

Christ in Prophecy

Interview 25: “Marshall on America’s Christian Heritage”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Was our nation founded by Christians who came to this continent seeking a new opportunity to proclaim the Gospel? Was our national government established on Christian principles? Do the American people have a distinctly Christian heritage, or is that a concept that simply a modern day myth? Stay tuned for an interview with one of Christendom's greatest authorities on the religious heritage of our nation.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I cannot begin to tell you how delighted I am this week to have as my special guest the Reverend Peter Marshall, one of Christendom's greatest authorities on the religious heritage of our nation. Peter welcome to Texas.

Rev. Marshall: Thank you David, good to be with you.

Dr. Reagan: Well thank you, I want you to tell our folks a little bit about your ministry. I know it's located in Massachusetts, a long way from here.

Rev. Marshall: Right

Dr. Reagan: We appreciate you coming down. Tell us when was it founded? What was the purpose of it? Where is it located specifically?

Rev. Marshall: Well I was ordained as a Presbyterian Minister in 1965 David, a long time ago now. And served as an Assistant Pastor and then had my own church on Cape Cod until the end of 1977. At which time I decided that the Lord wanted me to do full-time what I had been

doing part-time which was traveling to respond to invitations from different churches across the country or groups, cities to come. And minister on growing in Jesus, growing in discipleship, living the Christian life. But in that same year the, "Light and the Glory," our first book was published on America's Christian Heritage. And what has happened in the years since then is that the Lord has sort of changed my ministry into a national ministry of helping modern American's recover the truth about this nation's Christian Heritage and His hand in our histories specifically. So I still travel teaching and preaching wherever I am invited to do that. Often weekend conferences on America's Christian Heritage or sometimes Christian growth and discipleship. And do a lot of writing, been doing a lot of that since 1977, and I plan on continuing that.

Dr. Reagan: Well folks, as Peter said in 1977 his life was really changed by the publication of this book a seminal study of the Christian Heritage of our nation. The book was entitled, "The Light and the Glory." It traced the religious heritage of our nation from 1492 to 1793. And in the 30 years since that time Reverend Marshall has published 2 sequels bringing the history up to the year of 1860. He is now working on one that covers the Civil War. In 2009 a second edition of the original book was published and in just a moment we are going to interview him regarding this classic study of our nation's heritage.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Peter let's begin our discussion by talking about this great book of yours, "The Light and the Glory." You first, the first edition of this came out over 30 years ago. What motivated you to write this book?

Rev. Marshall: Well back in 1977, 1975 actually when it started David, it became obvious to me that America was starting to slide down hill. We were losing the moral and spiritual foundations of the nation of the society. We were a society that was increasingly in trouble. We'd been through the Watergate Crisis you know our institutions were beginning to show signs of corruption. The sexual revolution was in full bloom. I mean things were not going well. And I began to feel that it was necessary to, I began to feel the Spirit of the Lord leading me to check into American history. I had been a history major in college, but that was before I had given my life to Jesus. Thought I would never have anything to do with history anymore when I went into the ministry. I thought that was just a part of my former life, you know. But had a great love of

the history of this nation and wanted to see if I could find the evidence of God's hand in our American past and that is what prompted the beginning of that book.

Dr. Reagan: Wow, well I tell you it seems like we've been going downhill ever since then. But we are going to get into that more next week. Let me just ask you this: You have just come out with a new edition of this book after 30 years. Why did you do that?

Rev. Marshall: Well we found with the original book, David, we found overwhelming evidence of God's hand in our American past. I mean far more than we could begin to put into one book. Through the years since that book came out, oh there were a few mistakes, minor things that probably nobody but me would notice that I wanted to correct, but also wanted to add some new material. So there is new material in that, for people that loved the first book they will love this new edition even more. There is new material on George Washington, on Samuel Adams on the lost colony of Roanoke. I did a whole new appendix on the Christian faith of other Founding Fathers beside Washington, because I get so sick and tired of hearing this endlessly repeated mantra that the Founding Fathers were all a bunch of deist, which is flatly untrue. We will deal with that later.

Dr. Reagan: Well I can attest to the fact that you have a lot of new material in here, because I have read both editions and you can see that my edition is very much marked up. I just loved it, I couldn't put it down. Now on page 19 of this new edition, you say, "Our basic premise that is that God had a definite and discoverable plan for America and it was confirmed many times over albeit occasionally with surprising twists. Now develop that for us, your basic premise.

Rev. Marshall: Well, the evidence shows David that the people, the original Christian settlers that came to this nation, particularly in New England with the Pilgrims and the Puritans, had a vision to put the Gospel of Jesus Christ into practice in the New World, on a new continent, 3,000 miles away from anybody who could prevent them. And to create a society based on the Biblical principles of self government, that we govern ourselves first in obedience to God. And then we put Christ second commandment into practice to love our neighbors as ourselves. That if, in other words if people took the Bible seriously and put those Biblical principles into practice; they could create a society that would have liberty and justice for every soul. That is the original founding vision for this nation.

Dr. Reagan: You know in modern times that vision has fallen on hard times. You have the revisionist historians today. And one of the persons that they seem to have zeroed in on is

Christopher Columbus, the fellow who opened up this part of the world to Europe. He was a hero in American history for many years and yet today he is viewed as a villain, as a barbarian who should have never have come here and it was a tragic mistake that he ever did. And he was just a greedy guy who was looking for gold. What is the truth about Christopher Columbus?

Rev. Marshall: The man interestingly enough when you do the research on him, and David and what you have been expressing of course is the politically correct view of Columbus. Few people, very few people that are committed to that kind of politically correct view ever have looked into the life of the man. They know nothing about him it is simply a political project. But the truth is when you do the research on him what you find out is that he was not only a committed Christian but he was a brilliant Bible scholar able to read the Old Testament in Hebrew the New Testament in Greek. He was a third, which was unusual for a clergyman for a priest pre-reformation Europe never mind a layman. He was a Third Order Lay Franciscan wore the brown Franciscan habit the last three years of his life. Actually interestingly enough was involved in a charismatic renewal movement among the Franciscans.

Dr. Reagan: I know he was also a student of Bible Prophecy.

Rev. Marshall: Oh, yes, he was soaked in Bible Prophecy, in fact especially the books of Daniel, Isaiah, and Revelation. His book of prophecies without being aware of what you can't understand the man, 84 pages in his own handwriting the originals are in the Cathedral Library in Seville, in Spain. Wrote out in his own handwriting, most of it is Biblical passages that he felt applied to him. For example Isaiah 55 I think it is where it says, "The far distant isles wait for my law."

Dr. Reagan: Didn't he actually write in his diary or log that he felt led of the Holy Spirit to come here?

Rev. Marshall: Well in that book of prophecies he said, one of his letters, he says, "I could feel," he said, "it was the Lord who put it into my mind. I could feel His hand upon me," the fact that it would be possible to sail from here, Europe to the Indies. Then he said, "All who heard of my project rejected it with laughter, ridiculing me," which you know we learned in grade school. Here is the next sentence, "There is no question the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit because He comforted me with rays of marvelous inspiration from the Holy Scriptures." I didn't learn that in grade school, and I don't think our viewers did either.

Dr. Reagan: I didn't either.

Rev. Marshall: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: I suspect that his strong Christian commitment maybe one of the reasons he is being so severely attacked today in a society that is becoming increasingly secular.

Rev. Marshall: Yeah absolutely, what he has become a political football that is being kicked around by the Native American Indian lobbyist and so forth. He has become, you know, the symbol as you mentioned, sort of the poster boy for villainy you know for the European age of discovery of the America's. He gets blamed for everything. Most of the atrocities that took place in Latin America were committed after he died.

Dr. Reagan: Right, well, another thing that I found very interesting in your book had to do with the Pilgrims and their motivation for coming to this country. I was always taught, of course you are not taught anything about the Pilgrims today in school, but when I was growing up I was taught that they came to this country to escape religious persecution.

Rev. Marshall: Yeah, I was too, we all were.

Dr. Reagan: But that wasn't their motivation.

Rev. Marshall: No, again when you do the research. When you look into what these people say, what you find out is that they were missionaries. I mean all you have to do is read the most famous quote from the pen of William Bradford who was the great chronicler and Governor, perennially re-elected Governor. He said, "They had a great hope and an inward zeal," David, "of advancing the cause of the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ and those remotes parts of the earth. Yet even though they should be but a stepping stones unto others for the performing of so great a work." So they were missionaries they weren't running away from anything, but coming in the response to the call of Jesus on their lives. Again as I said earlier, to implement the Gospel and create this just society. Because as adherence of the reformed faith the Calvinist wing of the Protestant Reformation they understood that what Scripture teaches is that we Christian believers are to take the Gospel of Christ into every area of society in whatever nation we find ourselves, where ever we are located.

Dr. Reagan: And that was a guiding principle all through the early history of this country, wasn't it?

Rev. Marshall: Absolutely! That America was this miraculous new opportunity provided by God to Christian believers from again heirs of the English Protestant Reformation. To implement the Gospel and create a society that would really be a beacon of hope to the rest of the world, that human beings aren't doomed to have to live together raping and murdering and slaughtering one another, you know that God has a better way. That is really why America was founded.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to my interview of the Reverend Peter Marshall, one of Christendom's greatest experts on the Christian Heritage of our nation. Peter I want to talk a moment about the Founding Fathers. In recent years they have fallen on hard times. People have attributed every vile motive to them that you can possibly imagine and one of the things that the revisionist historians are really pounding on is that these men were not Orthodox Christians that they were all Deists. Now respond to that, but first of all explain to us what a Deist is, because many of our viewers may not know what that is. And then were they Deist?

Rev. Marshall: Well the closets modern equivalent would be a Unitarian, but bear in mind folks that Unitarians back in the 18th Century now were closer to Jesus, closer to a belief in Jesus, then they are today. But John Adam's for example might be able to be legitimately characterized as a Unitarian, you know back in those days. But most of the Founding Fathers, David, the vast majority of them, probably well over 90% of the Founding Fathers according to my research were Christian believers.

Dr. Reagan: And we know that absolutely from their writings and speeches, don't we?

Rev. Marshall: Oh, yeah. Here is an interesting little statistic of the 250 roughly men who deserve the title Founding Father, 40 about 40% of them David, now 40% of these men were not only members of varies Bible Societies in America, but office holders, 40%. Now there were, there was the American Bible Society national one, there were state Bible Societies in the original colonies, there were city, Baltimore had a Bible Society. And roughly 2/5 of the Founding Fathers were office holders. Now you didn't become an office holder in a Bible Society unless number 1 you revered the Bible as the Word of God, and number 2 were committed to

spreading it as the Word of God throughout American society. And that is who these guys were. I mean Samuel Adams for example; strong evangelical Christian even secular historians call him the Father of the American Revolution. King George III referred to the Revolution as Mr. Adam's War. He was personally held responsible for creating it. Strong, strong evangelical believer.

Dr. Reagan: What about a person like George Washington? Was he an Orthodox Christian?

Rev. Marshall: Washington was definitely an Orthodox Christian. Bottom line on Washington is he was a typical 18th Century Low Church, meaning evangelical, Low Church Virginian Anglican. He was very, very reticent, very unwilling to talk about his personal belief which is why he is a difficult case for historians because it is not easy to pin him down. But if you look at the evidence for the man's Christian faith it is overwhelming. He made over 200 separate Biblical references in all his writings David, over 200; 270 times he uses the word providence, divine providence. Now this was not some big sort of may the force be with you kind of thing, okay. When he used the word providence he meant, he meant a Heavenly Father who personally is involved in His creation and with His creatures. You know it is clearly demonstrated for example when he uses that phrase to find providence in a letter to the Hebrew congregation in Savannah, Georgia what he says in that letter is, "May that same Divine providence who was with your forefathers in the Red Sea crossing and performed the miracle of delivering them from slavery in Egypt, be also with you, and so forth." So he is referring to the Biblical God who intervenes.

Dr. Reagan: One of the things that impressed me, I ran across in your book was that when he became the commanding General of the Revolutionary forces one of the very first orders he issued was to go to church.

Rev. Marshall: "The General expects and requires that all...

Dr. Reagan: Requires

Rev. Marshall: "...all officers and men not engaged in actual duty shall attend Divine services." He also reminded them to bring their muskets to church with them just incase.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah, and he also prohibited any blasphemous language.

Rev. Marshall: Oh, he was death on swearing, he hated it. One time his officers were dining with him in New York City before they evacuated that. And one of his officers...early in the war they didn't know him that well yet. One of the officers swore at the table. Washington loudly dropped his fork and silence descended on the room. He looked around the room, he said one thing, he said, "I had supposed that all of us in this room were gentlemen." That officer...

Dr. Reagan: I bet things got very quiet.

Rev. Marshall: Oh, boy, that officer, no officer ever again swore in his presence, it never happened. His men revered him, because of his commitment to them and his obvious strong, moral leadership.

Dr. Reagan: The modern revisionist historians often just make a sweeping statement that all the Founding Fathers were Deists. And then they immediately go to Thomas Jefferson to prove it and they say, "You know, look at Thomas Jefferson, here was a man who rewrote the New Testament took out all the miracles, took out the Resurrection..."

Rev. Marshall: It's true.

Dr. Reagan: ...he was a rationalist; he was not an Orthodox Christian."

Rev. Marshall: It is true, he was a rationalist the thing is Jefferson was an exception among the Founding Fathers.

Dr. Reagan: That's right, yes.

Rev. Marshall: See now Ben Franklin again, Franklin is kind of on the fence, there are quotes from Franklin that might lead you to think he was a Christian.

Dr. Reagan: Like when he insisted they start praying at the Convention.

Rev. Marshall: Oh, yeah, Franklin was responsible, that and the Holy Spirit has to have anointed those words, I mean they are really divinely inspired when you read that. You know the Scriptures the sacred writings tell us that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without His notice. Then he says, "Can an Empire arise without His aid?"

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Rev. Marshall: You know, so clearly and that broke the dead lock that and the July 4th, that was July 4th weekend the anniversary thing, celebration for them in Philadelphia there, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention. They went to church and heard a very strong message about God's hand in the Revolution and so forth. When they came back they reconvened that dead lock was broken, I think Franklin had a key part you know in breaking that.

Dr. Reagan: Now the Founding Fathers are often attacked as hypocrites because they talked about liberty and they talked about freedom yet some of them were slave holders.

Rev. Marshall: Right, Samuel Johnson the great British essayist, Samuel Johnson said, "What is this yelping about freedom that I hear on the other side of the Atlantic from these slave drivers?" You know. So there was some hypocrisy there, the Founding Fathers were well aware of that. And the New England delegates particularly the Adams from Massachusetts you know and New Hampshire and so forth were absolutely determined to not have slavery you know in the New Republic. The problem was that particularly we write about this in our second book, "From Sea to Shining Sea," particularly the South Carolina and Georgia delegates said, "Listen we will never, our entire economy is based on slavery, we will never be able to get this Constitution ratified, we won't be able to be part of the Union unless there are some provision for slavery." So the compromise was the word slavery never appears in the Constitution, the slave trade, the importation of slaves was prohibited 25 years then it was done. They really hoped they put it, as Franklin put it, "Put it on the road to extinction." They hoped that what would happen would be that the American people would get rid of it. Which is why the word does not appear in the Constitution because they were writing that document for all of eternity, and they knew that, they were very conscious of the role they were playing on the stage of world history, David. And they were, the Northern delegates absolutely committed to getting rid of it, but the problem was they couldn't get the Southern delegates to agree, so there had to be a compromise. This conflict in American history was not resolved until Appomattox, you know it took a Civil War because the Church would not deal with it, but the Founding Fathers were well aware of that conflict and tried to get rid of it, but were not able to.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: Peter as we pick up with our discussion why don't we just take a moment to pick up where you left off in talking about the Founding Fathers and how many of them were true Orthodox Christians. Do you want to mention some other names?

Rev. Marshall: Well, Patrick Henry, I mean good heavens; Patrick Henry was a strong Evangelical Christian. These guys, many of them David were not just Christian believers but they were Evangelicals in modern terminology.

Dr. Reagan: So they were interested in bringing people to Christ?

Rev. Marshall: Oh, yes, heavens yes. Roger Sherman of Connecticut wrote the Creed for his local church in New Haven. He was a Calvinist Theologian loved to write theology tracks. In the new edition of the, "Light and the Glory," that you mentioned earlier, I have an appendix in the back where I talk about the Christian faith of other Founding Fathers, I just randomly picked 15 or 16 of these guys. I mean one of them was a hymn composer, these guys they preached, there are many, many, many sermons from Founding Fathers, they were busy preaching on Sunday mornings.

Dr. Reagan: So the argument that the Founding Fathers were not Orthodox Christians is simply a lie?

Rev. Marshall: It is ridiculous.

Dr. Reagan: Okay.

Rev. Marshall: I mean it is simply flatly untrue.

Dr. Reagan: Let's shift gears here for a moment; in your book you constantly emphasize what you call the covenantal basis of American society.

Rev. Marshall: Right.

Dr. Reagan: What do you mean by that concept? Why is it important? And how does it relate to our Christian heritage?

Rev. Marshall: It is the most important element in American History, David, because the nation was founded by Christian men and women who were in covenant with God through faith

in Jesus Christ. God is a covenant making God. And what they believed again as Reformed Christians from the Calvinist wing of the Protestant Reformation, what they believed was that if they would build a society based on these Biblical principles in covenant with God to seek to live in obedience to His commands and to put the love of Christ into practice, thereby creating a society with justice. I mean if you don't care about your neighbor there is no such thing as justice. So if they would do that, that God would watch out for and protect this nation. And I think the history of America amply demonstrates that God has kept His end of the bargain.

Dr. Reagan: Now would that be for example the bases of something like the Mayflower Pact?

Rev. Marshall: Absolutely, it opens.... The Mayflower Compact which was this hastily written out one page document creating a new government because the Pilgrims were not..., they were going to stay in Massachusetts they felt by the Lord to stay there, having planned to be under the authority of the Jamestown Colony in Virginia. But the Lord had different plans for them, but they needed... because they weren't going to be under that authority they had to set up a new government. So the Pilgrim Elders gather in the captain's cabin, create this one page document. The first sentence says, "In the name of God, amen." Well, see I used to think, "Oh well that is kind of boiler plate, pietistic talk from you know the 1600's, no, no wrong. That was a formula that was a specific formula that was used by Puritans whenever they created covenants or constitutions and they did this continually by the way. It was an announcement to the reader that what they were about to read was a covenant that had been entered into with God Almighty, in other words, what follows is based on our relationship with God. That is why they open it with the name of God, Amen.

Dr. Reagan: You know there is a document that has been circulating on the internet for sometime now that is very impressive to me because it gives the opening paragraph of every state constitution.

Rev. Marshall: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: And every one of them speaks about a covenantal relationship, God...

Rev. Marshall: You bet.

Dr. Reagan: ...all of them.

Rev. Marshall: Belief in the Holy Trinity, in fact you had in order to vote in the early years of the original thirteen Colonies, in most of them you had to affirm publically your belief in the Holy Trinity. But certainly to hold office you had to do that.

Dr. Reagan: You also emphasized in your writings that the only legitimate government is one that is instituted by the consent of the governed.

Rev. Marshall: Yeah, that is, the Lord showed me that American government that you see in terms of giving our free consent that is rooted in Scripture David. You go back to Exodus 24 with the Children of Israel in the Sinai Wilderness, Moses reads the 10 Commandments, reads the Commandments of God to them, and then there is a ratification ceremony, a covenant, a sealing into the covenant by blood, where Moses takes the blood of the sacrifice and he says, "Here is the Word of God the Commandments of God, do you accept this?" The people say, "Yes, we will, we commit, we pledge to live by these commandments." Then Moses takes the blood of the lamb and it is sprinkled by the Priest on the people, they are sealed into the covenant. Now at that moment when they've said, "We will obey these laws." They are giving their consent to be governed by the Word of God, the revealed Word of God. So all true government, all righteous government is based on the consent of the governed, because God governs us only by our consent, He is not a tyrant, He doesn't Lord it over people. That is Satan's project. Alright, but God doesn't govern that way, so the point is the relevance for today is; any government which does not govern by the consent of the governed is ungodly government by definition. It is satanic government. So you are talking China, Cuba, you know Sudan; there are lots of places in the world.

Dr. Reagan: One other quick point, we don't have much time left, but I am trying to get this in. I have always believed that one of the fundamental differences between a liberal and a conservative is their view of the nature of man.

Rev. Marshall: Right.

Dr. Reagan: The liberal believes man is basically good and capable of perfection. And the conservative says, "No he is innately evil, and fallen, and we must face that reality." Now our Founding Fathers faced that reality didn't they?

Rev. Marshall: Because they were believers in the Word of God, they knew their Bibles. The Bible is clear about the fact that the nature of man is sinful and fallen, that is why we need a

Savior that is why Jesus had to come, and die on Calvary's cross. And the point is that they set up a government with checks and balances, a balance of power.

Dr. Reagan: They didn't even trust themselves.

Rev. Marshall: Right, no single human being can be entrusted with absolute authority because of that person's sinfulness; they would use it wrongly sooner or later. That is why the Founding Fathers rejected Monarchy that is why America does not have Kings and Queens...

Dr. Reagan: Or Oligarchy.

Rev. Marshall: ...Or Oligarchy, so we have a system of checks and balances. Montesquieu of France whom they relied on a great deal, a Christian Philosopher of Civil Government may I point out. He was well aware of the sinfulness of man, which is why he wrote about the balance of powers, and that is what they put into practice.

Dr. Reagan: Well folks, I am delighted to announce that Reverend Marshall has agreed to come back next week. And at that time, Lord willing we will discuss the current challenge to our nation's Christian Heritage and what we as Christians can do about it. 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