

Christ in Prophecy
Interview 20: “Jeffress on Absolute Truth: Part 1”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Don Wildmon, the founder of the American Family Association, once stated that one of the main reasons for the deterioration we are experiencing in American society is the silence that characterizes our pulpits concerning moral and theological issues. As he put it, “We have three hundred thousand silent pulpits in America when it comes to the tough issues of the Christian faith.” Well, one pulpit where that is certainly not true is at First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. Stay tuned for an interview with that church’s Pastor, Dr. Robert Jeffress.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus our blessed hope and welcome to *Christ in Prophecy*. I am at First Baptist Church in Dallas and my special guest for this program is the pastor of that church, Dr. Robert Jeffress. Dr. Jeffress, welcome to *Christ in Prophecy*.

Dr. Jeffress: Well, thanks for having me, Dave.

Dr. Reagan: Well, we’re just delighted that you took out the time from your busy schedule to be with us. And God has blessed you immensely by entrusting to you one of the most famous pulpits in this nation. The pulpit where George Truett, one of the legendary preachers, preached for almost fifty years and then followed by W. A. Criswell who preached for almost fifty years. Wow! Those are some big shoes to fill, are you a little bit awed by this?

Dr. Jeffress: I'm very awed by it. Not only for the reason you mentioned but I grew up here in First Baptist Church.

Dr. Reagan: And you were sort of Timothy of this church.

Dr. Jeffress: I really was. Dr. Criswell was my spiritual father in many, many ways and to come back to a church where you were baptized and saved and married and so forth, it's a great honor to be here.

Dr. Reagan: Well tell us a little bit about your career before you came here to First Baptist. How did God prepare you for this?

Dr. Jeffress: Well, like I said, I grew up here in the church and then I felt the call to ministry here when I was 16. And then went off to college and came back after seminary and was a youth pastor here for seven years under Dr. Criswell and got to train under him. And then I went away to pastor in other churches for 23 years, and then in the fall of 2007 God called me back here to serve as pastor.

Dr. Reagan: Well, it seems like a wonderful plan that the Lord had in His mind for your life and I praise God for the role He's given you here. Now, you are known far and wide as a man who does not mince word, as a man who's not afraid to take strong stands on very controversial issues. In fact, you have a wonderful book that we're going to offer, and tell people how to get it at the end of the program. It's called, *Outrageous Truth* and its subtitled *Seven Absolutes you can Still Believe In*. And these absolutes are some things like every other religion is wrong. God is ultimately responsible for suffering. God sends good people to Hell. Homosexuality is a perversion. Husbands are to be the leaders of their families. Evolution is a myth. America is a Christian nation. Wow. Now, this book has had some rave reviews. I was on amazon.com the other night reading some of the reviews and I'm telling just rave reviews. But I wanna tell you, there were also some reviews on there that were not, they were just people just

outraged and calling you all sorts of horrible names, an intolerant bigot, and all this sort of thing. Surely when you wrote a book on topics that controversial you knew it was going to spark some controversy, so why in the world did you write this book in the first place.

Dr. Jeffress: You know Dave my favorite review on amazon was headlined, "Worst book ever written." So you know that's a great distinction of being the author of the worst book ever written.

Dr. Reagan: So. Why did you write this book?

Dr. Jeffress: Well, it's because of the fact I really believe many Christians have turned into wimps and they will not stand up. They waffle and waver over truth. We don't expect non-Christians to embrace this truth. But I believe far, far too many Christians have rejected the notion of absolute truth. In fact, as you know, the Barna research revealed that 64% of born again Christians, 91% of born again teenage Christians say there is no such thing as absolute truth. They have bought into the idea of relativism which has weakened, it as diluted the Christian gospel. And it's because of what I see going on in the Christian world, the desire for political correctness among Christians it caused me to say, "You know what? We as Christians need to stand up and lovingly but firmly say, "This is what we believe and here's why we believe it."

Dr. Reagan: And that there are some absolute truths!

Dr. Jeffress: That's right. And what I did was I realized most Christians, Dave, aren't going to read a whole book on evolution, a whole book on homosexuality, a whole book on God sends good people to Hell. So I took seven of these basic truths and I spent months and months researching each of these truths. And I've given Christians in each chapter the best ammunition they can use to defend the

idea that evolution is a myth homosexuality is a perversion America is a Christian nation and so forth.

Dr. Reagan: Well, you know, this is not only a problem with the people in the pew it's also a problem with the people in the pulpit and you know that as well as I do. I said at very beginning of this program that Don Wildmon said one of the biggest problems we have in this nation is three hundred thousand silent pulpits where people just don't want to speak out on these things. And a lot of that I think has to do with political correctness. We just don't want to step on any toes. So a lot of pastors are tip-toeing through the tulips and in the process people are not learning that there really is such a thing as absolute truth.

Dr. Jeffress: That's right and I think part of the reason for that Dave is I think so many pastors feel desperate to make their churches grow. They don't want to do anything that would offend a potential customer and so they in fact don't want to preach these hard truths for the fear of alienating people or driving people away from the church. But you know God never called us as pastors to make sure that our churches are "growing" or increasing numerically. But He did call us to be faithful to proclaiming the truth. And when I stand before God as a pastor, He's not going to ask me for my attendance figures. He's going to ask me, judge me, by whether or not I was faithful to preach the truth. And here's the interesting thing, we have found here at First Baptist Dallas, I just preached a series in our church. And we have found people from all over the metroplex coming here, leaving their churches, to come here because they're grateful for a church that will stand for the truth.

Dr. Reagan: Well, you know it is possible to build a large church with a sort of seeker sensitive approach and not ever talk about sin or the need for repentance or whatever. But the idea that you can't build one preaching absolute truth is just wrong. Look at this church, you had two men like Truett and Criswell who stood up there and preached the truth and they let the chips fall where they may, and

this church grew and grew and grew. People want to hear the truth and they want to know what the truths of Christianity are.

Dr. Jeffress: That's right. And I would just encourage any pastor, listening to this series, to really understand that is your role as a pastor, is to preach the truth of God regardless of the consequences. That's what Paul did in his day, that's what we're to do in our day.

Dr. Reagan: Well thank you and I want to get to some of these issues now, in just a moment we're going to take a break but in just a moment I want to come back and start going through some of these issues. We're not gonna have time to do all of them but we'll take a look at a few of them.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to our interview with Dr. Robert Jeffress who is the pastor of first Baptist Church here in Dallas, Texas. Dr. Jeffress I want to go back to your book here, *Outrageous Truths: Seven Absolutes you Can Still Believe*. And I want to just start off with the first one. "Every Other Religion is Wrong." Now, I wanna tell you, I have found that this is one of the fasted spreading heresies in Christianity today is the idea that there are many different roads to God. I think its part of the emphasis on tolerance in our society. You must be tolerant. And it seems that the people who teach that are tolerant of everything except evangelical Christians.

Dr. Jeffress: That's right.

Dr. Reagan: But none the less, people have picked up on this and I find more and more Christians, even who are calling themselves evangelicals saying, "Surely, there's not just one way. Surely there must be several ways. Surely God

is broader than just one religion.” And yet the title of that chapter is, and I mean point blank, the title: “Every Other Religion is Wrong.” Okay.

Dr. Jeffress: That is the mother of all politically incorrect statements.

Dr. Reagan: It sure is.

Dr. Jeffress: It really is.

Dr. Reagan: You say that you better head for the bunker.

Dr. Jeffress: And yet you know Dave if we allow for more paths to God other than Jesus Christ, then we are trying to put ourselves as being more tolerant than Jesus was.

Dr. Reagan: Yes and we make Jesus a liar.

Dr. Jeffress: We do because Jesus said I am the way, the truth, the life, no man comes to the Father except by me. And if indeed there are more ways to God than through Jesus Christ, then the death of Christ really wasn't necessary. Why did Christ come and die that horrible death if there were another way to God except through Jesus Christ. And I found really in my experience Dave, one reason people object to this idea that there's only one way to God is when you think about the consequences. That means that all of the followers of Islam are doomed to Hell, all of the followers of Mormonism are doomed to Hell, all of the followers of Hinduism, you've drawn the line. That means there are billions of people that are going to go to Hell and only a small percentage of the world's population is going to be in Heaven. And most people say well that's just illogical, how can you say the majority of the world is wrong and only Christians are right. But isn't that exactly what Jesus said when he said the way that leads to life is narrow and few are those who enter into it.

Dr. Reagan: Well this whole issue really is one about the integrity of Jesus Christ and whether what He said was really true or not. Was He really God in the flesh and speaking authoritatively or not?

Dr. Jeffress: That's exactly right. And I was on a program recently on Fox and they were talking about how intolerant it is and anti-Semitic it is to say that Christianity is the only way to God. But think about this Dave, you know it as a scholar more than anyone, Jesus said He's the only way to God. Paul said there's salvation only through Jesus Christ. Peter said there's no other name under heaven by which we can be saved except the name of Jesus. Now what do Jesus Peter and Paul all have in common? They were all Jews. And yet here are three of the most well spoken and well written Jews of the New Testament, they all say Christ is the only way to be saved.

Dr. Reagan: Well you know I really believe that this issue about are there many different roads to God is related to another issue that you raise in here. And that's the one about God sends good people to Hell. Because I am convinced that the average person on planet earth even the average Christian believes that if you're just a good person you'll go to Heaven.

Dr. Jeffress: That's right. Oh I think they believe that, and even if they don't believe you can make it to Heaven by good works. They will say Dave I cannot believe in a loving God that would condemn people to an eternity of literal suffering because they just didn't believe the right things. I've heard Christians say I don't want to believe in a God who would do such a thing. But a person who says that first of all again is trying to be more moral and compassionate than Jesus was. Because Jesus gave more time to talking about Hell than He did about Heaven. Just look at the word count in the New Testament. He talked about a literal Hell in Luke 16, a place that was filled with actual pain and

suffering and fire. Now if Jesus was not telling the truth about that, He's a liar and disqualified to be the Son of God.

Dr. Reagan: Well, talk a little bit more about this idea of being good enough to go to heaven. So many people believe that, I mean you go out on the street and you ask people are you going to Heaven and they'll usually say something like well, you know I've got a few problems in my life but I'm a whole lot better than a fellow I know down the street from me. We always can find somebody that we're better than.

Dr. Jeffress: That's right.

Dr. Reagan: And you just find this over and over, this concept that you work your way to Heaven. Now what is the deal about that?

Dr. Jeffress: Well I think you hit the nail on the head there. The reason people think they're good enough to go to Heaven is the standard of comparison they use, I'm not Osama Bin Laden, I'm better than he is, and therefore, you know, I'm not a Jeffrey Dahmer, or Charles Manson. As long as I don't do those kinds of things I'm qualified to go to Heaven. But the Bible says the standard of comparison is not other people, the standard of righteousness is Jesus Christ

Dr. Reagan: Well that puts us all in trouble.

Dr. Jeffress: And that's why Paul said we've all fallen short of that standard and therefore that's the standard God is using, absolute perfection. And the other mistake we make is assuming that God is just like we are. You know somebody has said God created man into His own image and ever since that time man has tried to repay the compliment. We try to make God like we are. We think we can overlook sin, why can't God overlook a little bit of sin?

Dr. Reagan: I think most people believe God grades on the curve rather than on the cross.

Dr. Jeffress: That's right.

Dr. Reagan: And that He's sort of a cosmic teddy bear and that when you stand before Him He's gonna say, "Well I know that you were an alcoholic and you were a drug addict and that you ran around on your wife. But you were really a whole lot better than the fellow down the street. And I know you didn't accept my Son as Lord and Savior but you know you just come on in to my kingdom anyway. No such God exists.

Dr. Jeffress: No, and something else you hit on there, people think well, just because you didn't believe the right things about Jesus, is that really deserving of going and spending eternity in a place of suffering? But the writer of Hebrews said that when we reject or even neglect the Gospel of Jesus Christ it's like saying that the blood of Jesus Christ is unclean, that is, it is in the Greek language there, actually says it is like that of an animal. You're saying the blood of Jesus Christ is no more worthy than that of an unclean animal and you insult the spirit of grace. Whenever you reject or neglect the Gospel of Jesus Christ, what you're basically saying is Jesus' death was totally unnecessary, His blood is unclean; it is a tremendous insult to God to reject the Gospel of Christ.

Dr. Reagan: You know, I have found that some of the hardest people to bring to the Lord are people who are really good people. I mean, the guy lying in the gutter in the street knows he's got problems. He knows he needs something. And you can go talk to him about the Lord. But good people, I often have found it so difficult because they just feel like well hey I'm a good person I'm a good husband I provide for my family I'm honest I don't cheat on anybody I pay my taxes, I mean, what do you mean I need the Lord? I'm gonna get there. There

are some people right now watching this program who I know have that attitude. Would you look right in that camera and speak to them about that attitude.

Dr. Jeffress: Well, if that's you today. If you think you are good enough to be in Heaven when you die without Jesus Christ, understand you are rejecting what Jesus said. Jesus said, "I am the way the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father except by me." And you know what it comes down to is, do you believe what Jesus Christ said is true? If you say, well I don't believe the words of Jesus Christ then you have to say like C.S. Lewis did that either He's a liar that is He was saying He was the only way to God and He knew it wasn't. Or He was a lunatic that is He thought He was the Son of God but in fact He wasn't. If Jesus Christ isn't a liar, if He isn't a stark-raving lunatic, the only other alternative is, Jesus Christ is Lord. He's who He said He is. And if He is Lord, then you have to accept what He said. And I would say to you right now, there are some of you listening to this program right now, you don't need a preacher to tell you that you're a sinner. You know you've fallen short of God's plan for your life but the good news is you don't have to spend this life you don't have to spend eternity separated from God. Right now you can say to God, God I know I've sinned, I know I've fallen short of your plan for my life, but I believe what you've said, I believe you sent Jesus to die for me and right now I'm trusting in Jesus to save me and forgive me of my sins. The Bible promises the moment you say that to God and believe it with all of your heart you can have eternal life.

Dr. Reagan: You know that's one of the characteristics of Christianity its unique characteristic. You look at all the other religions of the world and every one of them without exception teaches salvation by good works. Christianity is the only one that teaches it's a free gift of God and there's nothing you can do that earns it.

Dr. Jeffress: That's right. I think it was H. A. Ironside who said, "All of the religions of the world are spelled "D-O" do this, do that, do that and you'll have

eternal life. But only Christianity is spelled “D-O-N-E” done.” It’s all been done for us.

Dr. Reagan: It is finished! Yes it was done through Jesus Christ. Let’s shift gears here for just a moment because one of the things that I’ve found that often causes people to reject God is the idea that how could God be a God of love if there’s so much suffering in the world. Why doesn’t He do something about this suffering? Why doesn’t He just end the suffering? And you have a chapter that’s entitled God is Ultimately Responsible for Suffering.

Dr. Jeffress: Yes and I think that’s one of the most difficult truths for Christians to accept. That God is responsible for the suffering in the world as well. Now I think it’s important that we say God doesn’t necessarily cause all the suffering in the world. But you know if I saw you when you left first Baptist Church Dave and if I saw somebody mugging you, robbing you, and I had the power to stop it but didn’t, ultimately, I’m responsible for that. If I see an evil and I can stop it and don’t, I’m responsible. So the fact that there’s evil in the world, whether it’s flood, hurricanes, murders, whatever it is, if we believe God could have stopped it but didn’t then He’s ultimately responsible. But what’s the alternative to that? Do we want to believe that we live in a world in which we are victims of random people and random circumstances? I want to believe that God is powerful enough to be in control of all things even the bad things and as Paul says, “He can cause all things to work together for God to achieve his purpose in our life.” And I believe that’s a message of comfort rather than to say you know God would like to help you in your problems He would like to stop the suffering but He just can’t pull it off. I don’t want to believe in an impotent God.

Dr. Reagan: Well you know I have found personally that this is one of the hottest button issues that there is. And I get a lot of criticism because I’m particularly involved in Bible prophecy. And so when I look at world events I look at them from a Biblical viewpoint, from a Bible prophecy view point. And I often

point out for example when Katrina occurred I pointed out that I believe that Katrina was a remedial judgment of God upon this nation for the way we treated Israel, for the sins of the nation, the sins of new Orleans, and boy you talk about criticism. I mean how can you say that God had anything to do with, but you know you look at the Bible and every calamity that occurs there is attributed to God allowing that.

Dr. Jeffress: Through Isaiah the prophet He said, "I am the God who causes well being and calamity." And the Bible says that. He said to Moses. He said, "Am I not the one who made the blind the deaf and the dumb." You know we see a baby that is born defective, we'll give all kinds of reasons, maybe bad genes, maybe the doctor made a mistake, maybe bad nutrition, no body would say God did it. And yet God says I am responsible for all of this I have a plan I'm working out even though in the darkness you can't see what that plan is.

Dr. Reagan: I think of the preacher Joel in the Bible where he gets up and he talks about a horrible locust invasion that has occurred. Well that's the worst thing that could happen to an agricultural society they ate the bark off the trees and the clothes off the clothes line. And he says, "Hey you're sitting around wringing your hands saying what bad luck, well I got news for you, God sent the locust and He sent them for a reason. He's calling you to repentance and if you don't repent He's going to send something like the locust, an army that will be much worse." And they laughed and God sent the army.

Dr. Jeffress: Yes, yes, well I just think we need to quit letting God off the hook to try to make Him look better to try to be His PR person. By saying God doesn't have anything to do with this because what we're doing is we're castrating God.

Dr. Reagan: And we're saying God is not sovereign.

Dr. Jeffress: That's right.

Dr. Reagan: And He is sovereign.

Dr. Jeffress: As R. C. Sproul said, “There are no maverick molecules in the universe.”

Dr. Reagan: Well, folks, we’re going to pause here for just a moment and we’re going to tell you how you can get a copy of this remarkable book, *Outrageous Truth: Seven Absolutes you Can Still Believe In*.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Well, Dr. Jeffress let’s pick up where we left off with this exciting book of yours, I’m telling you the truth this book is something else! And let’s look at the chapter that says, “Oh Brother, Husbands are to Be the Leaders of Their Families.” Now are you one of those guys that just goes around putting down women?

Dr. Jeffress: Well, not at all. And in fact, I say in my chapter on husbands they are to be the leaders of their families. My goal in talking about submission, the dreaded S word is to try to deliver this doctrine of submission both from the radical feminist and the rabid fundamentalist. I think really people in the church as well as people on the outside have twisted the doctrine of submission to say something God never meant for it to say. Again, people who don’t understand the Bible say the Bible denigrates women, not at all. Jesus.....

Dr. Reagan: Jesus never did.

Dr. Jeffress: Paul, no they actually lifted women to a place of prominence that the New Testament world didn’t understand.

Dr. Reagan: The fact that He would even talk to a woman as He did at the well was revolutionary. That's right and when Paul talks about husbands having responsibilities to sacrificially love their wives, why in the Greek culture and the Roman culture that was absurd to say a husband had any responsibility. Marriage was nothing more than legalized prostitution. It is Paul and Jesus who gave a place of honor to women. Peter said you are to treat your wife as an equal participate worthy of honor in the marriage relationship. So again, if anybody who understands submission to say that women are inferior to men, no they really don't understand.

Dr. Reagan: So how would you define biblical submission?

Dr. Jeffress: Well I think it is understanding and the leadership role of the husband in the marriage relationship. There are certainly boundaries around submission, I think if a husband asks a wife to do something that is in violation of God's Word, the Scripture is clear we ought to obey God rather than men. I don't think it means women are to be doormats and allow themselves or their children to be physically abused for example. The sanctity of life applies to life outside the womb as well as life within the womb, so there are some boundaries. But we are to understand that God created men and women with different roles in the marriage relationship. During the break we were talking about the fact that even Jesus Christ was subject to God the Father He submitted to God the Father.

Dr. Reagan: Though they were equal.

Dr. Jeffress: Although He was equal. You know most people have a skewed theology they think we have God the Father up here and then Jesus a little bit lower. No they were equal, but Christ willingly placed Himself under the leadership, under submission to God the Father.

Dr. Reagan: And by the same token the Holy Spirit calls people to Jesus and witnesses Jesus instead of exalting Himself.

Dr. Jeffress: And Paul actually makes this comparison in first Corinthians 11 he says, "As Christ is subject to God the father, wives are subject to their husbands." Now think about this in marriage. You have two equals. Men and women are equal but in a marriage relationship the woman is voluntarily placing herself under the leadership of the husband believing that God is going to lead her through that husband. That doesn't mean that she doesn't give input, a wise husband ought to listen to his wife. Pontius Pilot should have listened to his wife, he would have had a much different place in history but ultimately somebody has to have the final say in a family. It's like the late Adrian Rodgers used to say, "Anything in nature with two heads is a freak and anything with no head is dead." It's the same in the marriage.

Dr. Reagan: That'll preach. I like that. Well, that is a wonderful exposition there of Biblical submission. I thank you for that I think that'll help many of our viewers in understanding this better, but they still need to get this book and read it in detail. One of the things I noticed in the reviews of the book is that people raved over the way in which you presented really both sides. They said as you went through this and helped people to understand where people are coming from, from both sides and I appreciate that. Well, I'd like to ask you to come back for one more program so we can discuss a few more of these issues would you be willing to do that?

Dr. Jeffress: I'd be honored to, thank you Dave.

Dr. Reagan: Thank you so much.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to our studio here in Dallas, TX. I'm excited about extending our discussion with Pastor Jeffress next week and I hope you will be back with us at that time. In the mean time I hope you will tell your friends about the program and encourage them to tune in. We will begin our discussion next week by talking about whether or not there really is such a thing as absolute truth. And in the process we will discuss how modern society has perverted the concept of tolerance. We will then discuss some other absolute truths like homosexuality is a perversion, abortion is tantamount to murder, and evolution is a myth. And Dr. Jeffress will close the program with a very politically incorrect appeal to Christians. He will state that the time has come for Christians to engage in a renewed intolerance by refusing to allow error to masquerade as truth. In addition to encouraging your friends to tune in to next week's program, you might also encourage them to go to our website at lamblion.com and watch this week's program. And if you have never visited our website, I'd like to encourage you to do so. You will find dozens of articles about every aspect of Bible prophecy. You will also find copies of our magazine and copies of our television programs that you can watch online. You will also find a blog where you can ask questions. We have a full time web minister who is available 8 hours a day to respond to your questions. If you are interested in subscribing to our magazine the *Lamplighter*, you can do so through our website. The website also contains our catalogue of Bible prophecy study resources and you can order them online. Well, that's it for this week. Until next week the Lord willing this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries saying, "Look up be watchful for our redemption is drawing near!"

End of Program