

Christ in Prophecy
"Interview 13: William Hallmark on Christian Art"

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Most of you are familiar with the name of Hallmark as it relates to greeting cards. But how many of you are familiar with William Hallmark, one of the foremost Christian artists in America today. His incredible paintings have inspired Christians all over the world. For an interview with this remarkable man, stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our blessed hope. I'm Dave Reagan, founder and director of Lamb and Lion Ministries and I want to welcome you to Christ in Prophecy. This week I'm delighted to have two very special guests here with me in the studio and the first is William Hallmark, an artist from Birmingham, Alabama. The second is my colleague Gary Fisher, founder and director of Lion of Judah Ministries in Franklin, Tennessee. Welcome to Christ in Prophecy, fellows!

William Hallmark and Gary Fisher: Thank you very much. Glad to be here.

Dr. Reagan: Glad to have you here. Let's see, Alabama, Tennessee, and Texas. Sounds like we're having a confederate convention of some sort.

William Hallmark: Absolutely, yes.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I tell you, you know William we have to kid, we kid Gary here a lot because being from Tennessee and his roots from Tennessee we just fondly refer to him as Hillbilly Graham. And sometimes when he gets up and preaching he sounds like him. We're so glad to have both of you, and I want to start off with you William. I want to ask you a question. Did you receive formal art training at some art institute somewhere?

William Hallmark: I have never received formal training at all.

Dr. Reagan: That's just incredible, so this is just a talent that God gave you and anointed.

William Hallmark: Absolutely, it's strictly from God, I had nothing to do with it.

Dr. Reagan: And so you're completely self-taught.

William Hallmark: Absolutely.

Dr. Reagan: Well that is really remarkable, there's no doubt this came from the Lord.

William Hallmark: Absolutely.

Dr. Reagan: Ok. Well when did you start producing art that was particularly Christian in character?

William Hallmark: Around 23 years old I began to go to a Bible study, a youth Bible study, and that's where I began to get interested in how God worked and the symbolism in the Bible, and symbolism is what amazed me, and that's when I started getting fascinated by all the different variations of who Christ was in the Bible, the different names.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, like a Lion, a Lamb, a Rose of Sharon and that sort of thing.

William Hallmark: Cornerstone, everything, Advocate, you know, the First, the Last, the Living One. All those type of names.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I understand that one of the very first Christian paintings you did, and one that really brought you a lot of notoriety was one entitled *The Lion of Judah*. I've got a small copy of it here. Tell us about that painting.

William Hallmark: You know basically what it is, is a portrait of Christ. It depicts Him as a lion and He's sitting there crucified, the Crown of Thorns on top of His head, and He's bleeding blood and He also has a pierced paw too, and you can see the blood right there. This actually comes from the verse Revelation 5:5 and you can see also the dove behind Him, which represents the Holy Spirit. And if you look you can also see the scroll hidden inside the rock there that He's perched on. And basically it's a simple portrait of Christ that can reach any type of person because you don't see what Christ really looks like but you see His Soul, who He is. And any person of any race can look at it and relate to it.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I know that that picture has touched the hearts of people literally all over the world and it's a picture that we have hanging in our mail processing room. It's a source of inspiration for us each day, in fact, when you arrived today we brought you into the mail processing room and showed you that picture. We took it off the wall and you were kind enough to autograph it for us and we want to thank you for that.

William Hallmark: Well, thank you.

Dr. Reagan: And Gary, I understand that that particular painting is very important in the life of your ministry. Tell us about that.

Gary Fisher: Oh, it's a great honor to do so Dave. In 1993 I was getting ready to leave my career to start a ministry and I was teaching a large Sunday school class in Nashville, Tennessee. My wife and I were laboring over what to call this new ministry we had decided we were going to launch and my wife went in the bookstore the day before. And this painting was hanging in the bookstore, *The Lion of Judah*. And the lady had been in one of our Sunday school classes and knew our story a little bit. My wife asked her, said "We're getting ready to start a ministry, we're having trouble deciding on the name." And the lady looked over to the painting, pointed over at the wall. She said "Why don't you name it Lion of Judah Ministries?" And my wife looked at the painting and she said, "That is really incredible." She bought the painting and brought it home. And as soon as I pulled it out of the box it absolutely captivated me more than any piece of artwork I'd ever seen, because the Lord had put an anointing there and there was a special attachment to it. So, I told my wife "Praise God this is it, Lion of Judah Ministries, Jesus is coming as the Lion of the tribe of Judah." And that's what we want to depict

in the name of our ministry. So I got inspired and I called the bookstore manager and I talked to her and she laughed at me. She said, "They're not gonna let you use this as the logo." That's what I'd call her to ask her for. She said, "This thing is tied up in copyrights and that kind of thing." So I just kind of got my feelings hurt and I just forgot about it. I went to my class the next night, had about 50 people in this class. And as the class assembled I was telling them this story. And there was a couple that were sitting on the front row in this class, had never been in there before. And as I was telling the story we were going to start our ministry, Lion of Judah Ministry, and about this painting. And the man on the front row spoke up, and he said "the artist's name is William Hallmark, he's a friend of mine, and he lives in Alabama. Would you like his phone number?" And now the class is absolutely blown away. And we all knew all 50 of us knew that God had orchestrated this moment.

William Hallmark: Amen.

Gary Fisher: And so I took the phone number, and I called your office the next day, and your mother who was serving as your secretary at the moment was answering the phone for you. And we talked for a moment. I told her about this story and she went rejoicing on the phone, "Oh yes! Praise God! Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah! We'd love to do a logo for you!"

Dr. Reagan: Does that sound like your mom?

William Hallmark: Absolutely it does.

Gary Fisher: And so, two weeks later, I got this drawn by you, in the mail, and it is one of the most precious pieces of artwork. It hangs in my office now. And we took this William and scanned it into the computer. Did you get a good shot of that? Ok. And then we scanned it into the computer and put the words around it and it became Lion of Judah Ministry. And I have had so many comments about that since then and I owe you brother, and I thank you for it. Jesus is coming, not as a baby from Bethlehem, but as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

William Hallmark: Amen.

Dr. Reagan: Well you talked about God orchestrating that moment in that class and I believe he did. And I believe he orchestrated this moment for the three of us to get together. Who, we preach all the time about Jesus coming back as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and here he is illustrating it. William, I want to introduce our viewers to more of your paintings, but before I do so I want us to pause for a moment for a tremendous song. And folks we're going to have a song here by Jack Hollingsworth entitled *We Shall See Jesus*.

Song

Dr. Reagan: Wow! What a great song! And what a wonderful and imaginative job of video editing our media staff has done in rendering Jack's version of that song. Well, my special guests are Christian artist William Hallmark and Bible prophecy teacher Gary Fisher. William, I want to start off with you in this particular session and I want to ask you to take a look at some of your paintings here and just describe them to us. I want to introduce our viewers to quite a number of your painting because they are so powerful in nature. One of my favorites is one that's called *Behold the Lamb*. Tell us about that precious painting.

William Hallmark: Behold the Lamb. You know what it really is, is just about Jesus' crucifixion. You know, He was the Lamb of God. He was the Lamb slain before the beginning of time. He

was prophesied to come and He did come. You know, and He was prophesied in the Old Testament, and He came in the New Testament, and basically this is a Lamb that is wrapped in a crown of thorns representing His destiny as you can see. And He looks tender. He's almost kind of like a young yearling being sent to the slaughter, basically. And you've got the light shafting through the clouds back there that gives a spiritual sensation, a mood into the picture.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah. Well I know before we started the program that Gary was mentioning something about lions and lambs and we were always talking about those. What was it Gary that you were mentioning here?

Gary Fisher: Well, first of all the three of us have been knit together for 27 years about this issue about the Lion. I'd been to church all my life and I never heard anything about Jesus being a Lion. And 27 years ago I first heard you started to preach about that. And then I came along with the Lion of Judah Ministry, and then he comes along illustrating the Lion. William, I understand at Christmas time every year we see the classic scenes, the Lamb and the Lion.

William Hallmark: Absolutely, we do.

Gary Fisher: But there's actually a little problem with that. A theological problem and we really know that the scripture says "the wolf will lie down with the lamb", and I understand you have illustrated that in a painting.

Dr. Reagan: Well he certainly has.

William Hallmark: Absolutely. A fantastic painting. Um, what I did here was actually from Isaiah, you know, it talks about the wolf will live with the lamb. And it really doesn't say the lion and lamb.

Dr. Reagan: That's right.

William Hallmark: It always says the wolf and lamb, which is interesting. And so what you have here is lambs being nestled here. You know, wolves and lambs are natural enemies.

Dr. Reagan: They certainly are.

William Hallmark: Wolves are very horrifying but this one's gentle, because when Jesus comes back everything will be new and innocent and animals will no longer be a threat to us.

Dr. Reagan: You know we get calls almost every day from people saying "I know that somewhere in the Bible it says the Lion will lie down with the Lamb and I just can't find it, where is it? We know the name of your ministry, you know where it is." And I say, "No it's not there. It says the wolf will lie down with the lamb and the lion will eat straw with the ox." I said, "Certainly the lion will lie down with the lamb, there's no problem with that, but that's not what it says." And you very seldom ever see an artist who really paints what the book of Isaiah says. So that's one of the reasons I love that painting so much and one of the reasons that we decided to use it as a cover on one of our magazines, I really appreciate you doing that. But you know, you don't just paint animals as symbols of Jesus Christ you also do other types of paintings and a couple of them that I really like are paintings of angels. For example, this painting right here of the angel with the sword standing in front of the book of Hebrews. Tell us about that, that is a fantastic painting.

William Hallmark: Well, basically what it is, an angel holding the sword and the sword represents the Word of God.

Dr. Reagan: And it's a humongous sword.

William Hallmark: Absolutely. It would only take an angel such as he to hold it because he is a very strong angel. And what you see, you know the Bible behind there. But it says it's the book of Hebrews, because Hebrews talks about the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword.

Dr. Reagan: That's right.

William Hallmark: And angels, I look at angels as being very large and very strong. I do like feminine angels, it doesn't bother me, but I also like to draw what the Bible really depicts, they're masculine angels.

Dr. Reagan: Right. Well you know, when I saw this I immediately thought of that verse that the Bible is sharper than a two-edged sword. But then I also thought of something else, and that is that in the background it says book of Hebrews. And the first chapter of the book of Hebrews has more information in it about angels than any other chapter in the Bible. So I thought that was particularly appropriate. And you've got another one it's called the *Midnight Herald*. And I just love this painting. We cropped it and used it on one of our covers also. Tell us about that one.

William Hallmark: Well what it is, it's about to strike midnight and it's almost kind of like just a couple of minutes. Jesus is about to come, the heavens are going to open up and here He comes with all His white horses, and coming to proclaim and to get His Church. And as you see there, the angel's about to blow the trumpet. He's about to just put his lips on there and about to do that great...

Gary Fisher: Praise the Lord.

Dr. Reagan: Man, I'm ready.

Gary Fisher: Glory to God, Amen.

Dr. Reagan: That great shout. You know that tickles me because in the background you've got this picture of the clock and it's just like three minutes 'til midnight. And the reason that tickles me is because we get letter after letter from television viewers asking us about the clock on the mantle behind you there that shows about five minutes 'til twelve, and they're always saying "why don't you wind your clock? Your clock always shows the same time!" And I have to write, "Hey! It's on purpose! This is a symbol, it's a symbol of the fact that we are living in the end times and Jesus is coming soon."

Gary Fisher: Amen.

Dr. Reagan: Now I understand you have a new painting out that's about the bride of Christ, and it's very special. Tell us about that.

William Hallmark: You know, the bride represents the church.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

William Hallmark: And when He comes back, the bride has to be holy, white and clean. And so when I did that particular painting I wanted to present the idea that He's married to us! We are His bride, you know. Wow. When I talk to kids about the bride I'll say that's me right there. And kids will look at me and scratch their head and go, "That's not you!" Of course, it is me, of course. I am that bride right there. We're all it's not male or female. It's a beautiful idea, concept that the Bible, that Revelation talks about in the book, about the bride.

Dr. Reagan: Alright, what sort of images are you working on right now?

William Hallmark: Well, I'm working on one of Jesus coming back on a white horse. I've done one but I'm doing another one which the Lord had inspired me to do. I'm also doing one of a lion on the throne, which I'm very excited about.

Dr. Reagan: The Lion on the throne.

William Hallmark: The Lion on the throne.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I tell ya, I wish we had a copy of that to show people because I've seen a preliminary sketch of it and it is absolutely dramatic. Oh yeah. It's fantastic I can hardly wait for you to get that one out. Because you very seldom see any pictures of Jesus sitting on the throne, reigning. And this is the Lion of Judah on the throne reigning.

Gary Fisher: William I want to ask you something, I've been wanting to do it the whole set. I know when I started being conscience of Jesus being the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and your painting had something to do with that. But as a personal question to you, I want to ask you. When did you start getting the vision to draw and paint Jesus as the Lion of the tribe of Judah?

William Hallmark: Oh, you know, that's a great question. I had prayed to the Lord around 23 years old. And I said, "Lord, give me something, a vision of You, an idea of You that would touch the hearts of people, and Christians and everything." And He gave me this idea of a Lion and I just sketched it out. And it was around when I was 23 years old.

Gary Fisher: Well, I'd like to input here for a moment and the three of us shout a hearty amen to this. As I said before, I'd been to church all my life but I never heard Jesus being the Lion of Judah, and our ministries, our three ministries herald this issue. Jesus is not coming as a baby from Bethlehem. He is coming as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I tell you what William I am convinced that God gave you that vision. It came straight from Him because all you gotta do is look at it and look at the eyes of that Lion and you know, man, this is a beautiful symbol of Jesus Christ.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to my interview of Christian artist William Hallmark, and with me also is Gary Fisher, evangelist for Lion of Judah Ministries. William, let me start with this question. Why in the world are you focusing your enormous talents on something like Christian art, instead of commercial art where you could make probably ten times as much money?

William Hallmark: It's what God called me to do, basically. He gave me this, He put it in my hands. And He gave it to me. I've talked to a lot of illustrators, and they actually would like to be doing what I'm doing because it's not as fulfilling for them.

Dr. Reagan: Yes. So you really look upon what you're doing as a ministry from the Lord, right?

William Hallmark: It is definitely a ministry.

Dr. Reagan: Well, let me ask you this. What is it that you hope to accomplish through that ministry?

William Hallmark: You know, I want people to be able to see who Jesus really is. His roots, His Jewish heritage, you know, through the star of David.

Dr. Reagan: Boy that speaks to my heart.

William Hallmark: I want you to feel who Jesus, capture Him in many different aspects. He's a lion, the ideas about who is He, the scepter, what He holds, the keys of death and Hell. Whether or not He might hold the keys of death and Hell or the key to the Kingdom. When I do paintings of lions, there are so many aspects of His personality, and I want to capture those.

Gary Fisher: Dave, if you'll let me get in here for a moment. William, as I have surveyed your paintings over the years, there seems to be a communication that Jesus is coming soon through those paintings and I think I know the answer to this question, but do you believe that we're living in the end times?

William Hallmark: Oh yes, yes I do.

Gary Fisher: And if so, why?

William Hallmark: Well, I guess because most prophets would probably say, if you asked them that question and everything, they would probably say because of Israel becoming a nation back in the 1950s and that was prophesied in the Bible when it came and that He would be coming along that time when that happened.

Gary Fisher: Amen.

William Hallmark: So I'd probably say that would probably be a cornerstone right there.

Dr. Reagan: Well William I know that many viewers are sitting out there thinking right now, "How in the world can I get some copies of these fantastic paintings?" And I know that you have many paintings that we haven't even shown that are just wonderful in nature so look right into that camera and tell people how they can get in touch with you.

William Hallmark: Sure, you can contact my website, it's www.williamhallmarkart.com and you can order prints framed and unframed, basically.

Dr. Reagan: And there's a great variety of them that are displayed on there so go to that particular website.

William Hallmark: Yes, in fact there are so many that you haven't seen here that are on my website.

Dr. Reagan: Ok, and they can also get many of your products in Christian bookstores, right?

William Hallmark: Yes, absolutely. Including even note cards and other things that we haven't talked about. Cards, puzzles, Bible covers.

Dr. Reagan: Yes. All those things. Ok, so I would encourage everyone viewing to go there to that website, take a look at that, and make some orders and bless your home and everyone who comes into your home with some of these beautiful paintings. Well William I want to thank you very much for being with us this week. We have really been blessed by your presence. But before we sign off I'd like for you to comment about one other painting and that is one called the *Helmet of Salvation*. Tell us about that.

William Hallmark: You know, the Helmet of Salvation basically is the armor of God, which we talk about in Ephesians. You know the Bible talks about it in Ephesians. You know where very masculine angel is placing the Helmet of Salvation on the boy. He's praying and this is actually to protect him against what the world throws at him, and of course as you see the sword and the shield of faith there and the sword of the Spirit down there also. I want you to refer that that is the Helmet of Salvation that that angel is putting on that child's head.

Dr. Reagan: And what inspired you to paint that?

William Hallmark: You know, Ephesians!

Dr. Reagan: Ephesians. I figured you were going to say that.

William Hallmark: Absolutely! You can't get more direct than that.

Dr. Reagan: And I can't think of a better inspiration for paintings than to get the inspiration directly from the scripture.

William Hallmark: Absolutely. That makes a good painting when you do that.

Gary Fisher: Every home's nursery ought to have one of those hanging there.

William Hallmark: Absolutely.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I want to thank you again for being with us. You drove here all the way from Alabama. You live in Birmingham and we appreciate you doing that and Gary, I appreciate you coming down all the way from Franklin, Tennessee and anyone who wants to get in touch with your ministry, what is the website?

Gary Fisher: www.lionofjudahministry.org.

Dr. Reagan: That's our program for this week. I hope you've enjoyed it and I hope you'll be back with us next week. Until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries saying, "Look up! Be watchful! For our redemption is drawing near."

End of Program