

## ***Christ in Prophecy***

### **Conference 26: “Ron Rhodes on the Sign of Apostasy”**

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#### **Opening**

***Dr. Reagan:*** The Bible prophesies that one of the signs of the end times that will identify the season of the Lord’s return will be an epidemic of apostasy in the Church. We are in the midst of that epidemic today. For proof of that assertion, stay tuned.

#### **Part 1**

***Dr. Reagan:*** Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. This is the fourth in a series of seven programs we are presenting regarding the signs of the times that indicate that we are living in the season of the Lord’s return.

All the programs are featuring presentations that were made at our annual Bible conference whose theme was “Living on Borrowed Time.” If you have missed seeing any of the previous programs, you can find them all on our website at lamblion.com. Again, that address is lamblion.com.

I personally kicked off the conference with an overview of the signs of the times. My presentation was designed to lay the foundation for all the other speakers. The second presentation at the conference was delivered by Don McGee, the founder and director of Crown & Sickle Ministries, located in Amite, Louisiana. Don spoke on the importance of the re-establishment of the nation of Israel as a vital sign that we are living in the season of the Lord’s return.

The third presentation was delivered by Nathan Jones, my colleague here at Lamb & Lion Ministries. Nathan focused his remarks on the development of modern technology. He showed how it was prophesied in the writings of Daniel some 2,500 years ago, and he demonstrated how it is helping us to understand ancient Bible prophecies that no other generation has ever been able to comprehend a fact that clearly indicates that we are living in the season of the Lord’s return.

This week we are going to take a look at the presentation that was made by Dr. Ron Rhodes, the founder and spokesman for a ministry called Reasoning from the Scriptures, it is located in Frisco, Texas. He focused his remarks on the growing apostasy in the Church and how it constitutes an important sign that we are living in the season of the Lord’s return. Here now, is a portion of what Dr. Rhodes had to say.

## ***Ron Rhodes Presentation***

**Ron Rhodes:** I'm going to be talking about the epidemic of apostasy and I want to begin by thanking Lamb and Lion Ministries and David Reagan in particular, what a ministry that is going on here. Don't you think? Wonderful ministry. (clapping)

You know I want to tell you a story about a young couple and they went to a movie one day in the middle of the day, and as they drove off there was somebody watching the house. And he goes around to the back of the house and he breaks a window. And he is crawling in the back window and then he hears this voice from a parrot saying, "I see you, and Jesus sees you." Well it didn't bother the man so he kept on breaking his way in and he is two-thirds of the way in and the parrot says, "I see you, and Jesus sees you." Well finally he is all the way in there and the guys stands up and he brushes all the glass off himself and the parrot says, "I see you, and Jesus sees you. Attack Jesus." And this Doberman Pincher... (laughing) and this Doberman Pincher named Jesus mauls the guy. And the guy dives out the window and nobody has ever seen him again. (laughing) Now that's a different Jesus.

But I would like to suggest to you that that Jesus is not as bad as the Jesus of apostasy. You see I say that because you can heal from a dog bite. But if you believe in a counterfeit Jesus who preaches a counterfeit Gospel you've got a counterfeit salvation. It comes down to that just as easy as can be. And that's why these kinds of conferences are so important.

Now my friends' apostasy is a rich word in the Greek. It carries the idea of a departure or a falling away, a forsaking of the truth, a defection from the truth, a revolt from the truth, and a swerving away from the truth.

Now I must pause for a moment and say that this is the after lunch session. You see there is going to be a tendency for there to be a departure from consciousness. There is going to be a tendency to have a falling away from a waking state, you see. But see what you want to be careful about is these cameras, you see. If those cameras catch you asleep you're on TV. Everybody knows it so don't fall asleep.

Now listen the signs of the times are so critically important. They are prophetic events that point towards the end times; it lets us know that we are living in the season of the Lord's return. You might consider it to be Intel in advance. Powerful nations have intelligent agencies like the CIA. And you know the Bible provides us with God's Intel in advance and He does this with signs. And the signs of the times are multiple. Now David Reagan gave us a very helpful categorization yesterday. I've got a slightly different categorization including Israel, and then technical signs which we heard about a while ago from Nathan. And the national signs, like all the nations building up to gang up on Israel, the Muslim nations and Russia. You've got religious and moral signs, some of which I'm going to talk about today as related to apostasy. And they you've got earth and sky signs, cosmic phenomenon. And so I'm not going to touch on all of that today but I am going to say that apostasy fits into the larger picture of the signs of our times. You see it would be significant if just one of these signs was coming to pass; more significant still if two of these signs were coming to pass. But the fact is we've got multiple prophetic signs today that are converging in our day. It's what I call the convergence factor and that leads us to believe that we are indeed living in the season of the Lord's return.

Now here's the thing we need to be thoughtful observers of the times. Remember the ancient Jews; the ancient Jews should have recognized that Jesus was the Divine Messiah. You see

back in Isaiah we are told that when the Messiah comes on the scene the blind will see and the deaf will hear, and the lame will walk. Well what happened when Jesus came on the scene? Well the blind could see, and the deaf could hear and so forth. So the Jewish leaders should have been able to see the signs of the times but they were blind to it. They could tell the weather was going bad by looking at the sky but they couldn't discern the signs of the times. Now we should not make the same mistake. There are many signs of the times pointing toward the Second Coming of Christ and the events that led up to the Rapture. Now what we want to do is make sure that we're not ignorant of those. We want to understand what the Bible says about the signs that lead up to the Rapture so that we're prepared and that's what this study is all about.

Now I want to be careful here because no one knows the day or the hour, Christ Himself told us that. No one knows the day or the hour, but we can know the general season of the Lord's return. Now my friends I do insist that we take a Biblical approach. Is that OK with you? I've seen a lot of very sensational things about the signs of the times where they read things into the Bible that aren't there. We must take a Biblical approach on all of this.

Kind of reminded of that second grade girl who came home from Sunday school one day and she was so excited about what she learned. So Daddy said to her, "Well what did you learn in Sunday school?" And so the little girl said, "Oh, Daddy it was just so great because you see God created Adam first, and then God saw that it was not good for Adam to be alone. So God put Adam to sleep and took out his brains and made a woman of them." (laughing) And all the women said. (amen) No, that's not in the Bible. That's in second allusions 3. Ok. We must be Biblical.

My goal today briefly will be fourfold. I want to talk about the Biblical bases for end time apostasy. Secondly I want to give you specific examples of apostasy in our day. And then third I want to look at statistics that reveal the severity of the problem. And then I want to close briefly with an exhortation.

So let's just hop right in. Let's talk about false prophets first. In every age there have been false prophets. Isn't that a great picture? That says it all. Took me 2 hours to get that wolf to wear that thing. Yeah. Don't normally go to that trouble but for David Reagan I would do anything. OK. I hope you appreciate that my friend. Now false prophets look good, but there deadly that is what we see on a lot of TV shows today that's why I'm glad that Lamb and Lion produces a TV show that you can actually trust. But there are a lot of shows out there where you channel surf you can't trust because there are lots of false prophecy out there.

Spiritual deception is in every age according to 2 Corinthians 11:4 we are warned about those who preach another Jesus and a different spirit and a different gospel. But you see Scripture gets more specific; it's not just general warnings we want to deal with. We want to look at the specific prophecies that deal with last day apostasy. And we begin with 2 Timothy 3:1-5, "Realize this that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, and lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossip, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; having the appearance of godliness but denying its power." Now my friend David Reagan is exactly right, what we see in this passage among other things is humanism, materialism, and hedonism. Lovers of self is humanism, lovers of money is materialism, and lovers of pleasure is hedonism.

I might mention to you that materialism and hedonism are both part of the humanistic worldview. Now here's the danger, it's not just adults that I'm worried about. I'm worried about our kids. You see the public school systems have become bastions of humanism. They are religious institutions now teaching the false religion of humanism to our children. This is the kind of garbage that a lot of kids are picking up in their schools.

There is also going to be religion without power and I think that we see that today. There will be the appearance of godliness but denying its power. But you know what these are counterfeits. Some of these counterfeits might make you feel good as a human and build you up as a human using psychology and other things, but the fact is there is no spiritual power that is there. Kind of reminds me of Jeremiah 2:13 back in the Old Testament God told His people, "My people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water." You see they forsook God but they also came up with counterfeit spiritualities, substitute spiritualities. Do we see that today? I think that we do. We see people coming up with their own substitute spiritualities and it shouldn't be. Second Timothy 4:3-5 tells us this, "The time is coming when people will not endure sound doctrine but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths." And I like this graphic, sugar coated preaching is dangerous to your soul.

You know this next weekend I can promise you there is going to be a lot of sugar across this nation on Sunday morning. All across this nation there is going to be sugar coated preaching. We need to return to the Word of God. To just give you a couple of examples of not enduring in the truth Scripture says that there will be denials of God in the end times, 2 Timothy 3:4-5. Denials of Christ, 2 Corinthians 11:4. Denials of Christ's return, 2 Peter 3:3-4. Denials of the faith, 1 Timothy 4:1-2. Denials of sound doctrine, 2 Timothy 4:3-4. Denials of morals, we've got a moral crisis, 2 Timothy 3:1-8. And denials of authority, now especially among our young, 2 Timothy 3:4. Now in sum this is what we're going to see in the end times according to this brief survey of Scripture. There is going to be false prophets that seem like true prophets, false Gospels contrary to the Biblical Gospel, false concepts of Jesus Christ, substitute spiritualities, a departure from sound teaching, the embracing of religious myths, a form of godliness without true spiritual power, humanism, materialism, and hedonism. And that's bad news. That is bad news and that is what we are going to focus on. I'm going to give you some actual examples but let me just emphasize that this description of this kind of apostasy taken in conjunction with the other signs of the times adds emphasis to the fact that the day is drawing near. We are not far away I don't believe.

Professor at Dallas Seminary where I attended put it this way, "Those of us who will follow Christ and His Word as opposed to the rising emphasis upon religious experience will increasingly become a smaller group until one day we will be on the outside of the American Evangelical Church looking in." This is what we are in route to as I speak. Now I want to give you a sampling of the evidence. And I say sampling on purpose because if I was going to give you a full exposition we would be here until midnight. David Reagan has not given me until midnight. So I am going to be quick and I am going to summarize some of the big points.

Let's begin with the Bible. You see foundationally there has been an undermining of the Bible. Began with the higher criticism that came into this country in the late 1800's and early 1900's and at that time basically enlightenment thought was applied to the Bible and inspiration and the

inerrancy of Scripture were rejected out of hand. Scripture writers were considered mere editors that spliced together earlier manmade documents. And basically the Bible was not viewed as the Word of God but rather was the word of man. And by the way the miracles were deemed a myth. It is like they took scissors and started to just cut those miracles right out of the Bible.

Fast-forward to today Bart Ehrman a person who studied at Moody and Wheaton and then he went to Princeton and got all messed up. But he says, "That the New Testament manuscripts have many mistakes." This is a guy who went to Moody and to Wheaton." Human fingerprints are all over the Bible," he says. "The idea of an inerrant Bible is denied."

It gets worse here's the Jesus seminar, I'm looking at John Dominic Crossan and I don't just read their books I got to hear them in person. I've actually sat under his lectures and listened to what he had to say. And he among others at the Jesus Seminar say, "That the New Testament is unreliable and of the many statements in the Gospel attributed to Jesus only 18% were likely uttered by Him. Jesus didn't say the majority of what the New Testament said He said and nearly all of Jesus' sayings in John's gospel are judged inauthentic, He didn't say those things."

Even Christian theologians are combating the Bible now. There is a book written and published just last year by my friend Norman Geisler it is called, *Defending Inerrancy*, and in this book sadly he documents a number of evangelical scholars who are publishing books that undermine the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture. My friends it should not be. It should not be, but it is happening. The Bible bashers are now within the gate.

Now here's the thing once the Bible is undermined the domino effect occurs you see all the other doctrines begin to fall. After the Bible is undermined that means all other doctrines of the Bible are undermined. For example today there are some Christians who are saying that God is not all powerful and all knowing. That explains the problem of evil, you see evil is so bad in our world that we must conclude that God is a good God but He is just not strong enough to bring about a good world. So God is not all powerful. In terms of salvation lots of Christians today are now claiming that Jesus might not be the only way. I'll talk more about that more in a minute. Jesus well some Christians are saying that Jesus was not perfect that He made mistakes while He was on this earth. So you know these are the kinds of things that we are seeing penetrate the Church.

Here's a man you've seen in the news his name is Jerry DeWitt he has been in almost newspaper in the country. He was a pastor in the Bible belt and the problem of evil disturbed him and so he came to believe that there is no God. That is apostasy. He joined up with a group that has become very popular on-line called, "The Clergy Project," and based on their website we read that it is a confidential on-line community for active and former clergy who do not hold supernatural beliefs. It helps members move beyond their former faith. And it also helps them to come out aiding them in how to tell their families that they no longer believe.

Another very popular website is "Recovering From Religion," on their website we read, "If you are one of the many people who have determined that religion no longer has a place in their life but are still dealing with the after effects in some way or another, recovering from Religion maybe just the right spot for you. The primary focus of recovering from religion is to provide on-going and personal support to individuals as they let go of religious beliefs. Now my friends the very fact that there is a market for these kinds of organizations tells you that there is an apostasy taking place. Many former pastors are joining up with this kind of thing.

Also we have to look at the weakened view of the Bible and the effects that has on the Bible reading habits of some people. Now I know I am about to step on some toes probably, and if I am about to step on some toes I apologize in advance. But I must speak the truth of the Lord here. Can I do that? Fact is *The Shack*, is full of problems. You know it is a book that is so incredibly popular and it is inspirational when you read it. But it is wrong. (clapping) We've got bookstores lining up to sell this book and I don't blame them I know it is making them a lot of money, but just look at some of the problems. A book by the way endorsed by Eugene Peterson who you know put together *The Message Bible*, he said, "That it has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*, did for his." I don't think so. I don't think so. The book communicates that traditional Christian teaching and Sunday prayers and hymns and a traditional approach to Christianity are all wrong. The Trinity, you know the father is a large beaming African American woman. Jesus is a Middle Eastern dressed like a laborer complete with tool belt and gloves. And the Holy Spirit is named Sarayu a small distinctively Asian woman. That's Tritheism, that's not Trinitarianism this is putting the Trinity into three people, that is heresy.

William Young the author argues that we should forget our preconceived notions about God. Forget your Seminary training that God appears to us in whatever form we personally need. Christianity he says has to be revised in order to be understood. How dare any human being say that Christianity which is based upon revelation from God Almighty say that Christianity must be revised. Boy I hesitate to think about William Young at the judgment when God says, "What's this about a revision?" You know? What's going on there?

Personal experience is supreme in this book; it communicates that personal experience trumps revelation. If you've got problems you don't go to the Bible you go to your experience and experience is used to interpret the Bible instead of the Bible being used to interpret Scripture. As for sin, Papa or the father says this, "I am not who you think I am. I don't need to punish people for sin. Sin is its own punishment devouring you from the inside. It is not my purpose to punish it; it is my joy to cure it." Well I agree that God's curing it but God does punish sin. In fact unbelievers will be punished for all eternity in a politically incorrect place that we call Hell. Ok.

There is a false view of incarnation here, listen to this, instead of Jesus coming in the flesh, we've got the entire Trinity coming. "When we three spoke ourselves into human existence as the Son of God we became fully human. We also choose to embrace all the limitations that this entailed even though we have always been present in this universe we now became flesh and blood."

And then in terms of salvation, "Christ is just the best way to relate to the Father not the only way." So I'm sorry you know the fact is the Christian bookstore should not be selling this book. Leads me to believe that there are landmines in Christian bookstores today and innocent people walk in there thinking they are safe, but they step on a landmine and the whole thing blows up, you see. It's dangerous. That's why we need discernment like at these conferences.

And then there is Christian Wicca, Christian Wicca, we are witnessing this among our teens today which involves a blending of witchcraft and Christianity. One young Christian Wiccan said this, it is a young teenage girl who said, "I started studying the book, *Earth Power*, which is by Witch Scott Cunningham and started to dabble in some of its practices and a few others. I purchased, *The Craft*, by Dorothy Morrison and *Wicca a Guide for the Solitary Practitioner*, by Cunningham and found myself in a faith that I could truly hold dear to my heart." How deceived.

She did say, "I did however feel somewhat empty still Jesus had been a part of my life for almost 3 years and has helped me become who I am today. I started looking in to Christian Wicca then." Then she says, "I followed the Wiccan Rede," that's their ethical principle that says you shouldn't harm anybody, "but also take the Ten Commandments to heart greatly. You shall not hold any gods before me; this is one that people really don't get when it comes to my beliefs. I believe that there is only one true God, and that all other gods are part of the one. The Christian Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is also somewhat a reflection of this. I view it as god, goddess (or the feminine quality of God) and Jesus as all still being part of one being." You know so that's a big problem among our teens today.

And then as if that wasn't enough we've got Chrislam making its way into our midst which says that Christianity and Islam are compatible, that both the Bible and the Qur'an are holy texts. That there are similar teachings between the two on morals and ethics and that we worship the same god. You know they'll say that we both worship the God of Abraham and therefore we worship the same God. Now my friends is that true? Absolutely not! The Qur'an and Muslims will tell you that there is no such thing as the Trinity, that's heresy and that Jesus is absolutely not God. How dare anyone claim that anyone is Allah's equal, you see. So this is just a bunch of linguistic nonsense trying to argue that Christianity and Islam are compatible. They absolutely are not compatible.

## Part 2

**Dr. Reagan:** What you have just seen is only a portion of the presentation that Ron Rhodes made at our conference. The entire presentation is contained in this video album titled, *Living on Borrowed Time*. In just a moment our announcer will tell you how you can get a copy of the album.

Dr. Rhodes continued in his presentation to talk about Christian Psychics, Christian Mystics, and the efforts to merge Christianity with Hinduism and Islam. He also spoke extensively about the apostate Emergent Church Movement.

Next week, the Lord willing, we will present a portion of the presentation made by Alan Franklin concerning the prophetic significance of the emergence of the European Union. Mr. Franklin is a newspaper editor from London, England.

And now, here are some closing comments from Dr. Ron Rhodes.

**Ron Rhodes:** My closing is simply this be sober minded and be watchful, and be firm in your faith. It is a simple statement but it says it all doesn't it? Be sober minded, be watchful, and be firm in your faith. And I might add, never give up. Fight the good fight of the faith and never give up. Contend for the faith that once for all delivered to the Saints, and never give up. That is what I desire for every person here. And I want to just leave a bit of good news with you, soon you and I will be in the AFZ, the AFZ, that's the Apostasy Free Zone. That's right. (clapping) One day you and I will live in the New Jerusalem, the eternal city of God which will come down from Heaven onto a new earth. We will have resurrected bodies, and we will live in a resurrected universe, and the word apostasy will not even be in the dictionary.

## End of Program