

Christ in Prophecy
Interview 17: “Intellectuals vs. Jesus”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Do you have a Christian worldview or has your philosophy of life been tainted by the wisdom of the world? What is our best guide for life, the Word of God or the philosophies of intellectuals? And what does the Bible mean when it says that the foolishness of God is wiser than men? For an in-depth discussion of these questions and others, stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus our blessed hope, and welcome to another broadcast of *Christ in Prophecy*. I'm delighted to have with me this week two special guests. One is Dennis Pollock, the other Nathan Jones. Dennis, as many of you well know, is a former colleague of mine who was with our ministry for twelve years before the Lord called him into the establishment of his own ministry called Spirit of Grace. And Dennis, as I understand it that ministry is primarily one that's focused on evangelism and healing and on training of native ministers around the world. And you're right now focusing your efforts on Africa and I guess it's the Philippines, and India, right?

Dennis Pollock: Right. The Lord has basically put it on my heart to go where the harvest is.

Dr. Reagan: Okay.

Dennis Pollock: And there's a lot more harvest going on out there in Africa and Asia than there is in the U.S. and so I'm kind of like a migrant worker, I go and I collect some harvest.

Dr. Reagan: Well, we're glad you're in town long enough to make this program with us and later on we'll give people an opportunity to find out how they can get in touch with you, okay? And then this is Nathan Jones. Nathan is our newest staff member, he is our Web Minister. And if you go to our website and start asking questions of any kind, he's the guy that has all the answers, right?

Nathan Jones: Yeah, and then I run across to your office and ask for the answer.

Dr. Reagan: Well I don't know about that. Anyway, we're delighted to have Nathan with us. And our topic for this program is intellectualism. And I want to get into it Dennis by asking you what in the world do you think the apostle Paul meant when he said in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and there in verse 25 these words, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men."

Dennis Pollock: Well, clearly God's thoughts are not our thoughts. And you know the world has had some brilliant men, just incredibly intelligent men and women over the centuries and millennia. But man does not have the capacity no matter how brilliant to come up with any kind of way to reconcile himself with God or to really even find out the answers to life. And there have been a lot of brilliant men that have tried, and they've written long philosophies and books about what life's supposed to be about but they've never come up with the answers. God has done it. And it's so simple that a small little child can find the answers and know more, a five-year-old child may essentially know more than a philosopher...

Dr. Reagan: Well, I'm gonna ask you specifically about some of those great intellectuals in history in a moment but first of all, I'm intrigued by the statement "the foolishness of God." I mean God is the source of all true wisdom. He is omniscient, how could God possibly be foolish, can you think of an example either one of you, the foolishness of God?

Dennis Pollock: Well, obviously the Bible is not saying God is foolish but I think what Paul is referring to is the fact that God's simplicity looks like foolishness to us. We look at it and we say, "So you're telling me...that if I put my faith in Christ because a couple thousand years ago He died on a cross and He rose again, that I will be forgiven, I will

be justified, I will have my life's purpose fulfilled and all of these things by a simple act of faith, it cannot be that easy! It sounds foolish."

Dr. Reagan: It sounds foolish that's right and I can tell you another example of the foolishness of God from the viewpoint of the world and that is when God calls people to do things that the world considers absolutely foolish. For example, Abraham, a man of great wealth, in retirement... suddenly God speaks to him and says, "I want you to sell everything you've got, get up and move. I want you to move to a place you've never been to before." Can you imagine how the neighbors must have responded when they said, "Where are you going?" "Well, I don't know, I'm just going where God leads." Or "Noah, build an ark." It never rained, but just build an ark. Build this big boat. Think of how the neighbors must have reacted. So we're talking about here the foolishness of God, from the world's viewpoint.

Dennis Pollock: From the world's viewpoint.

Dr. Reagan: Is wiser than the wisdom of man. Now that's a very insulting statement to intellectuals. Right?

Dennis Pollock: Well, it shouldn't be but it is.

Dr. Reagan: I mean they consider you and me to be flat earth people. You know, we're just fanatics, and we're ignorant people and nobody with any sophistication could ever be a Christian, could they?

Dennis Pollock: If you're smart you couldn't possibly be a Christian.

Dr. Reagan: They never met C.S. Lewis did they?

Dennis Pollock: I don't think so.

Dr. Reagan: Well, tell me a little bit about these characters that you have in mind. Give us some examples of great intellectuals who thought they had the answer to all the world's problems.

Dennis Pollock: Well, I'll do that. Let me start by saying that, you know, when you study philosophy you pick up a few things. So you know, as I've studied these different philosophers, I've learned something. I want to share with you and with the audience one of the great lessons I have learned, okay?

Dr. Reagan: Okay.

Dennis Pollock: So, you know, for example, Sartre taught that action makes the man.

Dr. Reagan: Now, you're talking about Jean-Paul Sartre?

Dennis Pollock: Jean-Paul Sartre said that our actions really define who we are. So his idea was, you do, and then you become. But many other philosophers and the French were the ones that kind of threw this back and forth, have said it was just the opposite, that what you are becomes what you do. So in the intellectuals of France it was either be and then do or do and then be. But actually there was an American philosopher that solved that whole dilemma.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah?

Dennis Pollock: Yeah. You probably have never heard of him, his name is Frank Sinatra. And he said, "Do, be, do be do." So, now that we've got that out of the way. The young people don't have a clue what I was just talking about. They said, "Who is Frank Sinatra and what is do be do?" Get the oldies CD. Anyway, you know, I think that a lot of what I have discovered is from a book by Paul Johnson called *Intellectuals*. And the main point he was making is that if you're going to have someone tell you about how to do something, you would expect that they have a pretty good grasp on it themselves. Someone comes along and says, "I'm gonna teach you how to play golf." And you said, "Alright, you hit a ball for me." And he swings and misses, you know, can't even hit the ball. You think, "Well, I'm just not sure that you're really probably the best teacher for me." And so his point was, these philosophers pretend to be the ones to tell us how we should live, what life is all about, and how we can best function in life, if we will cling to their philosophies and believe what they teach. So he said in his book *Intellectuals*,

“Let’s look at what their lives were like.” And when you read about the lives of some of the philosophers and intellectuals over the last few hundred years, it is like going through a sewer. I mean, their lives were so wretched, their family lives, their personal lives, their financial lives. I mean, it was such a mess and you cannot help but wonder how could any sane person choose these folks to tell them how to live or what to think. Really, you could go out into a crowd at a ballgame and pick ten people at random they’d probably have better lives and make more sense than some of these great philosophers and intellectuals.

Dr. Reagan: That reminds me back in the ‘60s when Kennedy was elected president. He started raiding Harvard University, hiring one professor after another to be in his administration. It prompted one leading conservative commentator in America to say, “I would rather be governed by 10 people selected at random from the New York telephone directory than 10 professors from Harvard University.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, well that’s exactly...

Dr. Reagan: Well, give us an example!

Dennis Pollock: Alright, let’s talk about... the father of the enlightenment was considered Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Any good philosopher knows his *Voltaire* and his *Rousseau*. Lived in the 1700’s and like most of these intellectuals, Rousseau had no problems at all with self-esteem. He thought incredibly high of himself. Let me just read a few quotes from Rousseau. He said, for example, “No man ever had more talent for loving.” He said, “I would leave this life with apprehension if I ever knew a better man than me.”

Dr. Reagan: Wow. No self-esteem problems here.

Dennis Pollock: “Show me a better man than me, a heart more loving, more tender, more sensitive.” He said, “If there was a single enlightened government in Europe they would be erecting statues to me.”

Dr. Reagan: Well in truth he was a pretty wretched guy, wasn’t he?

Dennis Pollock: Well, he was, and the interesting thing was, he claimed in his writings to just love people. The most tender, loving, compassionate man you could ever want, you know. In his writings he comes across that way very much so, as a very tender soul. The reality was, nobody liked Rousseau, and he didn't like anybody, if you got to know him. Now from a distance he was great, you know, if you corresponded or you read his books, he seemed wonderful. But in reality, he quarreled with everybody and all those that got to know him pretty much despised him. People that criticized him he couldn't stand. Toward his latter years he thought there was a great conspiracy against him. In his personal life, he took a lady named Teresa as his mistress, he would not marry her, lived with her for 33 years. One of the things he said about Teresa was, he said, "Well I don't actually care about her, she's just there to satisfy my sensual needs."

Dr. Reagan: Oh this was the great loving man.

Dennis Pollock: The great loving man, he never took her out. And when people came to his house for a meal, she would never be allowed to even sit down she would serve the meal and then go wait in some back room. So this is how he treated the so-called "love of his life" and of course he had other women as well. Another thing about Rousseau was the fact that he wrote much about children, claimed to be the lover of kids and just, and much of educational theory is based on some of what Rousseau had to say about children. The reality in his own life was, he had, according to most counts, five children with Teresa. And in each case, the baby is born they take the baby to an orphanage nearby and drop it off. He will not raise any of his kids. And this orphanage was so wretched that two-thirds of the babies died in their first year, and by the time they had lived several years it was like a 90% mortality rate – nobody lived! And that's what he did with his kids! Now they asked him you know, later on, when this became public and he had written so much about kids and education, they said, "Well how come you didn't keep your own kids?" And he blamed other philosophers for putting bad ideas in his head and then he said, "Well you know, my work is so important that to have my house with all these noisy sounds of children, it would stop me from doing this important work." So the man was...

Dr. Reagan: Well let's take another example. Here's Karl Marx, for example, who's supposed to be the great hero of the proletariat, the common people, the poor people. A man who would devote his life to trying to come up with a philosophy of life, a philosophy of government that would provide them with the best possible life. What kind of guy was he?

Dennis Pollock: Well, Marx, again... now, Marx as far as I can tell was not nearly as promiscuous as some of these others. But he was a total nerd, he was desk-bound, all he did was read and write. And the interesting thing was, he expressed once again such compassion, such a zeal for the common man, for the proletarian, in truth he didn't know any common people. He just didn't know any.

Dr. Reagan: He didn't want to.

Dennis Pollock: He didn't want to, he hung out with intellectuals. He was an angry man. When he would have meetings in Paris as an editorial board, they would close the windows because he screamed so much and he just would constantly shout and yell. One man said in his conversations his favorite expression if he didn't like what you were saying was, "I will annihilate you!"

Dennis Pollock: And the interesting thing was Marx never had a chance to express his fury. That is, he never became a dictator, he never really controlled much other than got involved with communist parties and so forth. But his writings abound with anger. He was an angry man, just furious and in his writings you just sense that anger. Now, when you look at some of his disciples, who did attain power, like Lenin, like Stalin, like Mao Tse-tong, they ended up killing millions.

Dr. Reagan: Millions, hundreds of millions.

Dennis Pollock: And they were absorbing, I believe, at least part of the reason was, they were absorbing the anger and the fury of his writings. One contemporary writer wrote this about Marx. "Marx doesn't believe in God, but he believes much in himself, and he makes everyone serve himself. His heart is not full of love but of bitterness, and he has very little sympathy for the human race." And that's the one thing you see among

most of these philosophers and intellectuals. They wrote beautifully, they were smart guys there's no doubt about it, but in terms of their relationships with people, they got along with almost nobody, and often times they were slobs...

Dr. Reagan: Well, quickly tell us something about another one and that is Bertrand Russell.

Dennis Pollock: Alright, Bertrand Russell was a very interesting fellow, and he probably had more to say over a longer period of time than any of the philosophers we're aware of.

Dr. Reagan: In fact, he thought he was the world's greatest expert on everything, didn't he?

Dennis Pollock: Well, he did. He wrote on everything. He wrote on nuclear weapons, he wrote on government, he wrote on education, he even wrote articles on the proper use of lipstick and how to chew the right cigars. Everything you can imagine, mysticism, logic, China...just, he wrote on everything. He was the ultimate know-it-all. He lived to be almost 100. He was born when Ulysses S. Grant was nominated for his second term, he died on the eve of Watergate, so I mean it covered a long period of time. And he was the ultimate intellectual. He was brilliant, and he was a great writer. He'd go out and go for a little morning walk. He'd come back, he'd write all morning, with no re-writes, and just totally fluent.

Dr. Reagan: So did he have a wonderful life?

Dennis Pollock: He had a wretched life.

Dr. Reagan: So knowing everything doesn't mean you have a wonderful life.

Dennis Pollock: Well no, and here's another interesting thing about Russell. As brilliant as he was, he was totally helpless when it came to ordinary things. He couldn't even make a cup of tea. One time one of his wives, he had several, one of his wives went on vacation or went away and she left him instructions for how to make tea. You

know, you put the kettle on the hot plate, you know, you make the water boil, you pour it into the tea cup, and he messed it up totally. He could not figure out... so he had all these amazing theories but he couldn't really function much at all in real life. But probably the most horrific thing about him was his sexual life, his promiscuity. He had wife after wife and with each wife he had a set of mistresses, and then he would change mistresses every so often. His only touch with the common man as we've been talking about, was the fact that he would seduce maids once in awhile and female workers in the household, but he was just a totally immoral individual, and really a wretched man. So his life was pathetic. As an atheist, he had no hope. In fact, he made this classic statement, he said, "That all of man's hopes and fears and dreams are gonna be extinguished with the solar system is extinguished, you know, it's all coming to nothing. And he said, because this is true, the only foundation we could hope to build our lives upon is that of unyielding despair." So that's all you can build your life on.

Dr. Reagan: Well he didn't have much knowledge really about life, did he?

Dennis Pollock: No he didn't.

Dr. Reagan: Well there are others we could discuss, like Sartre, the philosopher in France, but we don't have time in this segment, so maybe we can at least touch on him in our next segment. But we're gonna pause here for just a moment folks and we're going to give you an opportunity to find out how you can get a copy of an incredible audio CD that Dennis has produced concerning Jesus versus the Intellectuals.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Well, welcome back to our discussion with Dennis Pollock of the bankruptcy of the intellectuals of this world. And it'd like for us to begin this segment with Nathan asking a question, how about it Nathan?

Nathan Jones: Sure thing. Dennis, we've been talking about the intellectuals who were the founders of our modern way of thinking. How do they compare to the way Jesus and His philosophy, how that works?

Dennis Pollock: Well, to me it's not just a comparison between the philosophy although his philosophy was certainly different. But even more important is the life.

Dr. Reagan: Amen.

Dennis Pollock: Jesus loved common people. He didn't just say that he loved them, He really loved them. He went out and He talked to them, He talked to the woman at the well. He touched the leper and healed him. He spent time with these people. He would sit with the tax collectors and the sinners and He would share, He would listen to them, He would speak to them. These guys never did. They were totally desk bound. Jean-Paul Sartre for example read three hundred books a year, much of his life, plus he wrote all the time. Now think that's almost a book a day. And if you read a book a day, and then you wrote a whole lot more, you wouldn't have time to do much else. And that's the way most of these guys were. They were so in the mind, in the realm of thought that they couldn't even function in the realm of relationships. They didn't function very well except for their sexual promiscuity. Jesus went out and it's interesting, He didn't write anything. I mean, the closest we have to anything Jesus wrote would be Revelation, you know, where he gives the dictation to the churches. But primarily He was out there doing good works, loving people. Not only that but He had the ability to make a difference. You go around and start asking people at random, "How much difference has Bertrand Russell made in your life?" "How has Jean-Paul Sartre changed your life and made life so much better for you?" Well, even the devotees of these guys would have to admit if they were honest, "Well you know, it's interesting to think about, but you know, they've changed nobody's life, except maybe for the worst." But Christ totally transformed lives. He healed the sick, He gave hope to the hopeless, He encouraged the people that nobody else wanted anything to do with.

Dr. Reagan: And He still transforms lives today.

Dennis Pollock: And He still transforms lives today. And then thirdly, He lived His morality. He didn't just talk morality. You know, Rousseau for example constantly talked about virtue and truth, virtue and truth. But there was no virtue and very little truth, in Rousseau's life. But Christ lived it. He lived such a life He could say, "Which of you convicts me of sin?" He was the sterling character of all of humanity, all of the ages, and

even the sinners instinctively know that. You can hardly get anyone to say much bad about Christ because we recognize He had a character like nobody else did.

Nathan Jones: Now Dennis you've been talking about the intellectuals and now just clarify for me, are you saying then that Christianity is un-intellectual? Like the world always claimed?

Dr. Reagan: Or anti-intellectual?

Dennis Pollock: Well you know, actually there was a time when I thought that, you know as a young fellow.

Dr. Reagan: Well you thought of yourself as a great intellectual.

Dennis Pollock: I thought I was an intellectual and I thought Christians were basically dumb. Usually losers who didn't have much else going on.

Nathan Jones: Ouch.

Dr. Reagan: Flat-earth guys.

Dennis Pollock: Flat-earth guys. Now I didn't think that way long because I did come to Christ at 19, but for a couple of years before that I did. One of the things that amazed me as I came to Christ, and I didn't come through deep intellectual thoughts, I came through the Holy Spirit drawing me the way He does everybody. But as I came to Christ and started reading, I found that Christianity has definitely her share of intellectuals. We've got guys like Jonathan Edwards, who was probably far more brilliant than any of these other guys we've talked about. He was so smart that when you read his writings, he answers questions nobody has even sense to even ask. We're not smart enough to ask the question, he not only figures out the questions he comes up with the answers.

Dr. Reagan: That's pretty smart.

Dennis Pollock: That's smart. Charles Finney was a genius, the apostle Paul, you read his writings, this guy was a genius, and people that have studied his writings just from a secular point of view have said, "Yeah he was a genius."

Dr. Reagan: What about C. S. Lewis?

Dennis Pollock: C. S. Lewis, another example, Spurgeon. Charles Spurgeon, brilliant fellow. We've got our intellectuals if you want that, but the thing that draws us all together whether you're intellectual or a very simple person, we believe the Bible is inspired by God. We believe Christ is the Son of God. We believe life is found in a relationship with Christ. And so whether you come to Christ from the perspective of highly intelligent, or not so bright, it hardly matters. The thing is that we are reconciled to God through Christ. But if you are smart and you're intellectual and you say I need something to feed my mind as well as my spirit, Christianity has got it. I mean, you read the debates between Calvinism and Arminianism. You know, read Edwards' writings and some of these guys. C. S. Lewis' writings. There's plenty for those that are interested in some of these deeper matters.

Dr. Reagan: But the difference that seems to me, one of the basic differences between the intellectuals of the world and the intellectuals of Christianity is that the intellectuals of Christianity are not saying they have the answer to the world's problems. They're saying Jesus has the answers to the world's problems. They're pointing people to the Lord, not to themselves.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, and that's the essence of Christianity, that Christ is the star of the show, he is the Son of God. He is the way, the truth, the life. He is our righteousness, He's our sanctification, our redemption, He is all in all to us.

Dr. Reagan: I read you a statement a few minutes ago from 1 Corinthians chapter 1 where Paul is talking about the foolishness of God being wiser than men. He makes another statement here that's rather intriguing. He says in verse 21 that the "Wisdom of God does not come through our own wisdom." In other words, the world cannot come to know God through its own wisdom. So how do we come to know God, what does that mean we can't do that?

Dennis Pollock: Well, to me, it's like, if I took you into a house that you've never been in before and I sat you in a chair and I said, "Look at that cabinet in front of you." The cabinet door is closed. And I give you a pad and a pencil and I say I want you to write down the contents of that cabinet. Well, it wouldn't matter whether you were brilliant or as dumb as a post, you wouldn't be able to know what's in that cabinet. No matter how bright you are. You could think for twenty years, fifty years, or two minutes. You'd still have an empty pad, there'd be no way. The only way to know what's in that cabinet would be to go and open the door and take a look. And there are things about eternity and eternal matters you will never know by the mind. You have to experience God, and we experience God through faith in Christ. And so, if all we're gonna do is sit at a desk and think and ponder and pontificate and all the rest. But we're not going to approach God through faith in Christ and through His Word we will never come up with the answers.

Dr. Reagan: The Bible says there's only one way you can come to know God.

Dennis Pollock: That's right, and that of course is Jesus Christ. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except through me."

Dr. Reagan: That's true but I had something else in mind.

Dennis Pollock: Okay. [Laughs]

Dr. Reagan: You know what it says here in verse 21? That God is pleased through the foolishness of preaching for people to come to know him, the foolishness of preaching. What do you think about that?

Dennis Pollock: Well, since I'm a preacher I'm all for the foolishness of preaching and I can amen to the fact that sometimes it does get kind of foolish. But yeah, it's true. And preaching by the way doesn't necessarily mean a guy behind a pulpit, it means a proclamation of the message of Christ. So it could be someone sharing at a McDonalds, or behind a pulpit in front of thousands, but it is the proclaiming. And really, even though this show is kind of an apologetics kind of program, the truth is people are not gonna get

saved simply by reasoning. And our job is not just to reason people into the kingdom of God it is to proclaim Christ came. He lived a perfect life. He died. He rose again. If you'll put your faith in Him you will be forgiven, you will receive the gift of eternal life.

Dr. Reagan: That's why I often tell people who are afraid to do individual one-on-one witnesses. They say, "Well I just don't know enough Scripture." I say, "The most important way to witness one-on-one is to tell people how Jesus has changed your life." Rather than doing it with reason, with all these Scriptures and all, talk about the impact of Jesus on your life. Nathan, I want to ask you a question and that is, what in the world is meant, we used the term several times and our viewers may not know what it means, what is meant by Christian worldview?

Nathan Jones: Well, Christian worldview is, you can kind of think of it as glasses. You can put on a pair of sunglasses and if they're pink you will see the world with a pink filter, if you put on your glasses and there's a yellow, you'll see the world with a yellow filter. You can put on the philosophers and see the world through a yellow filter, or you can put the Christians and see it through the purple filter. How you see the world is the worldview. You judge your actions, your behaviors, your thoughts, and your interactions with people, all based on your worldview.

Dr. Reagan: Well, what would be for example a fundamental aspect of a Christian worldview?

Nathan Jones: That the world is, and all that you think about and all that you love and adore is centered on Christ instead of yourself.

Dr. Reagan: Dennis?

Nathan Jones: Yeah, well you know, when I think of worldview I think about what have been often called the college questions. And those are, they call them the college questions because a lot of times college students wrestle with these. Such as, "Where did we come from?" "Who are we?" "Why are we here?" "Where are we going?" And the answers to those questions are going to vary depending on your worldview. The secular says we are here as an accident. There's really no purpose to our life at all. We are

nothing more than an animal and we're heading for extinction. If you believe that, it will affect the way you live, the way you talk, it will affect your sex life it will affect every aspect of your life. The Christian view says we came as a creation of God we're here for one purpose, or maybe two to know God and make Him known. And we are headed for an appointment with God where we will stand before Him and give account of our life.

Dr. Reagan: And to me, one of the fundamental differences between all worldviews that come from the world as apposed to the Christian worldview is the view of man. All of these philosophers would argue that man is basically good and capable of perfection. The Bible says man is basically evil and can only be brought toward perfection through the power of the Holy Spirit living within an individual and shaping them into the image of Jesus. I want to thank you so much for being with us this week and I'd like to invite you to come back next week. I mean, you got me so stimulated and I'd like to have you talk about another topic that I know you've given a lot of thought to. You know what that is?

Dennis Pollock: What topic would that be?

Dr. Reagan: Well, I have in mind, what happens when you die?

Dennis Pollock: Ahh, well I haven't died, so I cannot give first hand experience but I will be glad to share with you.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I know you've done a lot of study on that and you also have come up with some very interesting stories of famous people and how they faced death and I want to hear some of those next week, okay?

Well folks, that's it. We hope you'll be with us next week, same time, same station. 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