

Christ in Prophecy
Prophecy 4: “Ryrie on the Importance of Bible Prophecy”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Are you confused by Bible prophecy? Do you wish that you could understand it better? Then I invite you to stay tuned for an interview with one of Christendom’s foremost expositors of the scriptures, Dr. Charles Ryrie, the renowned author of the *Ryrie Study Bible*.

Program

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our blessed hope, and welcome to *Christ in Prophecy*. I am delighted to have with me once more this week, Dr. Charles Ryrie, the author of the immensely popular *Ryrie Study Bible*, welcome back Dr. Ryrie.

Dr. Ryrie: Thank you.

Dr. Reagan: Well, we’re really glad to have you back and as I said last week, ever since I let the word out I was going to be interviewing you, we were deluged with questions particularly about Bible prophecy. But I want to start off with one that has, it doesn’t have so much to do with specific Bible prophecy as Bible prophecy in general, and that is this. You’ve spend your life as a seminary professor and you know seminaries all across America very well. Why is it that the average seminary in America today ignores Bible prophecy? I mean you could go all the way through the seminary and never learn one thing about it.

Dr. Ryrie: Oh, I don’t know that I can answer that specifically or easily. I have some opinions.

Dr. Reagan: Well, let’s have those.

Dr. Ryrie: My opinion is that prophecy is too hard to understand. Prophecy should be taken non-literally. So it’s, and prophecy is useless, it’s talking about the future and we’re here to live in the present in different ways, so, it’s pie in the sky and we want to be changing the world here and now. Maybe those are the reasons, I don’t know.

Dr. Reagan: And you know it seems to be that the fact that the seminaries ignore it probably is one of the main reasons that preachers ignore it. You can go to church year after year and never hear anything about Bible prophecy. In fact, you made a point that is very good. When I talk to pastors quite often and ask them why they never teach on Bible prophecy, they'll say to me, "David, I've got every problem known to man in my congregation, I gotta preach practical sermons, I can't talk about pie-in-the-sky stuff, and furthermore, who understands it anyway? You know, there's Premillennial, and Postmillennial, and Amillennial and they always say, I'm just a Panmillennialist, I believe it will all pan out in the end." And to me, that's an omission of being lazy.

Dr. Ryrie: Or ignorant.

Dr. Reagan: Not willing to study it and find out what it says.

Dr. Ryrie: Willing ignorance.

Dr. Reagan: You know all of God's Word is profitable.

Dr. Ryrie: Of course, but people today think I've gotta scratch people where they're itching. And then we think, I know where they're itching, but I don't. And I know you've had the experience of preaching something and you thought the application would be such-and-such and somebody comes up afterward and says you know that spoke to me in a way that you never thought it could happen.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, that is so true and you know what I tell pastors. I say to them, let me tell you something about Bible prophecy. If you will teach it properly, you will find it will change the lives of your people. If you can ever convince them number one, Jesus is really coming back. Now the average Christian believes that here but they don't believe here. I mean really believe that Jesus is coming back. And number two that is an event that could occur any moment, their lives will be transformed, because mine was. They will commit their lives to holiness and they will commit their lives to evangelism. Now how much more practical could anything be?

Dr. Ryrie: Oh, it's very practical. Knowledge of the future affects our present activities in many areas. Going on a trip? You get the clothes out and get them ready to pack! You know the Lord's coming, you're going on a bigger trip. You better get yourself straightened out and ready to go.

Dr. Reagan: Amen, amen. Well, there is probably no book in the Bible that has been more attacked by liberals than the book of Daniel, a prophecy book, and book that is essential to the understanding of Bible prophecy. They hate that book with a passion and what do you say to people in defense of the book of Daniel? I even went to a church one time where I asked people to turn to the book of Daniel and the pastor stood up in front of the entire congregation and said, "We will not allow that book to be read in that church." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "It's a fraud. It was written about the time of Christ and written like prophecy to make it sell better" And he pointed his finger at me and he said, "You obviously are not a seminary graduation."

Dr. Ryrie: Oooh!

Dr. Reagan: What do you say in defense of the book of Daniel?

Dr. Ryrie: Well, one thing I say is, go to the British library, correction, it may be in the British museum now, they separated the two. And look at the evidence for the historical existence of the kings that are mentioned in the book of Daniel and the dates of those kings is not the time of Christ. It's at the time that the conservatives have always said the book of Daniel was written.

Dr. Reagan: You know, when this pastor said that to me one of the things that popped into my mind was I said, "Well hey, if it was written at the time of Christ then why was it included in the Septuagint?" And he said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, you know, the Septuagint translation. It was included." And I said, "That was what? 280 years before Christ?"

Dr. Ryrie: And the Lord quoted from it.

Dr. Reagan: And He quoted from it! I mean, if you attack the book of Daniel, you're in effect attacking the Lord because He quoted from it. So, it just, but you know, I think the

reason liberals hate it so much is because it is so precise in its prophecies. And they do not want to admit that this book contains any fulfilled prophecy.

Dr. Ryrie: Yeah, and it's easy to test those prophecies, because so many of them have been fulfilled.

Dr. Reagan: Oh boy, it is really something. Well, let me get to the question that so many people have sent in, and that question is this. Do you believe that we are living in the season of the Lord's Return?

Dr. Ryrie: Yes. Now, people all through the ages have expected the Lord to return in their generation that was true in the First Century. It was true in the well, let's see, the 16th century, people identified the antichrist, usually as one of the reigning popes, but they were looking about the future. It was true at the time the Pilgrims came. One of their motivations to leave Holland was that they thought the Millennium was about to happen and they were going to be a part of the people who conquered evil. And it was true when the first atomic bomb was exploded. I don't know how many articles I read saying that this is the fulfillment of Revelation 16, the judgments described under the seals in that chapter. But there are things that are true today that were not true 60 years ago.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I would say a hearty amen to that, and what would you point to?

Dr. Ryrie: Well, I just happen to have an object lesson. Do you believe in object lessons?

Dr. Reagan: I do, I love 'em.

Dr. Ryrie: I do too. First book I ever wrote was for children, did you know that?

Dr. Reagan: No, I didn't know that.

Dr. Ryrie: Well, here's an object lesson. This is?

Dr. Reagan: A twenty shekel...

Dr. Ryrie: Twenty shekel bill...shekel, shekel, doesn't that ring any bells?

Dr. Reagan: Yes, right out of the Bible.

Dr. Ryrie: Right out of the Bible. But that's not an old bill. No. that was printed in Israel, that's the currency. Israel! Israel! Now, if the antichrist was going to make a treaty with Israel as the Bible says, 60 years ago, where would he have gone to do it? Answer, London, because Palestine was under the control, after the Second World War, of Britain. Where could he go today? Jerusalem, the parliament, the buildings there, the area of the government offices is in Jerusalem. So, the existence, the continued existence of the nation Israel for 59 years now is something that is very, very significant.

Dr. Reagan: And you know, Dr. Ryrie, it thrills me to death to go back and read books written in the 19th century that say very clearly the Bible says that in the end times, God is going to regather the children of Israel in unbelief from the four corners of the earth and reestablish them in that land. And they're books in the 19th century saying this, the Puritans said it 400 years ago and people laughed and scoffed and ridiculed and yet, that's what happened.

Dr. Ryrie: Well, the nation, the existence of it, is an embarrassment to replacement theology because they don't think there's any future for Israel. I've got another one here.

Dr. Reagan: Alright.

Dr. Ryrie: I'll let you tell them what that is.

Dr. Reagan: Oh! That's a Euro.

Dr. Ryrie: Yeah, that's a Euro bill. Yes a Euro. Euro! Euro! Can you imagine France giving up its franks, and Germany giving up its marks, and Italy giving up its lira, and Greece giving up its drachmas, and all of them using the Euro? And that that unity, that financial unity, that banking unity took place in less than two years? Wow. When they started? Now, that's significant because in the end times there will be blocks of nations, geographically related to Israel. A block in the west, there's the Euro, a block in the north, a block in the east, and Egypt in the south. And the block in the east, who could

have imagined 10 years ago that that part of the world would be so important and prominent commercially?

Dr. Reagan: That's right.

Dr. Ryrie: Not only China and Japan and Singapore but now India. All these eastern countries have risen almost suddenly overnight to become powers to be reckoned with. And that unification, that making of blocks, in relation to Israel in the middle is I think something we haven't seen before.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I'd say you've really driven the point home beautifully with this illustration here and I would agree with you 100%. I used to teach international law and politics for 20 years before I went into the ministry and all that time I was running from the Lord. Then when I finally surrendered and said, "Ok Lord I'm tired of running I'll do what you want me to do." He handed me a ministry that really teaches international politics from a Biblical viewpoint. I wish I could go back to the university that I graduated from and teach international politics from the viewpoint of Daniel and what the Bible has to say because it's so much more accurate. But you're so right. We have things today that have never existed before. The most important being the existence of the nation of Israel because all of end time Bible prophecy focuses on Israel. They'll be re-gathered, their state will be reestablished, they'll be put back in their city, and then that final thing there, the whole world will come against them over the control of Jerusalem. That's where we are Dr. Ryrie! The whole world is coming. And then the European Union, Daniel talked about how the Old Roman Empire was going to be revived in the end times and they tried it, I mean, think about it throughout history. All the times that people like Napoleon and others tried to do that through war and it never worked. But when it was God's timing, bang, just like that. A guy gets up in Europe and says, "Hey, the only way we can recover from World War Two is we've got to get together and cooperate." And it leads into a super state because it was God's timing.

Dr. Ryrie: Yeah. Wow. And the kings, plural, of the east, Revelation 16 kings, an alliance, a group.

Dr. Reagan: Well, if we're seeing it come together before our very eyes, and as I was telling you before we began this program. I was speaking in Orlando, Florida in the early

'90s with a wonderful man of God, who was 82 at the time, and he had been preaching Bible prophecy for 60 years, and his topic was "The Signs of the Times." He got up and said, "Folks, I am tired of preaching on the signs of the times, I've been doing it for 60 years, when I started you could scratch around like a chicken and find one maybe. Today they're every where you'd have to be spiritually blind." And he says, "I'm not looking for signs, I'm listening for a sound, I'm listening for the sound of a trumpet." And man, I was shouting, "Amen! Amen! Let it blow!"

Dr. Ryrie: That's good.

Dr. Reagan: I'm ready to get out of here.

Dr. Ryrie: That's good.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, well, I tell you what, we're gonna take a pause here for a moment and tell people about a book by Tim LaHaye called *Understanding Bible prophecy for Yourself*, which is really down-to-earth, practical, type of book, very easy to read, that gives you fundamental principles for understanding the Bible as well as Bible prophecy. And so, here's some information about that and afterwards we will come back and ask Dr. Ryrie some more questions.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Well, welcome back to *Christ in Prophecy*. My special guest is Dr. Charles Ryrie, author of the very popular *Ryrie Study Bible*. It's available in the King James Version, New American Standard Version, and The New International Version, also in several languages. Dr. Ryrie, during the break we told people about this book by Tim LaHaye, *Understanding Bible Prophecy for Yourself*. Give us some guidelines of hermeneutics, how do you interpret the Bible?

Dr. Ryrie: Well hermeneutics just means principles that are going to guide your interpretation of anything.

Dr. Reagan: Okay.

Dr. Ryrie: Now, I go back to why did God invent language? We didn't. God did. And I think there's three reasons, one, so that He could speak to us, two, so we could speak to Him. And third, so we could speak to each other.

Dr. Reagan: Alright.

Dr. Ryrie: Now, how do I speak to you? Plainly, I hope! How do I talk to God in prayer? Not in unintelligible, flowery ethereal language, but plainly. Lord I need help! Lord I need some money. Lord I need encouragement. How does God speak to us? Same way, and when we monkey around with that, then we're not gonna hear what He had to say.

Dr. Reagan: Amen. I cannot yell amen loud enough because it seems to me that where you get in trouble with interpreting the Bible and particularly Bible prophecy is when you start saying it doesn't really mean what it says.

Dr. Ryrie: Yes, yes.

Dr. Reagan: Now what he really means is so-and-so. I've seen them do that to authors. I remember Carl Sandburg one time, they said, well, what he really meant... he said, by the time I got through reading that I didn't know what in the world they were talking about.

Dr. Ryrie: Well, if you want to know what I really meant in my books I'm still living, so you can ask me. Now, the author of the Bible is still living and you can ask Him what He said, and you can read what He said in the written Word. And don't spiritualize it, don't mess around with it. I read the most astounding, de-literalizing of passage in Isaiah where the Bible predicts the time when the wolf will lie down with the lamb. And this writer, we would call him conservative. He was dealing with that passage, he said, that means the wolfish rebel, meaning the unsaved person, by conversion, now turns into the mild meekness of the lamb. That is just unreal, unbelievable and it's worse than that because it is doing an injustice, it's doing damage to God's pure Word that He's given us.

Dr. Reagan: It seems to me that the two areas where people spiritualize the most are the beginning of the Bible, and the end of the Bible. The Genesis story, and how it's all gonna end is where they spiritualize the most.

Dr. Ryrie: Yep, yep they do.

Dr. Reagan: And in Bible prophecy it seems to me that you could see very clearly if you knew anything about Bible prophecy at all, that the first coming prophecies meant exactly what they said.

Dr. Ryrie: Precisely.

Dr. Reagan: Why should the second-coming prophecies mean anything other than what they say?

Dr. Ryrie: Yeah. And you know, even in the Revelation, there are more words that you do understand than the few you may not understand. So just take what you do understand plainly and as you grow and study that area of what you don't understand will become plainer and plainer.

Dr. Reagan: One principle I've always used and tried to use in interpreting the Bible, regardless of whether it's Bible prophecy or not, is what I call my golden rule of interpretation. If the plain sense makes sense, don't look for any other sense or you'll end up with nonsense. You know, don't play games with it. And the other thing is to watch the context because a word in one context will mean one thing it will mean something in another. I ran across a fellow the other day who said, "I can prove to you that the millennium, the thousand years in revelation chapter 20, does not mean a thousand years, because he says that over in the Psalms it says God owns the cattle on a thousand hills." He said, "How are there only a thousand hills?" He said, "There's obviously more than that, so it doesn't mean thousand in Revelation." Well, you've got two different contexts.

Dr. Ryrie: Of course, of course, and you just take it naturally, normally, plainly.

Dr. Reagan: Okay. Now we come to the most controversial question of all, and this is

the one that you've had more people call and say ask him this question than any other one and that of course has to do with the rapture. For those who don't know what the Rapture is, it's a teaching that the Lord's gonna appear in the Heavens and the Church, all those who are true believers, are going to be taken out of the world. The question, the real tough question is, when is that gonna happen? When is it most likely to occur? Before the Tribulation, middle of the Tribulation, near the end, combined with the Second Coming? What is your opinion?

Dr. Ryrie: My opinion is the same as what the Bible teaches. That is, it's before the Tribulation.

Dr. Reagan: What argument would you give to support that?

Dr. Ryrie: I'm really dogmatic on this.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, alright. Let's tell us the reasons now.

Dr. Ryrie: Well, I think there are several reasons. One is, comparing two verses, 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, I'm sorry, chapter 1, end of the chapter. The tenth verse I think it is, 1:10.

Dr. Reagan: I know what that is.

Dr. Ryrie: We know the Deliverer from the wrath to come.

Dr. Reagan: We're waiting on Jesus who will deliver us from the wrath that is to come.

Dr. Ryrie: Yeah, yes. You know, incidentally that word wait kind of means wait up.

Dr. Reagan: Oh I didn't know that.

Dr. Ryrie: Wait expectantly.

Dr. Reagan: Okay.

Dr. Ryrie: The Deliverer from the wrath to come. People sometimes read that and think that means hell, but generally almost always talks about wrath on living people. It does so in Romans 1, for example. Now, if you compare that with Revelation 6, where it says, and the sixth seal that the great day of His wrath has come and that verb has come means it's already here.

Dr. Reagan: Okay.

Dr. Ryrie: Who's able to stand? Well, if I'm delivered from the wrath, and the wrath is at the beginning of the Tribulation, then I'm not gonna be here during the Tribulation.

Dr. Reagan: Well, that's a pretty solid argument right there.

Dr. Ryrie: The other one I think that's so good is Revelation 3:10 which says, to the Church at Philadelphia, I will keep you from the hour of trouble, temptation, trial, that will come upon the whole world to try those who go upon the earth. Well, people say, well that's just in a short letter to Philadelphia, and it doesn't apply to us. Well, Philippians is a short letter, Philemon is a short letter, but you don't rule them out of the cannon. And that is a promise to the whole Church because every one of those letters ends with, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches, plural. So, what is said to Philadelphia is said to the Churches.

Dr. Reagan: I would think that you would also mention another argument being a Dispensationalist and that is that the great Tribulation is a period where God is dealing with Israel, not with the Church, and again we're keeping Israel and the Church separate here.

Dr. Ryrie: I was going to make that with Daniel 9 because the seven, sevens are for Israel upon your people and your holy city and we are not, the Church is not his people in that day. We are his people now. Back to revelation 3:10 a moment if you don't mind, the promise is very specific, it relates to the Tribulation that comes upon the whole world. There were troubled times and persecution in lots of parts of the world today, but look at the promise. I will keep you, not in the time, but from the time, and I will keep you from the hour. Now the only place we could be is somewhere where time isn't ticking, and that's heaven.

Dr. Reagan: Well, that reminds me of Luke 21 where it says pray that you may escape these things. Because I often have people attack me because I believe in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture by saying you're just an escapist, you just wanna get out of here and not suffer for the Lord. I say, well that's true.

Dr. Ryrie: I don't deny that.

Dr. Reagan: But Noah was an escapist, and Lot was an escapist, and Jesus said, pray that you can escape these things.

Dr. Ryrie: Yeah, and if they read what's going to happen, they'd be thankful they could escape. I don't use that, I just think that's a ridiculous statement because ask them, would you be willing to die for Christ right now, today? And the answer would be well, not sure. But they want to die for him and suffer for him during the tribulation.

Dr. Reagan: Alright, one other question and that has to do with the fact that most people are not aware of this, that the most widely held prophetic viewpoint in the world today by more Christians than any other viewpoint is Amillennialism, it's not the Premillennial view. It's Amillennial. That's the view of the Catholic Church it's the view of most Protestant denominations. And for those who don't know what that means, it means that the person believes that we're in the millennium now. That it began at the cross, it's gonna continue until Jesus returns, that there will be no future literal Millennium where Jesus will reign on earth. What would you say in response to that?

Dr. Ryrie: Read the morning paper and see if you're in the Millennium.

Dr. Reagan: You know, I mentioned to you a great theologian by the name of Loraine Boettner and I read his book on the Millennium and when I finished it I thought he's living in a different universe. Because he spent the whole time trying to convince that everything is so wonderful and so good and so great and getting better and better.

Dr. Ryrie: There are some Amill's who will say this Millennium is now in Heaven and you will experience it when you go to Heaven. But if they say it's on earth, read the paper.

Dr. Reagan: Well, all I can say is that if we're reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ right now, we're doing a very poor job of it.

Dr. Ryrie: Very poor job.

Dr. Reagan: Because every nation on planet earth including the United States of America is in rebellion against Jesus Christ.

Dr. Ryrie: That's right, that's right.

Dr. Reagan: So, I just find that a very, very difficult thing. What about the increasing popularity of this viewpoint called Preterism where they argue, there are different degrees of Preterism but basically argue that most of the end time prophecies were fulfilled in the first century.

Dr. Ryrie: First century, yeah. Well, they have to de-literalize. They do find things that actually happened in the first century that are bad and troublesome and tribulation type things but they are not over the whole world.

Dr. Reagan: And it all depends, that whole viewpoint depends on one thing that the book of Revelation was written before 70 AD and the whole evidence of the book and history and everything was written about 95 AD.

Dr. Ryrie: That's right, that's right. They have to make an early date for Revelation.

Dr. Reagan: Well, we only have about a minute and a half left and I wanted to use that time to give you an opportunity to speak to any viewer who may be watching right now who does not know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and maybe have convinced themselves that they can earn their way to Heaven through good works. So many people believe that. Would you look right into that camera and just address some remarks to them for a moment.

Dr. Ryrie: I'd be happy to because there's nothing more important we could talk about. It's more important to know your personal, individual destiny for eternity. Not just for tomorrow or the rest of your life but for eternity and the only way to know that you will be

in Heaven with the Lord forever and ever is to know that you have received Him personally as your Savior from sin. He died for your sins. You may believe that but until you connect, until you say, "Yes Lord, you died for my sins and I'm trusting that to take care of the whole sin problem." And believe me, it's a problem. I've never been able to take care of it. Oh, I can sort of form some good habits, but eternal forgiveness, and freedom from eternal damnation that depends on whether you have said, "Lord, I take, I accept you as my personal, personal Savior, from the judgment the penalty of sin. And I know then I have eternal life and I'll be with you forever. "

Dr. Reagan: Thank you so much Dr. Ryrie, I pray that the Lord will continue to bless your writings and magnify your voice worldwide.

Dr. Ryrie: Thank you.

Dr. Reagan: Folks, that's our program for this week, I hope it's been a blessing to you and I hope you'll be back with us again next week. Until then 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