

Christ in Prophecy

Conference 45: Dennis Pollock on Heaven

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: What will Heaven be like? Will we have new bodies, or will we be ethereal spirits? Will we know each other? Will we be living in a spiritual world in the heavens or a tangible world on a new earth? These and many other questions about Heaven are going to be answered in today's program, so stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I have an exciting program for you today. I have a special speaker who is going to give you a biblical view of what Heaven is going to be like. His name is Dennis Pollock. Dennis was my colleague for 11 years here at Lamb & Lion Ministries before he decided to form a ministry of his own called Spirit of Grace. It is a ministry that focuses on the proclamation of the Gospel to the peoples of Africa. Dennis spoke at our 2016 Bible Conference on what the Bible says about the reality and nature of Heaven. Here now is Dennis Pollock.

Dennis Pollock's Presentation

Dennis Pollock: I'm excited about this message. I think the official title was: "Heaven Ethereal or Corporal? Was that the way you put it Dave? Real or Ethereal. So, you know words like ethereal are not common words. I imagine we are going to be to Heaven and the Lord will be there and we'll say, "Well is this ethereal?" He'll say, "Have you been talking to Dave Reagan?" So, but basically what I call this was simply a biblical perspective. We are going to talk about the ethereal aspect of it. The aspect that many people believe that there isn't much real about it, nothing tangible it's all spirit. And I don't believe that. I don't believe the Bible teaches that so we are going to get into that.

I'm going to start with a Scripture that we are all familiar with, "Eye has not scene, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love Him." Every one of us has heard that Scripture. And a lot of times we hear that and we think to ourselves, "Well that means there's nothing about Heaven you can really know. It's so beyond us that we just have to know it's going to be great. And when we get there we will figure it out. But we can't imagine anything about Heaven." But the Bible goes on, it doesn't actually stop there in that verse it goes on to say, "God has revealed them to us through His Spirit." He has shown us somethings about Heaven. And among some Christians there is a very simplistic, and I would say an over simplistic view of Heaven and it's this: You die. You go to be with Jesus. And it is great there. You die. You go to be with Jesus. And it's great. And you know what? That's all true. At least it is for all except that one generation that will be raptured. We all die and if we are in Christ we will go to Heaven we will find out that it is great.

What's missing? What's missing are the details. There are some details about Heaven that the Bible reveals. And I can tell you somethings about Heaven this afternoon. Not because I've ever

been there. Not because I've got some great vision, revelation of Heaven from the Lord. I haven't I'm simply a Bible reader. I read the Bible and I find that God has somethings to say about Heaven. Our problem is not really a lack of details, our problem is we don't pay attention to the details that God has revealed.

So, the second view, the one that I hold, Dave Reagan holds and so many of us here hold is the idea that if you take the Scriptures seriously and you don't assume that they are all spiritual without any physical content, or physical aspect, or physical dimension. If you take them seriously and you believe that there can be physical aspects of Heaven, you'll come to a different conclusion. So we are going to look at some of that.

But before we do that I want to talk for a minute about the idea of the contempt of Heaven we see in a lot of quarters. In the world if you talk about Heaven you will be mocked. People will think that you are so foolish, so naïve, so simplistic, so childish. And the Atheists love to mock Heaven going all the way back to Nietzsche, Friedrich Nietzsche said, "In Heaven all the interesting people will be missing." Of course he didn't really believe in Heaven at all. Madalyn Murray O'Hair the famous atheist said, "There is no God. There's no Heaven. There is no Hell. There are no angels. When you die you go into the ground, the worms eat you." Well, that's encouraging isn't it? You can almost make a hymn out of that somehow. I don't think it would be very popular. The journalist Hunter S. Thompson said, "Maybe there's no Heaven, or maybe this is all pure gibberish a product of the demented imagination of a lazy drunken hillbilly with a heart full of hate." And Stephen Hawking famous scientist says, "I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There's no Heaven, or afterlife for broken down computers. That's a fairy story for people afraid of the dark."

Well anybody who thinks much will come up with a very obvious question that needs to be asked these people, and those who hold to this position. And the question is very deep and profound: Says who? Who says this? How do you know that Stephen? Madalyn Murray O'Hair? How do you know that? You see the only way you could really, definitively say there's no Heaven is if you have been everywhere there is to be, and you knew everything there is to know. Then you could say there is no God, there's no Heaven. The problem is if you've been everywhere there is to be and you know everything there is to know you are God and therefore denying yourself. But of course God does not do that.

But as miserable it is to contemplate what the world says about Heaven. It's far worse to see what much of the Church says, or more specifically what they don't say. That's the problem in the evangelical church today. "Time Magazine" did an article about Heaven some years ago, actually quite a few years ago, and they observed that Heaven is AWOL from most churches. It's just not preached. It's not sung. It's not thought about. The thing these days is how God wants to bless you in this life. Let's not talk about the sweet by and by, that's pie in the sky. Let's talk about how He wants to prosper you and make you a more successful business man. Make you have a better family life, a better marriage. One United Methodist spokesman called Heaven, "Too controversial to discuss." One preacher from Washington said, "Well that is a geographical issue that is not really deserving of our attention." We are so busy telling people how to succeed and prosper we are ashamed of Heaven. Remember the old songs? "When we all get to Heaven" what a day of rejoicing that will be. "Just over in the Glory Land." "I'll Fly Away." "Sweet By and By." "I've Got a mansion Just Over the Hilltop." Today we've become too cool for Heaven to talk about it much, or to talk about it at all.

C.S. Lewis had a different idea and this is to me about the most insightful statement that I've read about Heaven outside of the Scriptures. He said, "If you read history you'll find the Christians who did the most for the present world are the ones who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire. The great men

who built up the Middle Ages. The English evangelicals who abolished the slave trade. All left their mark on the earth precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one. Aim at Heaven and you'll get the earth thrown in. Aim at the earth and you'll get neither." And there is so much truth to that. You think about Paul, and Peter, and Wilberforce and all the great Christians that made such an impact on the world. And they had Heaven before them and in their thoughts all the time.

But more importantly than those guys look at our Lord Jesus for a moment. Jesus continually affirmed Heaven. He spoke about it all the time. Matthew 4:17, "Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. In this manner therefore pray, 'Our Father in Heaven hallowed be your name.'" He gives you the title Father. The address Heaven. Where is God the Father? Some people say, "Well, He's everywhere." His Spirit is everywhere. But the person of the Father is in Heaven. Not on the earth. Not in Washington, D.C., but in Heaven. Jesus said, "Whoever denies me before man him I'll also deny before my Father who is in Heaven." He could have simply said, "Before God almighty." He liked to use the expression, "Your Father in Heaven." Just let that soak in for a moment. The words of Jesus. The expression, one of His favorite expressions, "Your Father in Heaven." "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven."

In the news articles and documentaries we often talk about experts. Experts says this. Experts say that. Well rightly so. Naturally if you want to find the truth about a subject you would be wise to go to those who really know what they are talking about. But when it comes to Heaven do we have such an expert anywhere to be found? Are you an expert on Heaven? Am I? Is any of us? The answer is no. But the Bible declares Christ came from Heaven. And He is the very Creator and Architect of Heaven. And He told us about Heaven. Believed in Heaven. Told us we have a Father in Heaven. And I don't know about you but I take the theology of Jesus Christ a lot more seriously than the theology of Tom Hanks or Oprah Winfrey or so many others who would try to tell us about life. It's good for you to think about Heaven and believe in Heaven.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: You have been watching a presentation by Dennis Pollock of Spirit of Grace Ministries regarding what the Bible says about Heaven. After establishing the reality of Heaven in his very clever and fascinating introduction, Dennis began to talk about what Heaven would be like, about how real and tangible it would be. Let's return now to his presentation.

Dennis Pollock's Presentation

Dennis Pollock: Now let's talk about the view that Heaven is totally spiritual, no physical aspect whatsoever. You die, again you die. You go to Heaven. It's great. You're a spirit. You're not real. Nobody can touch you. If they try to touch you their hand will go through your body. You like to flit from cloud to cloud, harp to harp. It's just wonderful there but nothing is really real, not like it is here.

Well there are some reasons why they might believe that. The Bible says God is Spirit. You could say, yes, God is spirit therefore Heaven is spirit, everything is spirit, we die we go to Heaven we're all spirit. Randy Alcorn created the term Christoplatonism the idea that everything flesh is evil. Your body is evil. And of course if you are going to go to Heaven you can't go with your body. And so your body is left behind and in Heaven we'll be spirits rid of this evil body. And if you didn't think about it too much and you just picked up a few phrases from Scripture you could believe that. Paul talks about this body of death, speaking about the indwelling sin

nature. Who will deliver me from this body of death? He says, "In my flesh dwells no good thing." And really when you think about the biblical term the flesh, don't yield to the flesh. Don't make opportunity for the flesh we think of the body, right? So, you could say, ok, our body is riddled with sin. Our body is sin. Our body is the sin nature. If we want to go to Heaven and be pure we get rid of the sin, get rid of the body, and we live as pure spirits. That would be fine if we only had those few little verses, but, we don't we have a lot more.

So, what does happen when you die? Again I know the answer to that. And the reason I know it is not because I have died, but because I read the Bible. Well first thing we need to understand is that when you die you will indeed go to be with Jesus Christ. You will go to what some theologians call an intermediate Heaven. Intermediate meaning temporary. It's not the full complete package. It's only, you're only in a certain degree in the place you'll be for eternity. Paul put it this way, "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord." Absent from the body. The body is left behind. We're gone, and we are with Jesus.

Philippians 1:23, "I'm hard pressed between the two having the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." Everybody say, "Far better." Say it again, "Far better." Question: Do you really believe that? Do you really believe that? Because if you do you will rejoice over your loved ones that are there. You may grieve over missing them that's fine. That's legitimate. But you'll also have a joy to know they are happier than they've ever been. They are more peaceful than they've ever been. Life is better for them than it's ever been. It's far better says Paul. So, if grandma is dead and she was a Christian she's in Heaven right now. But her body's not there. Her body is in the ground. And some people think that's all there is to it. But then you have to deal with this concept the Scripture terms the resurrection. The resurrection. And a lot of people would say, "Well why do we even need a resurrection? You're in Heaven. You're with Jesus. Everything's perfect. Everything's great. There is no need for anything further.

Let me tell you a little story. Some years ago, and our family has been rather, I've struggled much of my financially I've never been a very wealthy person. And some years ago I was so desperate to get a car that wasn't very old because I'd driven all these junkers and all these old cars. I made the terrible mistake of getting a car that was almost new, very cheaply, but the problem was it was a Yugo. Anybody remember the Yugos? Beautiful, shiny, red Yugo. And I was so proud of my new Yugo. I mean it wasn't brand new it was like a year old, but \$80 a month payments, who could beat that? And it had a guarantee that they would fix anything that went wrong for like the next eight years. And I was thrilled I said, "I got almost a new car. Shiny. Pretty red. And they are going to fix it if anything goes wrong." What I didn't realize was it was going to be constantly in and out of the shop being fixed and I would be without a car. It was terrible. It was Murphy's Law all compacted into a car. Anything that could go wrong with a Yugo, would go wrong with the Yugo. And I ask the question where are the Yugo's today? They are all in the junkyard of course.

And finally a lady did me a tremendous favor. She ran into the back of me while I was in that Yugo. I could of kissed her. Finally free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty I am free at last. Ran right into the back and totaled that Yugo. I tried to act like I was all concerned, you know. "Oh, you've hit me. And now my car." Inside I was rejoicing.

Now the Yugo went to the junkyard, but I didn't stay with it. I got out. And when you die your Yugo, or maybe you have a Cadillac, but in this case it's a Yugo. Your Yugo is going to go into the junkyard, but you're not going to stay there. You are going to get out of it. And you are going to be absent from the Yugo and present with the Lord. Or as Paul said, "Absent from the body, and present with the Lord." But the thing of it is I needed a car. I could not just simply walk around. American's don't function without cars. I know in Africa where I go lots of people don't

have cars, but in America you need a car. You have to have a car. And we were doing a little bit better financially and I was able to get, again it wasn't brand new but it was just a few years old, maybe three years old Toyota van and it was so much better than a Yugo. And I just admired. I had to go and step out of the house and kind of just admire that Toyota van. I was so happy. Now the illustration is not perfect because if it was a perfect illustration I would get a glorified Yugo, instead of the old Yugo back. Because you are not going to get really a totally new and different body. You are going to get a perfected glorified body based on the body you've had all along. Some of you may be saying, "I don't think I even want this body anymore." But don't worry by the time God's finished you'll love it. And it will be right for you.

Here's what the Bible says, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump the trumpet will be sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible." You say, now wait a minute I don't quite get this because if I'm in Heaven already why do I need to be raised? No it's not really you being raised it is your body being raised, and clothing your spirit once again. You will become a three-part being: spirit, soul and body. And that will be your state for eternity. Spirit, soul and body. You are made to function in a body. And God is going to get you a body for eternity based on the body you have but glorified, raised, perfected, and strengthened.

The Bible says, "The Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel, the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first." Spirits are in Heaven. Bodies raised, clothe the spirits once again. John 5:28, "The hours coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth those who have done good to the resurrection of life." We believe in the resurrection. We believe that when we say good-bye to our loved ones even their body will be raised once again. And we'll see life once again in a perfected state.

And here's a little clue, it's not really the topic that I'm talking on but just to let you know even the ungodly will have their own resurrection. Paul says, "I have hope in God that they themselves also accept that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." Adolf Hitler will be raised. Mussolini will be raised. Jack the Ripper will be raised. And lots of other non-descript, run of the mill, garden variety sinners will be raised. In fact we'll all be raised at different times. The Christian raised at the coming of Christ, those that sleep in Christ. The sinners raised much later on. But there will be a resurrection of both. So right now sinners are not in their permanent position, not in their permanent state. They are in Hades waiting a trial. But that trial will never happen until they have had their bodies raised and they'll stand before Christ spirit, soul and body.

I heard a testimony of a man that used to run with the gangs, he had a terribly rough life. And he liked to refer to some of his old buddies in sin that were now dead with this expression, he said, "Yeah, they're now crackling and popping in Hell." Burning in the Lake of Fire that is. But the truth is there is nobody crackling and popping in Hell right now. There's nobody in the Lake of Fire. They are in Hades. There in what we might think of as the country jail waiting for trial. And though there are people in Heaven it's not the full, complete, permanent Heaven that we will see later. So, neither Satan nor sinner that's passed on is in their permanent condition.

If we want to see what will this new body look like? What will it be like? We don't have to look any further than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is called, this is very important the First Fruits of the Resurrection. The first fruits. 1 Corinthians 15, "Now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." First fruits is an agricultural term, it means the first ripened plants in a harvest. The first agricultural produce of a season. So, it is the one that goes before. We might call it the premier showing. If you want to know what your resurrection body will look like just read a little bit about what Jesus was like after He was raised.

So, let's look at Luke 24 the disciples have seen Him appear before them and they are amazed. They're astonished. They're afraid. And some of them are even doubting, "Can this even be Jesus?" He says, "Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet. It is I Myself." Handle me and see. A spirit doesn't have flesh and bones, as you see I have. I like the phrase, "It is I Myself." Not somebody else, it's me. And touch me. And when they touched Him their hand didn't go through them like you might suppose would be the case with the spirit, with a ghost of some kind. They found He was tangible. He was real. He was capable of being touched, and they could feel His body. He was saying, "Yeah, you might be scared if I was a spirit, but hey this is Me, this is the guy who walked on the Sea of Galilee. This is the guy that had meals with you all throughout Israel. This is the one you heard preaching on the Sermon on the Mount. This is the same Jesus." Now He's the first fruits of the resurrection which means when you are raised you'll still be the same people, minus sin, minus the ability to age and so forth, but you'll still be you. Sometimes we have such an esoteric view of Heaven and of the resurrection we suppose we'll be so unlike we are now that we won't even be recognizable to ourselves. We'll lose all our memory. We won't look the same. We won't feel the same. We won't be the same. But Jesus says, "It is I, Myself." As He was then so it is now, so it will be at the resurrection.

Another place it says they still didn't believe for joy. He marveled, He said, "Do you have any food here." They gave him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. He took it and ate in their presence. Let me tell you something there is nothing so human as eating. Somebody say, "Amen." It's just about the most human thing you can do. We just did it. And we enjoyed ourselves. But we suppose that in Heaven we will be so spiritual that we won't care about eating. And we won't care about drinking. And we won't even remember where we've been or what we have done. And we will just be floating here, and floating there. But Jesus was a very real person, the same guy they had known all along. He said, "Give me some fish." "Give me some honey." I like that you can eat sweet things. You know what I don't think His blood sugar rose even one point when He ate that honey.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: Well, folks, the rest of this absolutely fascinating presentation about Heaven is available on our 2016 conference album which I will tell you how to get a copy of in a few moments. That's our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you, and I hope, the Lord willing, that you will be back with us again next week. 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