

## *Christ in Prophecy*

### **Conference 2: “Jeffress & Carlson on Exclusiveness of Christianity”**

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#### **Opening**

**Dr. Reagan:** Is there only one road to God. The world shouts, “No!” The world insists that there are many roads to God, and anyone who says otherwise is labeled as intolerant. Well, regardless of what the world thinks, the Bible says there is only one way to God, and that is Christianity. For the insights of two great Christian thinkers, stay tuned.

#### **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.”

Last week, we started presenting excerpts from some of the sermons that were presented at that conference. We began with Dr. Robert Jeffress, the pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, and we shared his insights on the dangers of relativism. He pointed out that relativism encourages immorality, it discourages evangelism, and it promotes persecution. It encourages immorality because it has no standards of right or wrong. It discourages evangelism because it contends that all religions are equally valid. And it promotes persecution because it will tolerate anything except those who believe in absolute truth. It therefore views Christians as enemies who need to be silenced.

In this program we are going to hear what two of our speakers had to say about the exclusiveness of Christianity as the only road to God. We will begin with Pastor Jeffress and then we will hear from Dr. Ron Carlson, one of Christendom’s foremost authorities on cults and world religions. Here now is Pastor Robert Jeffress speaking about the reality and nature of absolute truth.

## **Dr. Jeffress Presentation**

**Dr. Jeffress:** There are three things we need to understand about absolute truth. And I want you to write them down if you can because this is necessary to understand about absolute truth if we are going to stand up for it. The first proposition is: absolute truth is universal. That is the absolute truths of God's Word applied to everyone. And is amazing to me how many intelligent people can't grasp that truth.

Sometimes on my way to work I listen to Mark Davis on WBAP and Mark Davis is a Christian. One time this caller called in and the issue being discussed was whether or not the Ten Commandments should be displayed in the public schools. And this caller who is a Christian called in and said, "Well Mark I believe we ought to display the Ten Commandments because they apply to everyone, they apply to everyone." And Mark Davis said, "Well you and I are of the same faith and we believe they apply to everyone, but not everyone believes like we do." And the caller said, "Well that is the point Mark, even though they may not believe it applies to them, it still applies to them." And Mark Davis said, "Well you and I believe that way but they don't believe that way." And down and down and down it went. You see we have to understand that absolute truth applies to everyone whether they believe it or not.

You know if I get up and stand on top of this Cornerstone Baptist Church on the roof and I say, "You know what? I don't believe in the Law of Gravity. I am going to jump off, and I am going to fly down to First Baptist Dallas." What is going to happen to me if I jump off this roof? Let me tell you what it doesn't matter if I believe in gravity or not the Law of Gravity is going to grab hold and grab me down to the ground. Truth applies to everyone whether they believe it does or not. And you see this idea of relativism in so many different places.

I remember watching the great worship service after 9/11 at the National Cathedral. And I remember a great Christian leader we all know stand up and in that service he had the guts to mention the name of Jesus of Christ which I was glad. And then he completely wimmed out, he said, "Jesus Christ who is the Messiah to those of us who believe in Him." Ladies and gentlemen, Jesus Christ is the Messiah whether you believe in Him or not. He is the Lord of Lord and the King of Kings. Absolute truth is universal.

Number two we have to understand that absolute truth is revealed, it is revealed. You see relativist believe that truth is something we construct and every society or culture comes up with

its own truth that has constructed. But we believe that absolute truth is revealed, it is something that we received.

And I know, by the way, I was on Fox a few weeks ago and the topic of discussion was the rebuilding of the Republican Party. And they said, "Pastor what do you think needs to be done to rebuild the Republican Party? And I said, "My goal as a Pastor is not to get the Republican Party reconstructed. My goal is to get Biblical principles enacted, that is what we are here to do." God is not the respecter of any political party, okay. This is not about politics this is about the absolute truths of God's Word. And we ought to stand up just as strongly against Republican administrations that violate the truth of God's Word as we do Democrat administrations. This isn't about politics.

Many people have disagreed with our last President, George Bush on a variety of issues. And you may have your own beliefs about the wisdom of the Iraq War. But I was reading this book by Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, and Bob Woodward had interviewed President Bush about why he went in and invaded Iraq. And whether you believe that was a wise thing to do or not. I do want you to listen to what President Bush said to Bob Woodward. He said, "There is a human condition that we must worry about in times of war. There is a value system that cannot be compromised, God given values. These are not United States created values these are values of freedom, and the human condition and mothers loving their children. What's very important is as we articulate foreign policy through our diplomacy in military action is that it never looks like we are creating, that we are the author of these values. It leads to a larger question of your view about God." President Bush was saying we are standing up not for our values that we have created, but from God given values that we have received. And that is the important part about absolute truth. We are not creating absolute truth we are simply articulating what we have received. And where is the depository of all of that absolute truth? It is in the infallible, inerrant Word of God. It is the Bible that is the depository of God's truth, Jude 1:3 talks about the faith that has once for all been delivered to the saints. Absolute truth is something that is revealed and received.

Number three absolute truth is exclusive. You know in a sincere effort to promote harmony among people, people will say, "Well maybe we are both right, maybe we are both right, because quite frankly that is a lot more politically correct to say then to say I am right and you are wrong." It is a lot easier to say, "Maybe we are both right, maybe nobody has a corner on the truth and we both are looking at the truth from different angles." You know the truth is if

there is absolute truth, then there has to be absolute wrong as well. And I think the reason we have such a hard time understanding and accepting that is; we have confused two terms, diversity, and pluralism.

Diversity is the recognition that there are many different belief systems out there. And we all accept diversity, we all realize that there are thousands of religions in the world. You know I like what G. Campbell Morgan said one time. Somebody asked him how do you explain all the thousands of religions in the world? He said, "There aren't thousands of religions in the world, there are only 2. All the other religions of the world are spelled D-O. Do this, Do this, do this, do this, do this, do this and you might earn your way to God. But there is only one religion Christianity that is spelled, D-O-N-E, done, it has all been done through Jesus Christ." But we recognize that there are lots of different belief systems out there, that is diversity. And were not trying to stop that, we are not trying to say in our country we're going to throw in jail anyone who doesn't believe like we are. That is diversity we allow for that, our country was founded on that.

But pluralism goes one step further and says, because there are a diversity of beliefs no one religion can claim to be truth. Pluralism says all ideas are equally valid. And yet any thinking person knows that can't be true. A person who accepts the notion of absolute truth must be willing to label some beliefs as wrong.

R.C. Sproul talks about the time he was watching the hearings on the television trying to confirm Clarence Thomas as a Supreme Court Justice. Remember he was accused by Anita Hill of sexual harassment. And R.C. Sproul said as he watched those hearings going on he really couldn't tell for sure who was telling the truth. But one thing he said was, "I knew they both couldn't be telling the truth." Somebody was telling the truth, somebody was lying.

And it is the same way when it comes to Christianity. Not all religions are telling the truth about God. For example let's take Christianity and Islam. Christianity says the only way to God is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. Islam says that the way to God is through following the path of righteousness and this list of good deeds and if you do these things you will see Allah. Now the fact is, hang on with me here it is theoretically possible that both Christianity and Islam are wrong. Theoretically it is possible that both religions have it wrong. But it is impossible for both religions to be right. If Islam is right, that the way to God is through good works then Christianity is inherently wrong. But if Christianity is right, that Jesus Christ is the only way to God, then Islam is wrong. If we are going to be willing to stand for absolute truth we must believe that some things are absolutely wrong.

Now I believe that there are some Christians quite frankly that have misused absolute truth. They have used it as an excuse to persecute, mistreat other people, and we are never advocating that. But just because some people have perverted this idea of absolute truth, the fact that some people have misused it should not force the rest of us into what somebody has called a forced neutrality in which we dare not say anything that might offend another person.

## Part 2

**Dr. Reagan:** Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy. Another speaker at our conference on "Spiritual Apostasy in the End Times" was Dr. Ron Carlson, the founder and director of Christian Ministries International, which is located in Minnetonka, Minnesota. Dr. Carlson has traveled extensively worldwide speaking on cults and world religions. We asked him to speak on the topic, "Are There Many Roads to God?" In the excerpt we are going to show you, he picks up where Pastor Jeffress left off, speaking about the uniqueness and exclusiveness of Christianity as the one and only road to God. Here now is Dr. Ron Carlson.

### Dr. Carlson Presentation

**Dr. Carlson:** As we begin tonight I want us to think together concerning a world of religions. And what makes Jesus Christ so unique. I was speaking at the University of Vienna in Austria and a Graduate student raised his hand. He said, "Dr. Carlson let me ask you a question." He said, "Why are you Christians always sending missionaries overseas?" He said, "Why don't you just leave people alone?" He said, "They're happy they have their own society, their own culture, their own religion." He said, "Ultimately all roads lead to God." He said, "Why are you sending missionaries overseas?"

You know that is a good question to ask ourselves today. This ministry supports missions around the world. But have you ever stopped to ask yourselves the question, "What is so unique about Jesus Christ, different from any religion that you do that?"

In 1980 I was working on the Cambodian border in Thailand at the time we had some 300,000 refugees caught in a no man's land. As you may remember after the Vietnam War we had what came to be called the killing fields of Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge, the Pol Pot Regime murdered nearly 2 million of their own people. In 1979 the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia and

many of the Cambodians who were left fled into Thailand but the Thai's did not want them in their country, and so 300,000 refugees were caught along the border.

I will never forget as I worked in those refugee camps that year, I began to notice something very interesting. I wish I could take all of you with me to see with your own eyes. Because here in this Buddhist country of Thailand, with Buddhist refugees coming from Cambodia and Laos I soon began to realize that there were no Buddhist in those refugee camps taking care of their Buddhist brothers. We had no Hindu's in those camps taking care of the people. There were no Muslims there taking care of the refugees. Certainly the Communist were not there, they were shelling us every day across the border. And if you could have been with me you would have seen something very interesting. That the only people there taking care of those 300,000 refugees, do you know who they were? They were all Christians and Christian mission organizations, Christian relief organizations like World Vision, and Food for the Hungry, and Christian World Relief and on and on.

I asked the man in charge of all the relief work in Thailand. I said, "Sir, explain something to me. I said, "Why, why in a Buddhist country with Buddhist refugees, are there no Buddhist here taking care of their Buddhist brothers?" And I will never forget the man who had lived in Thailand for 40 years he looked at me and he said, "Ron have you ever seen what Buddhism does to a nation or a people?" He said, "Buddha taught that each man is to be an island unto himself. Buddha said if someone is suffering that is their karma and you are not to interfere with another person's karma because they are purging themselves through suffering and reincarnation. Buddha said you are to be an island unto yourself." He said, "Ron the only people that have a reason to be here today taking care of these refugees are Christians who understand the value of human life. These people are so valuable, created in the very image of God. So valuable that Jesus Christ died for each and every one of us. He said, "You find that value of human life in no other religion, no other philosophy but Jesus Christ." Dr. A.W. Tozer in his classic work, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, makes this statement in the introduction, he says, "That the history of mankind will positively demonstrate that no society or people has ever risen above its religion." And he said, "Man's history will show that no religion is ever greater than its concept of God." What Dr. Tozer was saying was this; that what a person thinks about God, what your concept of God is tonight, will directly determine how you live, in regards to your value of human individuals, your bases of mortality, even your standard of living.

You know if I could take you with me around the world this evening we could quickly discover what a person's religion and concept of God produces in everyday life and what is so unique about Jesus Christ. If we were to go for example to that great subcontinent of Asia the country of India, do you know in India this evening, just think about this folks do you know there are more people in India then in all of Africa, South America, and Australia combined? Did you know those three continents put together do not have as many people as the nation of India over one, thousand, million people in India tonight? Now in India the basic religion is known as what? It is known as Hinduism.

And Hinduism the basic concept of God is what is known as monism or pantheism. Now in Hinduism they teach that everything in the universe is God. They say that the stars are God, the clouds are God, the trees are God, the dirt is God, your God, I'm God, everything is God and God by definition is impersonal. Now I want you to think with me this evening. Dr. Tozer says, "What a person thinks about God will determine how they live." If everything is God and God is impersonal, if the dirt is God, and you are God what do you become equal with? One of the problems in India has always been this, that Hinduism has never been able to raise the level of nature to the level of men and women. But it always ends up devaluing men and women to the level of nature.

During the war with Bangladesh, refugees were flooding into Kathmandu, Nepal. Nepal which is the only official Hindu country in the world. And they asked the foreign minister of Nepal, they said, "Sir, why are you not caring for these refugees flooding into your country?" His reply which was recorded in the United Nations Journal was simply this; he said quote, he said, "What reason on earth do we have to care for these people? What reason on Earth, if they are all equal with dirt?"

The United Nations reported that last year India grew enough grain to feed its entire population and to export. But the United Nations also reported that last year between one-fourth and one-third of India's grain crop was eaten by rats. In fact you may of seen the Discovery Channel program last fall on the rats of India in which they now estimate that there are three times more rats in India then the population nearly 3 billion rats, not mice, rats, which last year consumed nearly a third of their grain crop. But as they pointed out because of their religion, and their concept of God they will not kill the rats because it might be somebody's reincarnated uncle, or aunt. So sadly many of the children starved to death on the streets.

You see friends as you go around the world you quickly discover that most of the world's problems tonight are not simply economic, or technological, but they in fact are basic spiritual problems based upon what a person believes about God. The ultimate goal in India is to achieve a spiritual transcendence where one finally osmosis and merges into this impersonal universe they call God.

I was speaking in Kuala Porim, Malaysia and you can go just north of the capital of Malaysia to the famous spot, Two Caves. And I watched as the Hindus would go into their meditative trance, and then the Hindus would take these sharp skewers, they are like sharp knitting needles about 12 inches long, and I watched as they would first take their tongues and they would pull out their tongues as far as they could, and then they would jab the knitting needle down through the middle of their tongues so they could not pull it back into their mouth. I then watch as they take another sharp skewer and they'll jab it through their jaw and they will pull it out through the other side. Then I watched as they took long metal polls, 3-4 feet long with big fishing hooks on the end and they'll dig these into their flesh on the front and on the back of their bodies. And as the weight of these metal poles tear their flesh, the Hindus are then required to climb 272 steps up to the Batu Caves where they go in and bow down and worship the idol of the python the serpent the snake seeking to gain penance and forgiveness, so that somehow they might become part of this impersonal universe which they call God. But friends as I always share with them you need to understand that an impersonal universe never loved or cared about anyone. Please understand only a personal Creator loves and cares for His creation.

We could go this evening to the Middle East to North Africa we find there the basic religion known as Islam. Islam is the religion Muslims or Moslems are the people. Mohammed is their prophet, Allah is their God. In the Koran which is their holy book, the Koran tells us that God has 99 names and if you were to go this evening to Riyadh or Damascus, go to Cairo, Baghdad, you will see many of the Moslem men walking down the street, they will carry with them a string of 33 beads you often see this on the news. They will either have it in their hand or in their pocket. A Moslem man will go through that string of 33 beads 3 times each day, naming off the 99 names for God that are found in the Koran. Now what is interesting about those 99 names most of them are adjectives, is that not one of those names is a god that is a god of love. Nowhere in the Koran does it say that god is our heavenly father. Rather what you find in Islam is they say that God is a god of sheer power who wills and determines everything that happens on earth, man has no free choice. And this concept of god produces today a grave fatalistic outlook

throughout the Middle East, fatalism dominates everything. You hear the Moslem repeatedly say, "Allah wills whatever Allah wills, man has no choice."

I lived and studied for 2 years in the Middle East. When I was a student at Jerusalem University College in Israel I spent almost every weekend in the Gaza Strip with my Palestinian friends. I will never forget one weekend I was in a Palestinian village up in the hills up above Gaza. And Saturday morning I went down the creek to get drinking water for the family I was staying with. I will never forget here was a man going to the bathroom in the creek and about 5 yards down the creek another man was getting drinking water for his family. And I said to the man, "Sir, don't you know you will get dysentery or hepatitis, ameba, typhoid, cholera you know something." And with that fatalistic stare which is so common in the Middle East the man looked up to me and said, "Whatever Allah wills, if I get sick it is Allah's will, if I die it is Allah's will, Allah determines everything, man has no choice."

I was speaking in Eritrea in Northern Ethiopia just before the Civil War broke out between Somalia and Sudan there. And Asmara the capital some of the worst poverty I had ever seen in the world, a Muslim capital, no sanitation, human waste lying in the streets, children playing in it. Four or five flies sucking at the mucus of their eyes, children are so used to it they don't even brush the flies away any longer. And you say to the Muslim why don't you clean it up, they say why should we Allah wills and determines everything man has no choice.

When a Moslem prays, you know he prays five times a day facing Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Now the reason a Moslem prays five times a day facing Mecca is not only to show his allegiance to Arabia but you see in Islam they say that man was not born with sin but man is just merely forgetful. And so a Moslem will pray five times a day to help him remember to do the laws and commands of Allah. You see in Islam a Moslem cannot know God in a personal relationship. In Islam they say that God is so transcended, so far removed that a Moslem can never know God personally. For the Moslem he is told he can only know the laws of God, the commands of God that have been given through the prophets but he cannot know God himself. That's why if you ever hear a Moslem pray in the Mosque on Friday or in daily prayers they always pray the same words. The Moslem will always pray, "God have mercy on me." Now the reason a Moslem will pray for mercy 5 times a day is because he does not know the grace of God. A Moslem does not know that God is our heavenly Father who loves us, who has provided a Savior for man's sin. For the Moslem he is told in the Koran that on the Day of Judgment Allah is going to weigh his good and bad deeds in a balancing scale. But he is never quite sure he is doing enough

good deeds to outweigh the bad so he pleads for mercy 5 times a day because he does not know the grace of God.

## **Closing**

**Dr. Reagan:** Well, as you can see, with two speakers like Pastor Jeffress and Dr. Carlson, the Lord gave us a spiritual feast. Next week, the Lord willing, we will continue sharing with you excerpts from the sermons presented at our conference. Specifically, we will be sharing what Dr. Carlson had to say about the uniqueness of Christianity. I hope you will be back with us at that time.

I also hope you will consider attending our next Bible conference. You can find detailed information about it at our website, the address is [lamblion.com](http://lamblion.com). The conference is scheduled to be held the last weekend in June it will begin on Friday evening June 25<sup>th</sup>, and run all day Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup>. The theme will be “Defending the Faith.” We have an incredible line-up of speakers and musicians. Again you can find all the details on our website. Well that’s our program for this week. Until next week, the Lord willing this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries saying, “Look up, be watchful, for our Redemption is drawing near.”

## **End of Program**