing the thoughts of two of our speakers on the exclusiveness of Christianity. Those speakers will be Dr. Jeffress and Dr. Ron Carlson, a man who is considered to be Christendom's foremost authority on cults and world religions. 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