

Christ in Prophecy

Thanksgiving 3: Spiritual Blessings

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: During this Thanksgiving season are you counting your blessings? I hope so, we all need to be doing that. Let me ask you another question: What do you consider to be your greatest blessing? Is it your health? Your job? Your family? What about spiritual blessings? Are you counting them? If so what are they? In a moment we're going to consider two of the greatest spiritual blessings that we should be thankful for. Stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus our blessed hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I want to take this opportunity to wish all of you a very blessed season of Thanksgiving. You know folks, Thanksgiving is one of my favorite times of the year, a time of family, fellowship, good food. I have many wonderful memories of family gatherings at Thanksgiving and I am sure you do too. Personally I believe that for a Christian every day of the year should be a day of thanksgiving. I have found over the years that a heart filled with thanksgiving is one of the best medicines for emotional and physical health. I make it a point at least once a month if not more frequently to sit down and make a list of the things in my prayer journal that I am thankful for. I sometimes spend as much as 30-45 minutes working on the list. In the process I try to think of things that we take for granted, like pure water to drink, or electricity, air conditioning, a house to live in, a car to drive. Did you know that 80% of all the sickness in the world is attributable to unsafe drinking water? Did you know that if you keep food in a refrigerator, clothes in a closet, and sleep in a bed with a roof over your head, you are richer than 75% of the entire population of the world? Did you know that out of every 100 people in this world 18 struggle to live on less than \$1 a day, and 53 struggles to live on \$2 a day? We have so much to be thankful for in this country, and we tend to be so unthankful. We fret over the fact that we don't have a color TV set in every room, when most of the world lives without access to electricity. It's one of the reasons that I believe every American teenager should be sent to live a couple of weeks in a third world country like Mexico. Just to see how most people in the world are involved in a daily struggle to merely survive. All of us in the United States should be living with an attitude of gratitude.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: One of my favorite passages of Scripture is Psalm 100 which is labeled with a superscription that says, "A Psalm of Thanksgiving"; it is the only Psalm that bears such a label. It says in part, "Shout joyfully to the Lord all the Earth, serve the Lord with gladness. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise." That is the attitude we should live with, even in the tough times when things are not going smoothly for us. Of course the thing we should be most grateful for is the salvation that Jesus provided us through His sacrifice on the cross for our sins. What a glorious gift. And it is precisely that, a gift. The Bible teaches very clearly that forgiveness of our sins is something that cannot be earned, it is a free gift of God through faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Have you ever thought about the fact that salvation by grace through faith is one of the things that sets Christianity apart from all other

religions? Every other religion in the world teaches the satanic concept of salvation through good works. Christianity alone teaches that one cannot be saved by good works, that our only hope is the righteousness of Jesus which is applied to us when we put our faith in Him. Pastor Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Church in Dallas has a wonderful way of putting it he says, "Every religion in the world except Christianity is spelled, D-O only Christianity is spelled D-O-N-E." In other words, Jesus did it all for us by sacrificing His perfect life for our sins. A few years ago I ran across a short video that vividly demonstrates this point and in the process it shows how thankful we should be to Jesus. The video was produced by a very creative Christian artist named Justin Jackson, who is on the staff of Central Christian Church in Las Vegas, Nevada. He has given us special permission to show it to you.

Good-O-Meter Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrLzYw6ULYw>

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: The second spiritual blessing I want to thank God for is one that is yet to take place. It is based upon a promise of God that can be found in John 14, in 1 Corinthians 15, and 1 Thessalonians 4, it is called the Rapture of the Church. It is the day when Jesus will appear in the heavens to take His Church out of this world before the Tribulation begins. The apostle Paul describes the Rapture in detail in 1 Thessalonians 4, beginning with verse 13. And you know what? When he finishes his explanation of it, he writes in verse 18, "Comfort one another with these words." So the promise of the Rapture is supposed to be a source of great comfort to those of us who are believers. But the sad thing is that the average Christian seems to have little or no knowledge about this important promise.

And I know that from personal experience. You see folks, I was born into a Christian family. I was raised in the church. I went to church for 30 years every time the door was open and never once did I ever hear about the Rapture. In fact, after all those years in church, if you had asked me to define the Rapture, I probably would have said, "It's a sensation you feel when you kiss your girlfriend."

In 2002 when we broadcast our very first television program, we devoted it to the promised blessing of the Rapture, and we attempted to demonstrate the kind of ignorance that exists in the Church concerning the Rapture. We did it through a series of simulated interviews. Let's take a look at them.

Park Interview

Dr. Reagan: Excuse me sir, are you a Christian.

Person in Park: Well, yes I am as a matter of fact.

Dr. Reagan: Well I thought so from that tie you are wearing there. Let me ask you just a quick question okay.

Person in Park: Yeah, speed it up make it quick.

Dr. Reagan: Alright, what is the Rapture?

Person in Park: The Rapture? Well now let's see. The Rapture, the Rapture, um, don't help me, don't help me. Just give me another moment to think here. The Rapture.

Dr. Reagan: Excuse me sir, can I ask you a quick question?

Person in Park: Sure.

Dr. Reagan: Are you are Christian?

Person in Park: Yes I am.

Dr. Reagan: Then let me ask you a question: What is the Rapture?

Person in Park: Could you give me a clue?

Dr. Reagan: It's in the Bible.

Person in Park: It must be in the Old Testament, I have never heard of it. You see I am a New Testament Christian. The Rapture, the Rapture, come on, come on, I know this term, I know it. Um, don't help me, just give me a little more time to think here. The Rapture, the Rapture.

Dr. Reagan: Hey guys, can I ask you all a quick question?

Person in Park: Are we going to be on TV?

Dr. Reagan: Well maybe.

Person in Park: Cool, yeah, fire away.

Dr. Reagan: Are you Christians?

Person in Park: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: I thought so from those shirts you are wearing. Well my question is this: What is the Rapture?

Person in Park: The what?

Dr. Reagan: The Rapture?

Person in Park: I don't know, just a minute.

Dr. Reagan: I think they are having some sort of pow-wow here, I don't know for sure what we are going to get out of this. Oh, okay, okay, you got it?

Person in Park: Is it some type of Rap music?

Dr. Reagan: Excuse me, are you folks Christians?

Person in Park: Well yes we are.

Dr. Reagan: Do you mind if I ask you a Biblical question.

Person in Park: Well we are in church every Sunday go ahead. What's the question?

Dr. Reagan: What is the Rapture?

Person in Park: The Rapture, I tell you what, my wife is the real Bible expert and I think I am going to let her answer this.

Person in the Park: Okay. Um, just give me a minute, I know I have heard that term before, um, oh I think I know, isn't that when Jesus went up on the mountain and revealed His coming glory to His disciples? You know, the Transfiguration, isn't that also called the Rapture?

Person in the Park: The Rapture, the Rapture, the Rapture.

Dr. Reagan: Excuse me Ma'am could I ask you a questions?

Person in Park: Sure.

Dr. Reagan: Are you a Christian?

Person in Park: Yes I am.

Dr. Reagan: I would like to ask you a Biblical question.

Person in Park: Alright.

Dr. Reagan: What is the Rapture?

Person in Park: The Rapture, the Rapture is the promise of Jesus, that one day very soon He is going to appear in the heavens to take His Church out of this world.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: I've invited our Web Minister and my fellow Evangelist, Nathan Jones, to join me. He not only designed our website, but is on that site eight hours a day answering Bible questions and sharing the Gospel with people all over the world. Nathan, I'd like to jump into this by asking you to deal with two questions.

Nathan Jones: Ok.

Dr. Reagan: And the first has to do with how do we know that the Rapture is an event that is separate and apart from the Second Coming? And the second question is: What can we determine about the timing of the Rapture? So, let's start with the first one: How do we know the Rapture is an event that is separate and apart from what we call the Second Coming?

Nathan Jones: I think you just have to read the Bible. I mean when you read the verses that we attribute to the Rapture which is 1 Thessalonians 4, and 1 Corinthians 15, and John 14. And then you read other passages about the Second Coming like Zechariah 14, and Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, Revelation 19. You put all that together you realize that there are two

separate narratives as you read through it. For instance when you read the Rapture verses you hear a trumpet sound, an archangel calls a shout, and believers are instantaneously taken up into the clouds to meet the Lord, and there they will live with the Lord forever.

Dr. Reagan: And the Lord doesn't even come to earth.

Nathan Jones: No, He never touches the earth. He is up in the clouds. But then you read the Second Coming prophecies and you've got seven years of tribulation as Daniel 9 tells us. You hear about the Antichrist taking over the world and all the destruction and the devastation. And then you see the clouds open up and Jesus Christ come and He's got an army with Him, He is not by Himself. And the army is of the Saints. And He comes down. And He actually touches the earth, and He defeats Satan and the Antichrist, and sets up His 1,000 year kingdom. And when you read the two narratives they are very different.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, they are just as different as night and day. The only thing they have in common is Jesus.

Nathan Jones: Well, that's why I believe that the Second Coming is actually in two stages; the Rapture before the Tribulation and then at the end of the seven year Tribulation Jesus' Second Coming.

Dr. Reagan: I think that is a good way to put it, that the second coming is in two stages. First an appearing of Jesus in the heavens for His Church.

Nathan Jones: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: And then His return to earth to reign.

Nathan Jones: Exactly.

Dr. Reagan: What about the question of imminence? Doesn't that also require two comings? Because the Bible teaches that the return of Jesus is imminent, and yet, if you only believe in one coming the Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation it is not imminent is it?

Nathan Jones: Not at all. The Rapture happens like this. [snap] Unexpected. The Lord said keep you lamps lit. It is going to happen like a thief sneaking in, you will never know when it is going to come. But the Second Coming of Jesus comes after 7 years, 84 months of events including worldwide devastation of 21 judgments. Of Jesus releasing those 21 judgments from heaven. And there are many, many signs that go before the Second Coming, but there are no signs before the Rapture because it is an imminent event it could happen at any time. Where the Second Coming has to happen exactly at the end of the seven years.

Dr. Reagan: So, if you believe there is only going to be what we call the Second Coming of Jesus at the end of the Tribulation you should be living looking for the Antichrist instead of Jesus Christ, right?

Nathan Jones: Exactly. And Paul dealt with that with the church in Thessalonica they were scared to death they were living in the Tribulation. Paul was like, "No, no, no." You know the Antichrist has to be revealed. The restrainer has to be removed. And we believe that the restrainer is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Church. The Church isn't in the Tribulation,

the restraining influence of the Church is removed before the Tribulation. So, again, a good argument you bring up for why the Rapture happens before the Tribulation.

Dr. Reagan: Ok, so we've got two separate events here, one is the Rapture, one is the Second Coming. It is all part of the Second Coming of Jesus in two stages. But what about when the Rapture will occur? Does the Bible give us any clues about when it would occur?

Nathan Jones: Well, there is a few views as you know. There is the Pre-Tribulation view which you and I hold that the Rapture happens before the Tribulation. There is the Mid-Trib view which is the middle. The Pre-Wrath view pretty much went just before the Bowl Judgments. And then the Post-Trib view where Jesus Christ comes back, and He then raptures the Church up and makes a U-turn and comes right back down again. And of those four views I believe that the Pre-Trib Rapture view has the most support. And there's a number of arguments. For one let's start with the Post-Trib view; the idea that the Rapture and the Second Coming happen at the same time. Well if the Church is raptured up, all of the Believers are raptured up to Heaven and they are given their glorified bodies. And then they U-turn back with Jesus. And Jesus comes down and then He holds the Sheep Goat Judgment, where He judges those who are fallen, and those who are saved. How could there be any saved because they'd already been raptured?

Dr. Reagan: There wouldn't be.

Nathan Jones: And they-- when you go--

Dr. Reagan: There would be nobody to go in the Tribulation--I mean into the Millennium.

Nathan Jones: The Millennial Kingdom.

Dr. Reagan: You can't go into the Millennium unless you are a saved person.

Nathan Jones: Right. Right. And as we get raptured up we get glorified bodies that are eternal.

Dr. Reagan: So, there is nobody in the flesh.

Nathan Jones: Right. And if there is nobody in the flesh to live in a Millennial Kingdom who is having the kids?

Dr. Reagan: That's right.

Nathan Jones: There's nobody.

Dr. Reagan: There can be no population.

Nathan Jones: So, I think of all the views the Post-Trib view is the easiest one to disprove.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Nathan Jones: There is also the Mid-Trib view and the Pre-Wrath view. Let's start with the Pre-Wrath; the idea that the judgments of God are only the Bowl Judgments. The Seals and the Trumpet Judgments are the wrath of Satan, and the wrath of man. But doesn't Jesus Christ open the very first Seal Judgment, the Trumpet Judgments, the Bowl Judgements all come from the Throne and Temple of God. It's all judgments. And then when you get into Revelation 15 the

Bowl Judgments, it says, "This is the end of God's wrath." Well, it would be the beginning of God's wrath according to the Pre-Wrath view. So, again I don't believe that we will be raptured near the end of the Tribulation.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I think also another problem there is that if you put the Rapture anywhere during the Tribulation, again it is not imminent.

Nathan Jones: No. No.

Dr. Reagan: Because you have to wait until the Tribulation begins.

Nathan Jones: Well just read Revelation and the chronology of it. Most of Revelation after John sees the churches and then sees the Lamb slain, the Church isn't there at all throughout the entire 21 judgments of the Tribulation. But, Revelation 19 Jesus returns. Who does He return with? He returns with His armies, the Saints. That's the Church. So Revelation proves that the Bible says that the Church isn't there. And plus we are promised not to have to endure the wrath of God. Revelation 3:10, "Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test those who live on the earth." So, we are promised as believers in Christ to be rescued from the wrath of God beforehand. Colossians 3:4, "When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory." And that is a promise of God that the Church is not destined to endure the wrath of God.

Dr. Reagan: You know at our recent Bible prophecy conference we had a speaker named Ron Rhodes who talked about the Rapture. And he made a point in there, in a very funny sort of way that I had never thought about before. He talked about if you believe that the Rapture is going to occur anytime during the Tribulation or at the end of the Tribulation then what Paul is really saying in 1 Thessalonians 4 is this, "Now folks, the Antichrist is going to come. He is going to be the meanest guy that ever lived on this earth. He is going to kill one-half of the population of the earth in the first half. He is going to kill two-thirds of the Jews in the second half. You are going to suffer like you've never suffered before. You are going to be hunted down like a dog. You are probably going to be killed. Now, bless each other with these words."

Nathan Jones: That's great.

Dr. Reagan: Is this a blessing?

Nathan Jones: And I like what you always say, if the Church is the Bride of Christ is God going to spend seven years beating up His Bride and then marry her? No. I am sure when I proposed to Heather, I did not beat her up for seven years and then we had the wedding. She would not have married me. And it is the same. We are special to God. We are a gathering, a gleaning from this time and era to be the Bride of Christ. And God doesn't beat us up.

Dr. Reagan: Well, what do you say to people who come back at you and say, "Well, ok, the problem with the Pre-Trib Rapture is that it is too new to be true?"

Nathan Jones: There is so much evidence to disprove that. William Watson's book, "Dispensationalism before Darby."

Dr. Reagan: Just published, yeah.

Nathan Jones: Just published. Great book. It is really heady but if you chew through it. And he is an expert on literature from the 1400 and 1500's and 1600's and he shows document, after document, after document that people believed in the Pre-Trib Rapture view or were starting to move in that direction well before Darby.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, and he points out that many of these books probably not even been read in 300 years.

Nathan Jones: No. Well, Jesus believed in the Pre-Trib Rapture. Paul believed in the Pre-Trib Rapture. John believed in the Pre-Trib Rapture. If you want to say "new" well you have to go back to the First Century because the Bible I believe supports a Pre-Trib Rapture view.

Dr. Reagan: A couple of years ago a church in Australia produced a short video about the impact of the Rapture. It was placed on YouTube, on the internet and it caused a worldwide sensation. The church, the Potter's House in Perth, Australia has given us permission to show the video on this program. Let's take a look at it.

Rapture Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ck6aji4bdWU>

Part 5

Dr. Reagan: Now that's what I call a powerful video! You know, folks, I think of Jesus appearing in the Rapture as "Our Blessed Hope." But I am sorry to say that in recent years, it appears that Satan is absolutely determined to rob us of that hope by motivating some very vicious attacks on the concept of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. These attacks are coming from people who are trying to convince Christians that the Church is going to go through the Tribulation and suffer mightily.

I have prepared a one and a half hour video program in response to these attacks. It is titled, "In Defense of the Pre-Trib Rapture." At the end of this program our announcer will tell you how you can get a copy. I hope this program has been a blessing to you, and I hope, the Lord willing, you will be back with us next week.

Nathan Jones: And now, as we bring our program to a close, we want to share with you a powerful song about the Rapture called 11:59. Here is a production of it by our media staff as sung by Jack Hollingsworth of Acts 29 Ministries.

11:59 Lyrics

Jack Hollingsworth:

Time is winding down
Just look around us
Evil's breaking lose
On every side
The devil knows his time is almost over
Soon the clock will stop
And Jesus Christ will split the sky
Shout it from the rooftops
Proclaim it in the streets
Tell your friends and neighbors
Tell everyone you meet

We all need a Savior
But we're running out of time
He's coming back at midnight
It's 11:59.

God's prepared a place
For all his children
Free from fears and doubt
Tears and pain
We must choose our destination
You know there's just one way to heaven
Jesus is his name
Shout it from the rooftops
Proclaim it in the streets
Tell your friends and neighbors
Tell everyone you meet
We all need a Savior
But we're running out of time
Yes, He's coming back at midnight
It's 11:59.

And at the right hand of the father
He'll soon stand to his feet
And he'll say "Son, go get the children
And bring them home to me."
So Shout it from the rooftops
Proclaim it in the streets
Tell your friends and neighbors
Tell everyone you meet
That we all need a Savior
But we're running out of time
Yes, He's coming back at midnight
It's 11:59.

Church, Jesus is coming back
Time as we know it is almost over
He's coming back for a bride
Without spot or wrinkle
One who's ready to go
It's almost midnight
It's 11:59.

End of Program