

Christ in Prophecy

Interview 38: "Fletcher on the Importance of Israel"

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Why is Israel important? Is it for spiritual reasons or political reasons or both? Why are there more international correspondents in Jerusalem than any other city? Why does the whole world seem to be focused on such a tiny nation? Stay tuned for a fascinating discussion with an expert on Israel.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. My colleague, Nathan Jones and I have in store for you what I know is going to be a very interesting interview, and perhaps a very controversial one. Our special guest is Jim Fletcher who is the founder and director of a ministry in Arkansas called, Prophecy Matters. Jim, welcome to Christ in Prophecy.

Jim Fletcher: Thanks, Dave.

Dr. Reagan: I love the name of your ministry.

Jim Fletcher: Thank you.

Dr. Reagan: Prophecy Matters.

Jim Fletcher: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: Amen.

Nathan Jones: Good to have you here Jim.

Dr. Reagan: Thanks.

Nathan Jones: Now before we get into the discussion maybe you can tell us why you are an expert about the Middle East and Israel, what are your credentials?

Jim Fletcher: Well I was a book editor for many years, I have a journalism degree. And in the 90's I took my first trip to Israel to do some book research and became hooked on it and started advocating for Israel then and have continued it to this day.

Dr. Reagan: You've interviewed a lot of people in Israel haven't you?

Jim Fletcher: I have, I have.

Dr. Reagan: Crucial people.

Jim Fletcher: Yeah, Ariel Sharon.

Nathan Jones: Really?

Jim Fletcher: People like that, yeah, it was a fascinating conversation, yeah.

Dr. Reagan: Well I know that you write even for WND don't you?

Jim Fletcher: I do. I do, and *Jerusalem Post*, *Belief Net*.

Dr. Reagan: In fact the other day I went to my computer turned it on and bang the first thing that popped up was an interview with you published in *Israel Today*.

Jim Fletcher: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: So, the people in the Middle East really look to you as an expert on at least what the Church in America believes about Israel.

Jim Fletcher: They do and I look to them as well. I have a lot of friends over there who are very good sources.

Dr. Reagan: Well, Jim let's get into some questions here about Israel and the one I want to start off with is: Why in the world is such a tiny nation, smaller than the state of New Jersey, why is thing such a focus of the world? I mean anything happens in Jerusalem it's in the headlines all over the world the next day. Why is that?

Jim Fletcher: Well I go back to what Dave Hunt said one time I heard him 20 years ago basically say because God said so. It's important to God and He intends to reveal Himself in the last days to everyone. And the story of Israel dominates Scripture. And so it's a big subject for God and it should be a big subject for us.

Dr. Reagan: You know when you say it is important to God it suddenly popped in my mind it is very important to Satan also. He doesn't want certain things to happen in Israel. He's not very happy about the Jews being regathered.

Jim Fletcher: No, he doesn't and I think that starts in Genesis chapter 3 and you see that drama played out all through the pages of Scripture right up to Revelation.

Dr. Reagan: Well what is the spiritual significance of Israel? Why is it that so many Christians focus on it? Why is it that Bible prophecy ministries focus on it? What is the spiritual significance of Israel?

Jim Fletcher: Well you know the Lord said that He choose the Jews not because they were greater in number or anything like that. He said, "I choose you because I loved your fathers and I intend to reveal myself through you." And so that is the place that He choose for the establishment of His Word, to go forth throughout the world and so I think that is the foundational reason.

Dr. Reagan: And also many, many promises He made to them.

Jim Fletcher: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: I mean 1,000's of years ago He made promise after promise, after promise and we are seeing those things come true before our very eyes today.

Jim Fletcher: We do, and as I said it really dominates the pages of the Old Testament. I mean even looking at the end of Deuteronomy He tells them in quite astonishing detail exactly what it going to happen to them.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, that if they weren't faithful that He would put certain curses upon them. And it is an amazing list, I mean it is teenage rebellion, divorce epidemic, loss in wars, economic problems, loss of crops. And finally He says, "And if that doesn't bring you back to me in repentance the ultimate curse I will put upon you is that you will be distributed from your land, you will be ejected from your land and you will wander the earth for a long period of time.

Jim Fletcher: That's exactly correct. I mean I like to say to people what you read in the Bible is what you see in reality. And He in fact said after many days I will bring you back.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, He promised to bring them back.

Jim Fletcher: The long exile is explicitly said.

Dr. Reagan: But many people say to me today, "What is going on today, the regathering of the Jewish people from all over couldn't be a supernatural act of God because the Jews have never repented and they are still in rebellion against God. So why would He regather them?"

Jim Fletcher: Well, they're reading Scripture through the lens of an anti-Jewish bias, I think. And I think that's really the foundation for that kind of talk because it is very, very plain in Scripture. As you often say the plain sense of Scripture is very clear.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, and you know to me what God is doing today as He brings the Jewish people back in unbelief is a magnificent illustration of the grace of God. They don't deserve it, they haven't earned it but He is doing it. But then what have you earned, and what have I earned, and what do we deserve? The only thing we deserve is death but God in His grace and mercy gave His Son to die on the cross for us and make it possible for us to be reconciled to Him. That is grace. And what He is doing among the Jewish people is a glorious illustration of the grace of God.

Jim Fletcher: It is and I think one of the fascinating conversations that I have with people today the critics of the return of the Jews is that they say, "Well those people aren't even religious." And my answer is, "What would you expect them to be doing at this moment in history? They are exactly where they are supposed to be in history. God said He would bring them back in unbelief, physically to the land and then He would restore them spiritually."

Dr. Reagan: Yes, and that's exactly what's going to happen. And in fact you know one of the most remarkable Scriptures in the Old Testament to me is one over in Jeremiah where two times in the book of Jeremiah he says the same thing, he says, "When history is over and done with and the Jews look back on their history they will no longer swear by the God who delivered them from Egyptian captivity but they will swear instead by the God who regathered them from the four corners of the earth." It's the same God, what's he saying? He's saying that they are going to consider what is going on right now to be a greater miracle than their deliverance from Egyptian captivity.

Jim Fletcher: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: And we're witnessing that. And the average Church member has no concept of how important it is or that's even a work of God.

Jim Fletcher: No, no clue. There's not much teaching about this in churches. The largest ministries by in large leave this subject alone. And yet you're right Israel's glory is ahead of her. They have a wonderful, marvelous future that the Lord is going to provide for them. And we are privileged to watch it unfold.

Dr. Reagan: Yes. Well let's shift gears from the spiritual for a moment, what about the political? Why should the United States support Israel, not just from a spiritual viewpoint but from a political viewpoint? Is there any reason why we should support Israel?

Jim Fletcher: There are and I am glad you brought that up because there are multiple reasons to support Israel.

Dr. Reagan: Ok, let's go through them.

Jim Fletcher: One would be that they are the outpost in the Middle East, a bulwark against Islamic terrorism. The Israel Defense Forces is extraordinary. You know some people, the critics of Israel complain about the aid that we give Israel, we've received much more in intelligence value.

Dr. Reagan: You're not kidding.

Jim Fletcher: And they are our eyes there. So those are among the main reasons to support them.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, they are great intelligence gathering operation in the Middle East. And they are the only democracy in the Middle East I mean all the rest are dictatorships.

Jim Fletcher: They are.

Dr. Reagan: I mean for that alone we should be interested in their survival, as the only bulwark of freedom and democracy in the Middle East. And most people don't understand the degree to which they are democratic. For example how do they treat Palestinians who live in Israel and who are citizens of Israel which there are over a million?

Jim Fletcher: Well if you talk to an average Palestinian as I have many times and you ask them privately they will tell you that they would rather live in Israel because their standard of living is much, much higher. They are not afraid of Hamas and things like that. So the Palestinian people themselves by in large prefer to live in Israel.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, but they don't want that known.

Jim Fletcher: They don't want it known, it's a sticky situation for them to be in. You know the Palestinian Authority still controls those territories obviously and is a big problem.

Dr. Reagan: But the people who live in Israel itself, the Palestinians who live there who are citizens of Israel and most people don't realize that there are Palestinians who are citizens of Israel, they have all freedoms of the people of Israel. I mean they have freedom of speech, they can run for the Knesset, they are members in the Knesset representing them. How many Jews are in Arab parliaments? None. And yet they have representatives.

Jim Fletcher: Well, that's a very good point and it is one of the answers to the charges from the critics that it an apartheid state. You know the judge that sentenced former Israel President Katsav to prison is an Arab Palestinian. People are not aware of things like this.

Dr. Reagan: No, not at all. In fact as I understand it the Palestinians in Israel today have all the rights except one, they don't have the right to serve in the military.

Jim Fletcher: They don't. Now there is talk of the Druze in the north want to serve and things like that.

Dr. Reagan: Oh, yes. Well I think they do, I think the Druze often serve as trackers and that sort of thing for the Israeli army.

Jim Fletcher: Yes, yes.

Dr. Reagan: But they are loyal to Israel.

Jim Fletcher: Absolutely.

Dr. Reagan: In fact the Muslim world considers-- looks upon them like the Christian world looks upon Mormons, as cult that is to be despised, right?

Jim Fletcher: Yes. And again when you talk to them privately you see a much different picture than what is portrayed in the media.

Dr. Reagan: Alright you've just given some reasons why the United States should support Israel and one that you can't emphasize enough is not only the intelligence but the tremendous technical information. I mean these people are geniuses and they are developing all kinds of technology all the time that we want. But what about Christians? Why should Christians support Israel?

Jim Fletcher: Well, I think one of the reasons is to show people that God is sovereign and keeps His promises. You know if one doesn't sanitize the Jewish history from the Bible you understand that God is working through the Jews in history to bring history to culmination. And so you know the story of the Jews bleeds through in every page of the Old Testament in particular. And so as I said an important subject to God and should be an important subject to Christians.

Dr. Reagan: It should be and yet we find a great silence in the churches today.

Jim Fletcher: There is and I think you would understand this as well rank and file Christians still have an interest but at the leadership level there is a problem.

Dr. Reagan: Ok, well let's just take a pause for a moment we'll come back and talk some more about the importance of Israel in this day and time.

Part 2

Nathan Jones: Welcome back to our interview with Jim Fletcher concerning the importance of Israel. Now Jim you hear from Palestinians and some Christian leaders that Israel stole the land that they have now, is there any truth to that?

Jim Fletcher: There really isn't. In fact Jews have been purchasing land from Arab owners for decades prior to the establishment of the state.

Nathan Jones: They probably got gouged too, right?

Jim Fletcher: Well maybe so. But the UN in 1947 voted to partition Palestine. And actual a key plot point in this is that Mandate Palestine included what is today Jordan.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Jim Fletcher: And so the Jews took the deal. The Arabs rejected it outright and we have the situation that we have today.

Dr. Reagan: You know this is really one of the biggest lies that is told about Israel stealing this land. First of all it belongs to them forever the Bible makes that clear, God gave it to them and He said it is an eternal covenant, no ands, if or buts about it. It was not conditional it was unconditional it belongs to them. But when they began to come back in the 1890's in the early 1900's there were only 40,000 Jews in all of Israel in 1900. As they began to come back they came back to a land that nobody wanted. It was a land that was malaria infested swamplands, all the trees had been cut down, there were only 17,000 trees left in all the country. And the Arabs laughed all the way to the bank as they sold them this land at exuberant prices. And the Arabs were not "Palestinians" if you ask an Arab living in Israel in 1900 what he was he would have said he was a Syrian that was their identity. This whole idea that there was a Palestinian State and the Jews came in and took all this land away from the Palestinians State is a myth. There was never a Palestinian State.

Nathan Jones: Which would mean then there is no such thing as a Palestinian really, right?

Dr. Reagan: Well, talk about that.

Jim Fletcher: Yeah, and you are right it is a myth. The Palestinians of today identify as such primarily after the Six Day War.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Jim Fletcher: When the Arabs realized they couldn't defeat Israel on the battlefield they switched to political propaganda.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Jim Fletcher: And so that invention of the "Palestinians" has served them really very well but in fact the Jews in 1948 took what in essence was only half of what they have today because it was the best deal they could get. The Arabs as I said rejected it out of hand.

Dr. Reagan: Well first of all what people need to realize is that in 1917 when the Balfour Declaration was issued the British spoke of making Palestine a homeland for the Jews. Well Palestine then as you pointed out was all of Jordan and Israel. Then in 1921 the British saw the handwriting on the wall, man they were discovering oil all over the place, we need to curry the

favor of the Arabs so they suddenly gave two-thirds of what they promised the Jews to the Arabs. There is a Palestinian State it is called Jordan.

Jim Fletcher: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: And 75% of the people who live there are Palestinians.

Jim Fletcher: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: And the king who is from Saudi Arabia runs around with Bedouin guards because he is scared to death of his own people. There are 75%-- there is a Palestinian state. And they keep saying, "Well we need a Palestinian State." They have a Palestinian State. So all that was left was little sliver of land, that is what 10,000 square miles something like that, and then in 1947 the United Nations divides that.

Jim Fletcher: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: And says well you are only going to have half of that. And the Jews felt doubled crossed twice, and they were. But they said, "Ok, well accept it." And on that day when they declared the existence of Israel, May 14th, 1948 the Palestinians could have declared the existence of their state. They could have had a second state ever since that time, right?

Jim Fletcher: Dave, they absolutely could have.

Dr. Reagan: They never let you know that.

Jim Fletcher: They don't. People also don't realize that there 22 Arab states in the Middle East all created out of artificial borders by the western powers. The problem in the Middle East is Arab rejectionism of the Jewish state. The single Jewish state that as Yasser Arafat said they want to push into the sea.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah, their real goal-- you got it, their real goal is not the establishment of a second Palestinian state, their real goal is the annihilation of Israel.

Jim Fletcher: Yes, yes.

Nathan Jones: If they go back to pre-1969 borders wouldn't that leave Israel almost indefensible? I mean there is like a nine mile stretch between Tel Aviv and what would be Palestinian territory. So they would basically be committing suicide right?

Jim Fletcher: Yes, they would. In fact I'll give you a quick example. Last year I was driving to the north part of the country, I passed Tulkarm a Palestinian city where a suicide bomber in 2002 bombed a place in Netanya on the coast.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Jim Fletcher: And Tulkarm is here, I'm looking over here at Netanya it is a very narrow band and so the borders are very indefensible and I'm afraid that a lot of our western diplomats are aware of that.

Dr. Reagan: You know it reminds me of a funny thing that happened to me one time. I was on a flight from Egypt to Israel I got on the plane and this guy sitting next to me saw me reading. He said, "What are you doing?" I'm reading about Israel and all and we got into a discussion. And he said, "You know I just don't understand those Jews." He said, "I don't understand why

they are so implacable." He said, "Why don't they just give the West Bank to the Arabs and be done with it and have peace." And I said, "Where is the West Bank?" Because I sensed he didn't know what he was talking about. Well he said, "You know where the West Bank is." I said, "Yes, I know where the West Bank is. Where is the West Bank?" "Well everybody knows where the West Bank is." I said, "Where is it?" "Well the West Bank of the Nile."

Nathan Jones: What?

Dr. Reagan: This guy had no idea where it was and yet he pontificating about, "Well the Jews need to give that away." And this is the heart of their land.

Jim Fletcher: It is the biblical heartland. But you are right geographically people have no understanding how tiny Israel is either.

Nathan Jones: Well we saw what happened when they gave up Gaza in 2005 it became a place, a launching point for attacking Israel constantly to this day. Almost every day right a missile comes flying through?

Dr. Reagan: Launching missiles.

Jim Fletcher: Absolutely, it imperiled Israel's southern population and yet the illogic of what they do continues. That is a good point. So if they make another concession we will have the same scenario.

Dr. Reagan: Well our friend Clarence Wagner who used to be head of Bridges for Peace, one of his favorite statements was the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over expecting different results. Well the Israeli's keep doing the same thing over and over. They release murderers, prisoners thinking, "Well that will make them ok with the Arabs. They'll understand they really want peace." They go in 1967 take the Old City and immediately turn the Temple Mount over the Arabs and think, "Well that is going to make them love us." And the Arabs look at that as a symbol of weakness.

Jim Fletcher: Absolutely and as you rightly point out there have been several times since the Six Day War within weeks of the Six Day War the Israeli's attempted to give back the West Bank.

Dr. Reagan: I know.

Jim Fletcher: And the Arabs rejected it every time.

Dr. Reagan: In 2000 the year 2000 at Camp David the most liberal Prime Minister in the history of Israel Ehud Barak who I think would have given away his own shirt said to Arafat, "You can have it all, everything you ever asked for here it is." Arafat got up, walked out of the room went back and started an Arab uprising because he knew if he settled for anything less than the annihilation of Israel it would mean his own life.

Jim Fletcher: And Mahmoud Ammas did the same thing in 2008.

Dr. Reagan: Yes. And so Abba Eban who was one of Israeli's greatest Diplomats once said, "The Palestinians have never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity." Their own leaders have been their worse enemies.

Jim Fletcher: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: And the graft and corruption that is there today.

Jim Fletcher: Absolutely and he also called a shrunken Jewish state "Auschwitz borders."

Dr. Reagan: Well you mentioned previously something about apartheid or maybe you did Nathan, but Israel is always accused of being an apartheid state. Let's talk a little bit more about that. What would be your defense of Israel on that?

Jim Fletcher: Well first of all it's an effective political cudgel to use against Israel because people want to make the comparison that they are like South Africa in oppressing some of the citizens. In fact there is no such comparison. Israel is the only open society in the Middle East. As we've talked about the Arab serve in the Knesset, they serve in the Supreme Court, they work in Israel. And so the standard of living for a Palestinian in Israel is dramatically higher than it is in the rest of the Middle East.

Dr. Reagan: Well and certainly they are not practicing apartheid. I mean they have Palestinians living in their own land. Whereas the Jews have been evicted from all of the Arab nations. Most people don't know that, they talk about Palestinian refugees. They don't know that after the 1956 Suez War that most of the Jews were ejected from the Arab lands and given like one week to get out and they confiscated everything they owned before they ejected them. And Israel ended up with millions of refugees.

Jim Fletcher: That is exactly right. A friend of mine Lela Gilbert wrote a book called, *Saturday People, Sunday People*, in which she talked about that story. A huge story that people are largely unaware of Israel absorbed more refugees than the Arabs that left Israel proper.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, and yet the Arab nations will not absorb Palestinian refugees because they want to use them as a political pawn on the world scene.

Jim Fletcher: Right.

Dr. Reagan: Another questions I have is what is your attitude about the current policy that we, the United States of America, have forced on Israel and that is the policy of trading land for peace?

Jim Fletcher: That policy really goes back to the Johnson administration. All American administrations since Johnson basically have called for that land for peace scenario but it depends on the friendliness of the sitting President as to how much pressure is applied to Israel. The problem is that that process has gone on so long that the pressure is now intensifying on Israel.

Dr. Reagan: Well the one who put the real hammer on them though was the first President Bush because they had this influx of emigrates from Russia. In fact they absorbed more people in about a two year period of time that would be equivalent to the United States absorbing the entire population of France in a years' time, they were just overwhelmed. And so they went to the World Bank wanting a ten billion dollar loan. The World Bank said, "Well the United States will have to underwrite it." They came to the United States and Bush said, "Ok, tell you what I'll underwrite it under one condition. You got to go to the Madrid Conference and you've got to start trading land for peace." And we forced them to do that. Jim Baker who was the Secretary of State was one of the most anti-Semitic Secretaries of State we've ever had. In fact I think it was interesting the very first thing he did after he ceased being Secretary of State is he

arranged to have Arafat to come to Houston, Texas and receive an honorary degree from Rice Institute. To me that is like Hitler receiving an honorary degree.

Jim Fletcher: We make a mistake if we think the American leadership has always been friendly to Israel. In fact it's often as you said been very unfriendly, and in fact that we are at this very moment.

Dr. Reagan: But is Israel going to gain peace by trading land?

Jim Fletcher: No, obviously not. I mean we were talking about Sharon's decision to pull out of Gaza in 2005 he fell for that with curry favor with George W. Bush. And the fact is that there is no amount of concessions that will satisfy Israel's enemies. The issue is Arab rejection of Israel as the Jewish State.

Dr. Reagan: That's right. And people evidently don't remember history I mean history shows beyond a shadow of a doubt that appeasement does nothing but whet the appetite of the aggressor. I mean if I can get that I'll put a little more pressure on and I'll get this, I'll put a little more. And you know what they are doing is the Arab's in the Middle East are following the plan that was developed a long time ago by really Mahmoud Abbas and Arafat together and that plan was we'll never defeat Israel militarily so what we'll do is we'll do it diplomatically and we'll say, "Ok, we want just a little piece, we want Jordan that's all we want. And then we want this, then we want that, and then we want this. And we'll get more and more and more until finally we'll have enough to launch the final attack."

Jim Fletcher: A lot of people are not aware that the Soviet schooled Arafat and Abbas in ways of attacking Israel diplomatically, politically. They literally brought them in and gave them a blueprint for how to do it. They basically said to Arafat, "Look, you are blowing planes up, you're killing people there is blood on TV. You have to change your MO and become a freedom fighter."

Dr. Reagan: Oh, yes.

Jim Fletcher: That's exactly what he did.

Dr. Reagan: Then you get the Noble Prize.

Jim Fletcher: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: Given to the greatest terrorist of the 20th Century.

Jim Fletcher: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: What a? To me it is still mind boggling that happened.

Jim Fletcher: Yeah it is. It's as Isaiah said "good is evil and evil is good."

Dr. Reagan: We'll call evil good and good evil, and that's where we are in the world today.

Jim Fletcher: Yes.

Part 3

Nathan Jones: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and our interview of Jim Fletcher on the importance of Israel. Jim can you tell folks how they can get in touch with you and your ministry?

Jim Fletcher: Sure, the address is prophecymatters.com or via e-mail jim@prophecymatters.com.

Dr. Reagan: And what can they do when they get to your website? Can they for example subscribe to a newsletter or what?

Jim Fletcher: A newsletter.

Dr. Reagan: How often do you put it out?

Jim Fletcher: Once a month.

Dr. Reagan: OK.

Jim Fletcher: And access all the articles that I write for various publications.

Dr. Reagan: Ok, and then I understand you have a new book out.

Jim Fletcher: I do, it's called *Truth Wins*, discussing a lot of the issues that we talked about here.

Dr. Reagan: Ok, and also about the emergent church movement right?

Jim Fletcher: It is, it is it's a huge under reported story.

Dr. Reagan: Well I have appreciated your reporting on Israel. And I hope you'll continue to do that, to write really incisive interviews and stories about Israel because you are really a good source for that. I want to encourage you on that.

Jim Fletcher: Thank you I appreciate that.

Dr. Reagan: Well folks, that is our program for this week and I hope you will access his website and get on his mailing list and you will find information about Israel you won't find in the regular newspapers. That is our program for this week, I hope you'll be back with us next week. And until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Nathan Jones, my colleague and myself saying, "Look up, be watchful for our redemption is drawing near."

End of Program