

Christ in Prophecy

Conference 23: “Reagan on Signs of the Times”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Is it possible to know when Jesus will return? For an overview of this important question, stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy.

This program is going to be the first of seven programs that are going to focus on the signs of the times that indicate that we are living in the season of the Lord's return. All the programs will feature presentations that were made at our annual Bible conference whose theme was “Living on Borrowed Time.”

I personally kicked off the conference with an overview of the signs of the times. My presentation was designed to lay the foundation for all the other speakers. Here now is a portion of my presentation.

Dr. Reagan's Presentation

Ok, my theme for this evening is an overview of the signs of the times. What I want to do is lay the foundation for everything else that is going to be presented in this conference. I'd like to begin with a question and the question is this: Can we know the date of the Lord's return? The Bible says point blank that we cannot know the date, Matthew 24, “But of that day and hour no one knows not even the angels of Heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Therefore be on the alert for you do not know which day the Lord is coming. For this reason you be ready too for the Son of Man who is coming in an hour when you do not think He will.”

And yet despite these words, these very clear words there are people who think they know when the Lord is coming back. And folks we are living in the midst of an epidemic of date setting. Do you remember Edgar Whisenat his “88 Reasons Why the Rapture will be in 1988?” He sold a million copies of that little booklet. And did you know that the next year he published another one, “89 Reasons Why Jesus will Come Back in 1989?” How about the church in Korea that decided that Jesus was coming back on October 28, 1992, they sent out missionaries all over the world to proclaim this. I ran into one when I walking down the streets of Moscow that year. How about Harold Camping in 1994, yes September of 1994 Jesus was coming back. And this man had a tremendous impact. He owns to this day the largest Christian radio network in

America. He can get that message out to millions of people and he convinced millions that Jesus was coming in September of 1994. And then there was the Messianic Jew in Oklahoma City who burst on the scene in the mid 90's arguing that the Tribulation began in September of 1993 and that the Antichrist would appear in Jerusalem in March of 1997 to stop the temple sacrifices, meaning Jesus would return in the year 2000. You know I wrote to this guy, and I said, "Sir, you say that He is going to stop the temple sacrifices in March of 1997. There aren't any temple sacrifices." So help me he wrote back and said, "Yeah, I know that is a problem with my theory, but I am sure it is going to work out one way or the other." Here is a booklet by a Texas lady that was published in 1995 in which set the date for the Lord's return on May 26, 1996. Here is a pamphlet by a prophecy teacher in the state of Michigan who set date after date, after date. This particular one he was setting in 1998. And of course as the year 2000 came there were so many date setters that even Time Magazine made fun of Bible prophecy and the date setters on the cover of the magazine. And of course Harold Camping has continued to set dates. His most recent one being May 21st, 2011, some people just never learn.

The date setters continue, most are very sincere, but they are sincerely deceived. What can we know if anything about the timing of the Lord's return? Well before answering that question I want to pause for a moment to make a very important point and that is this: The answer depends upon what is meant by the Lord's return. Think about that for a moment. It depends on what you mean by that. For example the date of the Second Coming can be precisely calculated because the book of Revelation says it will occur exactly 2,520 days after the Tribulation begins; the starting point being the signing of a treaty that will ensure peace for Israel and allow them to rebuild their temple. The moment that treaty is signed you can start counting. The people who are alive at that time and here on this earth they can start counting. I don't think we're going to be here I think we are going to be taken out in the Rapture before then, but those who are around they can do it. Therefore the verses that declare that no one can know the date of the Lord's return must be referring to the Rapture when the Lord will return for His Church. No one can know that date but we are given signs for the end times, signs for the Tribulation, signs for the Second Coming. And let me tell you something when we see those signs we can be certain that we are living in the season of the Lord's return. So can we know the date? No. Can we know the season? Absolutely, beyond the shadow of a doubt we can know the season.

Now let's take a look at the scriptural evidence that we can know the season of the Lord's return. I want to refer you to three passages, 1 Thessalonians 5, Hebrews 10, and Matthew 24. In all of those we find evidence that we can know the season of the Lord's return. In 1 Thessalonians 5 look at these words, "Now as to the signs and seasons brethren you have no need of anything to be written to you for you yourselves know full well that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."

I grew up in a church that was Amillennial. I grew up in a church that said Jesus is never going to put His foot on this earth again. I grew up in a church that said that there was absolutely nothing you could know about the coming of the Lord. Somebody would go off to a conference and they would hear somebody talking about the signs of the times, they would come back and the pastor would put them down immediately and he would always quote this verse, "Jesus is coming like a thief in the night." Well one day I kept reading and look what it says, "But you brethren, you believers, are not in darkness that the day should overtake you like a thief. For you are sons of light, and sons of day, we are not of night or of darkness so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober." What does it mean we are sons of light? It means we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit can help us understand God's

prophetic Word. Yes, Jesus is coming like a thief in the night for unbelievers. He is coming like a thief in the night for the world. He is coming like a thief in the night for those who do not know Bible prophecy. But for those of us who know the Word of God and know Bible prophecy and believe Bible prophecy He is not coming like a thief in the night.

Or consider this, Hebrews 10:25, "Do not forsake the assembling together as is the habit of some, but encourage one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near." What day? Well it tells us in verse 27, "The day of judgment." As you see that day drawing near, be sure you don't skip the services. Be sure you are there with other believers to encourage one another. That means there is something we can see. We can say, "You see that. You see that. You see that, those are signs that Jesus is about to return."

Even Jesus emphasized this in Matthew 24 He wrote, "Even so you too when you see all these things recognize that," He is speaking of Himself, "is near, right at the door." What is He talking about when He says these things? If you know Matthew 24 you know because He has spent nearly all that chapter talking about the signs that would point to His return. And He said, "Let me tell you something when you see all these things recognize that I am right at the door ready to return." And I believe we are seeing them today, and I believe He is right at the door waiting for His Father to give the command to step out on a cloud any moment and He is about to return. We, I believe with all my heart are living in the season of the Lord's return.

Now, there are a great abundance of signs. There are so many it is just kind of mind-boggling how many there are. I've spent 35 years studying these signs and I've discovered that regarding the First Coming there were 300 signs in the Old Testament; 300 some of those were repetitious, some were signs that were given more than once. There are actually 109 separate and distinct signs in the Old Testament concerning the First Coming of Jesus. But here is something interesting there's more than 500 in the Old Testament about the Second Coming of Jesus. And in the New Testament 1 out of every 25 verses has to do with the Return of Jesus Christ. My friends that is a lot of prophecy about what we call the Second Coming or the Return of Jesus Christ.

Now this brings us to a question, and the question is this: Why are there so many more signs about the Second Coming, than there are about the First Coming? Why is that? Why so many more about the Second Coming? And this question brings us to a theological point, God wants us to know the season because Jesus is returning in wrath and God does not wish that any should perish. Furthermore God is obligated to warn us of the impending return of Jesus because God never pours out His wrath without warning. You go all the way through the Bible He never pours out His wrath without warning. If God failed to warn us He would violate His character, and God cannot violate His character.

So let's take a quick look at the signs that we have been given to watch for. And let me just say right up front that there were so many that I have found the best way to handle these, the best way to get a handle on them or grip on them is to put them into categories. And here are the categories I have come up with.

First the signs of nature; second the signs of society; third the signs that are spiritual in nature; fourth the signs of world politics; fifth the signs of technology; and finally the ones that I consider to be the most important of all- the signs of Israel. Those are the six categories. Now let's take a quick look at each of the categories.

First the signs of nature. You will find these referenced in Matthew 24:7 where Jesus said and in various places, there will be famines and earthquakes. Luke records it in greater detail, "And there will be great earthquakes and in various places plagues and famines, and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven." Now Jesus added that these signs would be like birth pains. That means that the closer we get to His return the signs will increase in two ways, they will become more frequent and more intense, like birth pains, more frequent more intense. More frequent earthquakes, more intense, more tornadoes, more intense. And I think that is what we're seeing on the world scene today. What He meant of course by this is like birth pains. Now if you want more detail about the signs of nature I would recommend that you get a copy of this video that we have produced, it is one of my most best-selling videos of all times, and that is called, God and the Weather. In which we go into great detail in the Scriptures about how God has always worked through signs of nature, He continues to do so today, and He will continue to do so in the future.

Second are the signs of society. Jesus mentioned these in His Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24:12 and 37, "And because lawlessness is increased most peoples love will grow cold. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just as it was in the days of Noah." Well what were the days of Noah like? We don't have to guess, Genesis 6, "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent and the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence." Two characteristics of the society of Noah, (1) violence, (2) immorality. Do I need to say anything?

We are in the midst of a society that once was committed to the Lord Jesus Christ that has turned its back upon God and is caught up in a whirlpool of horror in which we are just going down, and down and down. As with the Supreme Court the other day and the decisions it's made we are mocking God, we are shaking our fists at God, we are just begging for the wrath of God in this nation as this nation continues to be more immoral, and violent in nature. The Apostle Paul presented this sign in the New Testament 2 Timothy 3 detailed look what he says, "In the last days," the days we are in, "difficult times will come." Some translations say perilous times will come. "Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God." It looks like what you see on the evening news every night these days. Notice the things that it says we will love in the end times, "we will be lovers of self, lovers of money, and lovers of pleasure." My friends those three things are humanism, materialism, and hedonism. And anytime you have those three combined humanism; the religion of worshipping man, materialism; the denial of God and thinking everything is just this world, and finally hedonism; the pursuit of pleasure. Anytime you have those three together you always have a fourth, and the fourth is what the philosophers call nihilism; which is just a \$64 word for despair; a society wallowing in despair. And when you read those verses they are the description of a society wallowing in despair. Tomorrow Pastor Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Church of Dallas will be with us and he will cover this in more detail in his presentation, "America's Coming Implosion."

Third are the spiritual signs, the spiritual signs are the most of all, there a more of these than any other category because there are both negative ones, and positive. The negative are very, very negative in nature. For example cults, and false prophets Jesus said would explode in the end times. That began in the middle of the 19th Century with the founding of the Mormon Church, then with the Jehovah's Witnesses, and then in this century just literally exploded. There is heresy in the Church in the end times, apostasy in the Church, demonic deception and

persecution. And we are seeing all of that today even the last one here in this nation Christians are becoming the most persecuted group in America today.

Then on the positive side, thank God for it, there is going to be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Bible always says there is going to be two great out pouring's of the Holy Spirit; one occurred at Pentecost, the other will occur in the end times. And it says in Joel 2 that the one in the end times will occur when the Jews are back in the land. The Jews were back in the land in 1948. And in 1948 and '49 God anointed two ministries that took off like rockets, the ministry of Oral Roberts, and the ministry of Billy Graham and the Gospel began to be spread over all the world. The preaching of the Gospel to the outermost parts of the world through modern technology, the understanding of Bible prophecy, prophecies we have never understood before we are now understanding and that is a sign of the end times. Then tomorrow Ron Rhodes is going to speak on this. He is going to talk about the epidemic of apostasy, The Epidemic of Apostasy in the Church. So we look forward to his presentation tomorrow. Most of you have heard him before he is a regular speaker at our conferences. He is a wonderful man of God.

Then the world political signs, the world political signs, number four. What I have in mind here is what it said in Matthew 24: beginning with verse 6, "And you will be hearing of wars, and rumors of wars for nations will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." Through prophecies like this in both the Old and the New Testaments a certain end time configuration comes together, an end time configuration on the world scene. First Israel re-established, second surrounded by threatening Arab nations, three menaced by Russia to the north, four the Roman Empire revived, and fifth an epidemic of wars and rumors of wars. All of this we are seeing on the world scene today, and tomorrow Alan Franklin who has come from London, England will provide us with some fascinating insights about the revival of the Old Roman Empire and how it's taking place before our very eyes in the form of the European Union.

And that bring us to number five, the signs of technology. We find a reference to this in Daniel 12:4, "As for you Daniel conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go forth back and forth and knowledge will increase." Here's how it's put in the Living Bible paraphrase, "Daniel, keep this prophecy a secret, seal it up so it will not be understood until the end times; when travel and education shall be vastly increased." Well we are going to hear more about that.

Let me just make this comment and that there are two reasons that we are understanding prophecies today that we never understood before. One are historical developments, like the re-establishment of Israel. How can anybody understand the prophecies about Israel in the end times when there was no Israel? For example in 1909 I believe it was when the famous study Bible was printed by Oxford Press the author of that study Bible was asked about Ezekiel 38 & 39, what does it mean? And he said, "Well what it means is that in the end times Russia with certain specified allies is going to invade Israel." And folks that took a lot of faith, a lot of faith. I mean people mocked him, they laughed at him. Why? Israel didn't exist. There was no possibility Israel would ever exist. And Russia was a Christian orthodox nation. How's a Christian Orthodox nation going to attack Israel when Israel doesn't even exist? Today we can see that very easily because of historical developments.

The other reason we are understanding prophecies we never understood before is because of technological developments like the computer, and the internet that helps us to understand prophecies no generation before us has ever understood. Tomorrow Nathan Jones, Lord willing is going to talk about, The Signs of Technology, and he will go into detail about that particular topic.

This brings us to number six, the signs of Israel, this is the most important category of all, more important than all the rest put together because end time Bible prophecy focuses on the nation of Israel. There are many prophecies about the Jews and Israel in the end times, many of which are currently being fulfilled. But there are four in particular that I would mention, first is the re-gathering of the Jewish people that began in the 1890's continues to this day; there were 40,000 Jews in Israel in 1900, today over 6 million. Second the re-establishment of the state on May 14, 1948. Third the re-occupation of Jerusalem on June 7, 1967. And finally the refocusing of world politics on the nation of Israel, it says, "All the nations of the world will come together against Israel in the end times over the issue of Jerusalem." And that is exactly where we are today. There can be no doubt that we are living in the season of the Lord's return. Tomorrow the Rajun Cajun Don McGee will develop the signs of Israel in detail when he speaks on the topic, The Rebirth of the Nation of Israel. And incidentally when you look at that picture there you will understand why we don't call him the Rajun Cajun anymore, we now refer to him more politely and reverently as Rabbi McGee.

I would like to conclude this section of my presentation with a reminder, 100 years ago in 1913 there were no signs that we were living in the season of the Lord's return. The very first tangible and definite sign to appear on the world scene was the Balfour Declaration issued by the British government in November of 1917 in which they declared it was their intention to provide the land of Palestine as a homeland for the Jewish people.

Now at this point I would like to shift gears for a moment. The past year I spent a lot of time writing a book about the signs of the times. It has just been published, in fact we just got it last week. And it is being made available to the public for the first time at this particular conference. The book has the same title as the conference, "Living on Borrowed Time", the subtitle, The Imminent Return of Jesus.

The first section of this book contains a series of chapter where I present an overview, an overview of the signs of the time in detail. The third section of the book contains in depth chapters in which I consider what I consider to be the nine key signs that we living in the season of the Lord's return. Things like the re-establishment of Israel, the revival of the Roman Empire, and the rampant apostasy in the Church.

In between those two sections the second section of the book consists of a 54 page prophetic forum in which I summarize the answers of 22 Bible prophecy experts to 11 questions that I asked them about the signs of the times. The Bible prophecy experts included: Daymond Duck, Gary Fisher, Jim Fletcher, Ray Gano, Al Gist, Phillip Goodman, Jeremy Hall, Mark Hitchcock, David Hocking, Ken Humphries of Northern Ireland, Terry James, Nathan Jones, Jack Kinesella; Jack has since been called home to be with the Lord, this is one of the last things he did before the Lord called him home was to respond to these questions, Tim LaHaye, Jan Markell, Carol Matrisciano, Don McGee, Denise Pollock, Ron Rhodes, August Rosado, Bill Salus and Brian Thomas. Those were the 22 experts that I sent the questions to and what were the questions, here they are: (1) Do you believe we are living in the season of the Lord's Return, and if so why? (2) What do you consider to be the single most important sign of the times and why? (3) What do you consider to be the second most important sign of the times and why? (4) How do you interpret the Fig Tree Parable in Matthew 24; a very, very important passage? (5) How do you interpret Daniel 12:4 which seems to talk about travel and knowledge in the end times? (6) How do you interpret Daniel 12:8-9 concerning the understanding of Daniel's prophecies only in the end times? (7) Do you believe God is speaking today through signs of nature? (8) What do consider to be the most important technological development from an end

time prophetic view point and why? (9) Do you believe the development of the European Union is the fulfillment of end time Bible prophecy? (10) Do you believe there are signs of the times that are unique to our day and time, have never existed before? And (11) The Bible speaks of spiritual signs in the end times both positive and negative in nature, which do you consider to be the most important and why?

Well I want to tell you something I found their answers to be absolutely fascinating and I would just like to share 2 or 3 with you. Let's take the first question: Do you believe we are living in the season of the Lords Return and if so why? All 22 of the Bible prophecy experts answered with a definite resounding, enthusiastic, yes, we are living in the season of the Lord's return. And as you might have guessed 7 of the 22 focused on one sign as the cornerstone of their belief and you can pretty well guess what that was, the re-establishment of the nation of Israel.

Now to my surprise the majority of the members, the majority 14 of them, 14 out of 22 selected a different sign than Israel. I was very surprised by this, 14 of them. The majority selected one particular sign and that sign can be summed up in this word convergence, convergence. What they're saying is that to them the most important sign is that all of the signs are coming together for the first time ever, all of them are converging. And to them that is the most important sign. Ron Rhodes summed it up best, he wrote, "Do I believe we are living in the season of the Lord's return, and if so why? Yes, I say this because of what I call the convergence factor. Not only has Israel come together as a nation again as prophesized. But a number of ancient prophecies of the end times seem to be converging in our day. It has been said that biblical prophecies cast their shadows before them, prophecies that relate specifically to the Tribulation are presently casting their shadows before them in our present day. For example the prophecy of Ezekiel Gog and Magog invasion that will take place as early as 3 ½ year prior to the Tribulation Period, or perhaps at the very beginning of the period seems to be drawing near. There are already alliances political and military developing between the invading nations Russia, Iran, Turkey, Sudan, Libya among others. The Muslim nations involved are strongly motivated to see Israel wiped off the face of the earth. Another example is how the Temple will be built sometime in the first part of the Tribulation period. Even today money has been raised for the building of the Temple and Temple artifacts and clothing have already been prefabricated. These and many other prophecies seem to be converging in our times." Well I would certainly agree with the emphasis on the convergent factors. I think that is a very, very important observation these experts made.

You know in the past Bible prophecy experts have often proclaimed the imminent return of Jesus based upon 1, or 2, or 3 or a dozen signs. But there were always many other signs that were not present, like the establishment of the nation of Israel. Back in World War II many people said we on the verge of the return of the Lord and they would point to Mussolini, they said you know he is in Italy he is near Rome, he is going to be the Antichrist. But there were so many, many other signs that were not on the scene, they were jumping to conclusions, they were running ahead of time. Today for the first time ever in history we have a full complement of signs surrounding us. And they are literally shouting that Jesus is coming soon. Convergence I think was a very insightful idea on the part of these Bible prophecy experts.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: What you have just seen is only a portion of the presentation I made in my overview of the signs of the times. The full presentation is contained in this album, "Living on Borrowed Time."

The album contains all six presentations that were made at the conference, and in a moment, we will tell you how you can get a copy.

Next week, the Lord willing, we will present a portion of the presentation made by Don McGee about the importance of the rebirth of Israel.

I hope you will be back with us at that time. Until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries, saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our Redemption is drawing near."

End of Program