

Christ in Prophecy

Conference 12: “Rhodes on Truth of the Resurrection”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: The resurrection of Jesus sets Christianity apart from every other religion in the world. Did the resurrection really occur, or is it a myth that was conjured up by the followers of Jesus. For a review of the evidence of the resurrection, stay tuned.

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. Over the past five weeks we have been sharing with you some of the presentations that were made at our 2010 Bible Conference, whose theme was, “Defending the Faith.” We are going to continue this week by showing you excerpts from the presentation which was made by Ron Rhodes, the Founder and Director of Reasoning from the Scriptures Ministries. His topic was, “The Truth of the Resurrection.”

Part 1: Rhodes Presentation

Dr. Rhodes: Anybody here love Jesus? Anybody here looking forward to the Rapture of the Church? I tell you what I can't wait; in fact I think that would be the ultimate sermon illustration. Right in the middle of my message on the Resurrection, POW we are with the Lord. I tell you what, Lord Jesus Maranatha! Come Soon. Not long ago I read an article about an Indiana cemetery that had a tombstone over 100 years old. On it were the following words, “Pause stranger when you pass me by, as you are now so once was I. As I am now so you will be, so prepare for death and follow me.” Alright this guy had a sense of humor. Well somebody else had a sense of humor because they scribbled some new words on there, and I thought that was very interesting, it says, “To follow you I am not content, until I know which way you went.” I mean these are words for the wise, you see. These are the kinds of things that you learn at discernment conferences, you see. So you heard it here.

Now I have always found that a person's dying moments are very educational in terms of his worldview. We have learned a lot about worldview at this conference but you know what a person says right at the moment of death really tells you a lot about what they believe personally. Many people are unprepared for the moment, General John Sedgwick was on the front lines with his army and he said, “Don't worry boys they couldn't hit an elephant at this dist....” And then he was a goner. Some people show a sense of humor, Spike Mulligan said, “I told you I was ill.” Ethan Allen an American Revolution General said, “Waiting are they, waiting are they, well let them wait.” You see his doctor had just told him, “The Angels are waiting for you in Heaven.” And he didn't want to rush, you know, he was trying to hang on until the last minute.

Some unbelievers are filled with despair and this is the sad part. I remember Louis B. Mayer who was a big film producer in Hollywood said, "Nothing matters, nothing matters." You know this wasn't someone who believed in the resurrection. Voltaire back in the 1600 and 1700's said, "I wish I had never been born." He implored his doctor, "I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six more months of life." Some unbelievers are simply unsure of what lies beyond the grave. For example philosopher Thomas Hobbes says, "I am about to take my last voyage, a great leap in the dark." How different it is for you and me, we know where we are going, amen. We know that the resurrection awaits us, but this guy had no idea what the resurrection was about. French philosopher Francois Rabelais said, "I am going to the great perhaps." The great perhaps, I mean how would you like that belief system? Some unbelievers are oblivious to their mortal danger, in fact Charles Darwin said, "I am not the least afraid to die." Now my friends I need to tell you that stories of a death bed conversion are untrue. I have looked into this very thoroughly and he died an unbeliever. You see, so this guy had no idea what was coming. Saddam Hussein who was executed by hanging right before he died he said, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammad is God's messenger." My friends the moment that his spirit departed the body what a rude awakening, he suddenly realized that Mohammad was a false prophet, that Allah was a false God. That Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords who was resurrected from the dead, and who was ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father, and reigns supreme over things on Heaven and Earth, amen. What a rude awakening, indeed.

How different it is for those of us who love Jesus. We don't fear death. I think about John Wesley who said, "The best of all God is with us." Now Wesley was looking forward to the resurrection. He knew that he was going to be with God and he was going to have a brand new body. His mama Susanna Wesley had earlier said, "Children, when I am gone, sing a song of Praise to God." Boy that is a different tone all together isn't it? Joseph Addison a writer who lived in the 1700 said, "See in what peace a Christian can die." Lady Glenorchy said and she was a lady by the way that was very wealthy, and she gave out a lot of money to missionaries she said, "If this is dying, it is the pleasantest thing imaginable." What a difference that is in terms of her future belief. Missionary David Brainerd said, "I am going into eternity and it is sweet to me to think of eternity."

Now the reason why it is relevant to you and me is that according to the most recent polls there is a 100% death rate. In fact worldwide 3 people die every second, 180 people die every minute, and 11,000 people die every hour. Which means that by the time I finish this evening about 11,000 people will have died on this planet. By this time tomorrow about 250,000 people will be dead. Now look at it from God's perspective you know right now we are just standing in this tiny bubble in this room. We are not aware of all that going on out there. But from God's perspective he is looking down on this little tiny planet and souls are literally flying out of bodies. You see death is everywhere. That is why we take this seriously, and woe unto those who go into eternity without having taken it seriously.

Now I need to tell you that today the resurrection is a theological battle ground. I am not going to spend a lot of time here but I do want to make you aware of what is going on. And in fact Eric alluded to this. The Jesus Seminar says the resurrection is pure fiction and wishful thinking. And

that the body of Jesus was torn apart and eaten by dogs according to John Croissant. Well let me tell you John Croissant is going to be torn apart at the Great White Throne Judgment that is not a good place to be. Not a good place to be. Liberal Christianity denies not just that the Bible is the Word of God and denies all miracles but of course denies the resurrection. One guy by the name of Rudolf Bultmann said, "What of the resurrection? Is it not a mythical event pure and simple? Obviously it is not an event of past history. And then we read both the legend of the empty tomb and the appearances insist on the physical reality of the risen Lord, but these are most certainly later embellishments." In other words the disciples made it up and stuck it in the Bible. They lied, they were dishonest, these guys who were brought up in the Ten Commandments and were trained not to bear false witness and not tell a lie these guys lied and stuck this stuff in the New Testament, so it is not really true. See that is what Liberal Christianity teaches.

Now you may not have heard of the Unitarian Universalist but their influence is massive. If you have ever heard of the truth, the idea that the truth is relative these guys are one of the main promoters of it. They teach that science proves that dead men stay dead, that miracles are impossible and that resurrection is simply a symbol of new life emerging from suffering. So you know when you look about Jesus suffering on the cross and then dying that is just symbolic and His rising from the dead; well that is just symbolic of modern times when something good happens out of something bad. That is all the resurrection is.

Islam says that Jesus was not crucified, that Judas was crucified in his place and Allah stuck the face of Jesus onto Judas so they thought they were crucifying Jesus. Jesus was actually caught up to Allah and one day Jesus is going to come again and lead all people to submission to Allah. But one thing is certain they say Jesus did not resurrect from the dead.

Well what about the Jehovah's Witnesses? I have written many books about the Jehovah's Witnesses. Did you know they have written about me too? One of their books that came out almost 1/3 of the book deals with yours truly. You want to know why? Because thousands upon thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses had become Christians as a result of my books on the Jehovah's Witnesses. So they are attacking me. By the way glory goes to God on that, you see we are just witnesses, God is the one who does the converting you see. So those conversions are God's glory. But they believe that Jesus was raised to life as an invisible spirit, an angel creature. He did not take up again that body in which He had been killed as a human sacrifice to God. They say Jesus appeared to His disciples on different occasions in various fleshly bodies just as angels appeared to men of ancient times. And by the way this is Jehovah's Witnesses art, authentic Jehovah's Witnesses art. You are seeing it here at this discernment conference.

What about the Baha'i Faith? The Baha'i teach that Jesus was just a manifestation of God there was no physical resurrection from the dead it just happened in the minds of the disciples. In fact let me just read to you what they say," The disciples were troubled and agitated after the martyrdom of Christ. The cause of Christ was like a lifeless body and when after three days the disciples became assured and steadfast his religion found life and his teachings and his admonitions became evident and visible." What a bunch of bologna. You know this is the idea that the faith or the belief system of the Christians was kind of like a lifeless body, but then well

they became renewed in their faith even though that body was still in the grave rotting you see. That is crazy! How can you have faith without a resurrected Jesus? Unless there is a Jesus who is sovereign over death how can you really have faith? You see. So that is why I say it is bologna. Now I don't usually like to use cartoons in my messages but I liked this message here. Did you see the big mistake this soldier made? Yes, he pulled the pin out of the grenade and with fervor he threw the pin. Well you know what these guys that I just told you about with fervor they argue for their positions, but they made a big mistake. Only they've made a worse mistake, see this guy is going to lose his physical life, but these guys that I just spoke to you about they are going to lose eternal life and that is much worse. Let me tell you if you believe in a Jesus Christ that is a counterfeit Jesus who preaches a counterfeit gospel you have got yourself a counterfeit salvation and there are no exceptions to that rule, you see. That is a big, big mistake. Can you understand why Satan's attacking this doctrine? He wants to keep people out of the Kingdom of God. And I thank God for men like David Reagan and Lamb and Lion Ministries that are standing for truth against this demonic attack and assault against the church on the front lines of apologetics and Dave may you continue, may you continue brother.

Now what I want to do is to spend the majority of my time here on the scriptural evidence for Christ's resurrection. And I want to do this because these evidences will help you to answer some of the attacks against Christianity today. And I tell you what this is something that is so critically important because this turned into a real huge battlefield in our day. First of all I want to point out that the resurrection was predicted in both the Old and the New Testaments. For example God says to the Son according to Psalm 2, "You are my son, today I have begotten you from the dead." Now a lot of people think that means that Jesus was a created being but that is false. The New Testament tells us what is meant by that verse, in fact in Acts 13:33 we are told that the Father was speaking of the resurrection of the Son from the dead. That is what the Father meant when he said, "You are my son today I have begotten you from the dead." Matthew 12:40 in the New Testament Jesus is talking to some Jews and he says, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days, and three nights in the heart of the earth." So you know Jesus was crucified Friday evening was dead all day Saturday and then rose Sunday morning, and according to the Jewish Talmud each part of a day is part of the whole day. So in Jewish reckoning it was three full days that is why Jesus spoke the way that He did. So we find predictions both in the Old and the New Testaments. By the way we've got many, many dozens of predictions, if I gave you all of them I would be keeping you past your time. And my wife Kerri told me, "Ron, get them out on time." So I am not going to stretch this out. But I do want to say that like all other prophecies in the Bible. These prophecies were literally fulfilled when Jesus was raised three days after His death. The resurrection was physical, bodily, and well attested by many witnesses. Now, why was the resurrection well attested? Well before it happened, what do you suppose a lot of people thought about this claim of resurrection? Yeah right. Yeah sure. Uh-huh three days, yeah, I really believe that. To counter that God made sure that there were many, many reliable witnesses who could see what was going on and verify without any shadow of a doubt that Jesus had resurrected from the dead. Amen. Now I am thinking about a friend of mine who appeared on a television show, a big national television show and I kind of chuckle here because you know David was talking about turning off your cell phone and stuff like that. Well

here my friend was on national television he is a Christian leader and he is sitting there talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And right in the middle of his discussion his cell phone went off, right there on television. Now you want to know what the ring tone was. It was Mission Impossible. (Hums Mission Impossible Song) You know God and His sovereignty must have a sense of humor, He's got to. Personally I think it would be pretty cool if Jesus was coming out of the tomb right after He resurrected and you hear that song. (Hums Mission Impossible Song) Jesus resurrected from the dead. You see with things that are impossible to human minds it is easy for God, it is a piece of cake for God. From the human perspective the resurrection is impossible. But with God all things are possible.

Now here is a key evidence folks, the tomb was empty, all 4 Gospels attest to this. Jesus was buried, and the Romans put Him in there, put this big stone there, and put the Roman seal there. And I got to tell you that Roman seal wasn't something that you couldn't take down. In fact if you just walked up to it with a little knife and cut part of it, it was the death penalty. You mess with the Roman seal and you get killed. But you know what the stone was moved a significant distance from the tomb like it had been plucked away by an angel. The seal was broken, the guards had fled and the body was missing. Furthermore there were empty grave clothes there. You know if somebody was a thief wanting to steal the body they wouldn't do it that way, and they wouldn't fold the head piece real nicely and lay it there in a separate spot. No thief would have done that. I mean the whole evidence there, if you had a C.S.I. Investigator there they would say, "Wow, this is pretty powerful evidence."

What about the idea of the body that Jesus resurrected in. You know there are some people out there that claim that Jesus died in one body but resurrected in a different body. There are some who claim that. Just like there are people who claim that when you die you are going to die in one body and then you are going to get a different body all together. Well, what does Scripture really say about this? Well first of all the empty tomb shows that it was the same body. I mean look folks, if one body goes into the tomb and the same body comes out of the tomb, doesn't that mean it is the same body? I mean isn't that a no brainer. You would think so. But further more the crucifixion scars prove that it was the same body. Jesus showed his crucifixion scars to different people on different occasions. It proves that it was the same body that went into the tomb. Furthermore, Jesus himself promised that it would be the same body. Jesus was talking to the Jews and He said, "Destroy this temple and in 3 days I will raise it from the dead." I will raise it from the ground I will reconstruct it. They thought that He was talking about the physical building the temple, but then he indicated He was talking about His physical body. Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it, the same body from the dead. It was the same body my friends. And then of the resurrection body Scripture says very clearly, nor did His flesh see corruption. In other words the flesh that went into the tomb did not see corruption, but came back to life. It was the same body, case closed.

Now there is a good analogy with a seed. You see using an analogy from planting a seed the body is sown in death, that is to say that it is buried. And just as the same seed that is planted in the ground blossoms into a flower, physically related to that seed. So the same body that is planted in the ground comes forth from the ground. The same body that goes into the ground is resurrected. The point of victory comes at the point of defeat. It was the body that died; it is that

same body that is resurrected from the dead. Get it? When I say get it, you've got to say got it. Get it? Alright!

I want you to also notice this is a physical resurrection. You know the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that this was just a spiritual resurrection body. I've got to tell you that there are some evangelical theologians who have claimed the same. There have been some evangelical theologians at seminaries that have written books claiming that Jesus' body was a spirit resurrection. You see, and this is unbiblical. It was a physical resurrection. For example Jesus appeared to the disciples and said, "Behold my hands and my feet, see that it is I myself. Handle me and see for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Now I don't know how you can get much, more clear than that. That is a physical body. Furthermore Jesus ate physical food four times after the resurrection, and He did this as a proof that He had a real physical body. By the way do you know what that indicates? That indicates that when you and I get resurrected from the dead we can still eat. Yeah. And apparently not gain weight. So, yeah. I am looking forward to that good heavenly cooking, I tell you that.

Furthermore the resurrection was said to be in the flesh, He was raised in the flesh. That is a physical body, in the flesh. It even retained the crucifixion scars. Furthermore, I am not going to get technical with you here, but I do know Greek, I had over 13 semesters of Greek. I just want to tell you that the Greek word for body when it is applicable to a human being always refers to a physical body. It never, ever in the Greek New Testament refers to anything other than a physical body. So when Jesus resurrected from the dead it was a physical body that He resurrected in. Now all of this comes to us from reliable testimony.

Now I wish I had two hours to spend on this alone because you see what we have documented in Scripture is only as good as the witnesses. And that is why I would like to spend a lot of time but let me just give you a quick summary if I could. For forty days He appeared to reliable witnesses on 12 different occasions. And on two of those occasions He showed the very scars from His crucifixion. He even appeared to over 500 people at a single time. And let me just give you a summary that I came up with. Mary saw, heard and touched Jesus Christ. The Mary and the women, according to Matthew 28 saw, and heard, and touched Jesus Christ. First Corinthians 15 indicates that Peter saw and heard Him. Luke 24 says, "The two disciples saw and heard Him." Luke 24 goes on to tell us that the 10 apostles saw, heard and touched Him. The 11 apostles are said to have saw, heard, and touched Him according to John 20. It gets better; in John 21 the 7 apostles saw and heard Him. All the apostles according to Matthew 28 saw and heard Him. 500 brethren at the same time saw and heard Him. James according to 1 Corinthians 15, you know the half brother of Jesus, saw, and heard Him. All the apostles Acts 1, saw and heard Him, and even ate with Him. And then in Acts 9 Paul had a rude awakening when he encountered the risen Christ and he saw and heard Him. Now this is just a brief testimony here, a brief summary. The thing of it is, all these people that were appeared to were typically schooled in Judaism and they were taught, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." They were taught, "Thou shalt not lie." These were honest people and all these people combined constitute an incredible body of evidence, and a body of witnesses. And in any court of law if you had this number of witnesses come forward and give a testimony, I mean it would be case closed. Nobody would argue with it.

Now here is a very significant fact, now when I use the word significant let me tell you, it is significant. This is a very significant fact, Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene now He appeared first to a woman. Why is that significant? It is significant because it is a highly significant indicator of the authenticity and the reliability of the resurrection account. The reason I say that is if the resurrection was fabricated by the disciples nobody would make it up that way. Nobody would make it up that way. You see the thing of it is, is that woman were looked down upon among the Jews. In fact they actually had a prayer back then that said, "Lord, God, I thank thee, that I am not a Gentile, a woman, or a dog." You see so women were looked down upon. Of course when Jesus came on the scene, Jesus changed that. And Jesus stood against the way that the Jews were treating women back then. But nevertheless woman were held in low regard. They didn't have any authority in terms of a court of law. Nobody would ever call a woman to a court of law, because their testimony was considered worthless. That's the scenario that I want to paint for you as you understand the significance of Christ appearing first to Mary Magdalene. If somebody was making it up they would never make it up this way. They would make it up by having Christ appear to Peter or one of the other disciples. You see what I am saying? You get it? Alright. The biblical text says, "The Lord appeared to Mary first," because that is the way it actually happened. And then Mary went on to tell the disciples the glorious, good news. So this is the beginning point, I mean the very fact that Christ appeared to Mary really indicates that what we read in the New Testament is a reliable testimony, and not fabricated.

And don't miss this, when I say don't miss this it means it is really important. Only the resurrection can explain the transformation of the disciples. Only the resurrection can explain the transformation of the disciples. Now let me tell you, the disciples came away from the crucifixion frightened and full of doubts. They were discouraged, they were depressed; the life had been just sucked out of them dry. They had no hope for the future, but following the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead their lives were virtually transformed. That is to say they suddenly braved opposition that they wouldn't before. Sinicism and ridicule, they suffered hardship and prison, and even death. Some of them were tortured to death, and some of their family members were tortured to death. My friends what is it that caused them to become so fearless overnight? It was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: You have been watching excerpts from a presentation about the divinity of Jesus that was made at our 2010 Bible Conference. In just a moment we'll tell you how you can get a copy of the full presentation, together with five others that were made by additional speakers at the conference. I hope you have been blessed by the series of programs we have presented over the past five weeks concerning how to defend the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Remember, the Apostle Peter exhorted us to "always be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks us to give an account of the hope that is within us." I urge you to check out our website at lamblion.com. You will find many resources there that will help you to defend the Christian faith. And now, as we conclude, I want to invite you to be back with us again next

week. 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