

## ***Christ in Prophecy***

### **Interview 55: Glenn Meredith Interview about Death**

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#### **Opening**

**Dr. Reagan:** Did you know the Bible says that most people live in lifelong bondage to the fear of death? Do you? Stay tuned for a biblical response to this problem.

#### **Part 1**

**Dr. Reagan:** Greetings in the name of Jesus our Blessed Hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy! My colleague, Nathan Jones, and I are delighted to have our pastor as our special guest today. He is Glenn Meredith, the pastor of the Brookhaven Church in McKinney, Texas.

**Nathan Jones:** Pastor Glenn, it is so good to call you pastor now that I am a member of your church.

**Glenn Meredith:** Well, thank you.

**Nathan Jones:** This guy is a great pastor.

**Glenn Meredith:** Thank you.

**Dr. Reagan:** And also, a great preacher.

**Nathan Jones:** Very much so, yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** In fact, that is the reason you are on this program today is because, I love preaching, and Glenn you just have a great gift of God for preaching. And a few months ago you preached an incredible sermon about death. It was so good that I decided we've got to have you on this program to talk about it. And I would like to get into it by quoting from Hebrews 2:15 which says that one of the reasons that Jesus came to this earth was to deliver those who live in lifelong bondage to the fear of death. Now, you spent, what 40 years almost in the ministry.

**Glenn Meredith:** Right.

**Dr. Reagan:** And during that time, you have counseled with a lot of people. Do you find that people live in bondage to the fear of death?

**Glenn Meredith:** Absolutely. And also, it seems like it is increasing. I suppose in this world we are living in now with all the 24-hour news, and with all the events that are going on in the world, and terrorism. And social media where a mass shooting could be happening anywhere in the world and instantly everyone is aware of it. So, just the events, the times we are living in it just seems that is increasing that people are becoming more terrified all the time.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well, it seems like a lot of people fear death because they don't know what is going to happen to them when they die.

**Glenn Meredith:** Right. Right. You know a lot of people don't know, especially people who don't know Jesus, they don't know what happens. When I die do I just cease to exist? Do I become one with the cosmos? Am I reincarnated?

**Dr. Reagan:** Do I become an angel?

**Glenn Meredith:** Exactly. So, people don't know.

**Nathan Jones:** Do you feel that cartoons, and movies and things kind of foster that? For instance, in Star Wars Yoda disappears and becomes one with the force.

**Dr. Reagan:** "It's a Wonderful Life" Clarence becomes an angel when he does his good deed.

**Glenn Meredith:** No question of that.

**Nathan Jones:** You're constantly getting these messages from the media saying this is what happens after you die. Is that clouding their views at all?

**Glenn Meredith:** Well, I think most people probably have their theology is probably developed more by TV and movies than it is by the Bible, absolutely.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well, some people just fear death itself, the process of death. Have you found that?

**Glenn Meredith:** Well, I think that people, what I've discovered, is that even believers are afraid to die because they really don't know really what the Bible says about Heaven for example. They are under the impression that the Bible doesn't say very much about Heaven.

**Dr. Reagan:** We are going to talk about Heaven some in the second half of this program because we need to. Because I have found that if I ask people, "What is your hope?" They say, "My hope is to go to Heaven." I say, "Well, what is Heaven going to be like?" And they don't even know.

**Glenn Meredith:** Yeah.

**Nathan Jones:** Quiet.

**Glenn Meredith:** Yeah, they don't think that anybody knows. And they think that the Bible is pretty silent about it. And so, there is nothing in their understanding of even Heaven that gives them any comfort or inspiration. And then a lot of people are afraid, I think, that death is somehow going to randomly happen to them or to their children, or to their loved ones.

**Dr. Reagan:** Or I think too, a lot of people are afraid of death because they fear they are going to have a long agonizing, painful death.

**Glenn Meredith:** Absolutely, so it is how they are going to die. Absolutely.

**Dr. Reagan:** So, how do you counsel people about these kinds of fears?

**Glenn Meredith:** Well, we will talk about Heaven in the second part of the program today because I think the Bible tells us a whole lot more about Heaven than people think it does.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes, it does.

**Glenn Meredith:** And it is exciting, and so I think comforting. But for me one of the things that has been greatly comforting to me is a passage that is found in Psalm 139:16 where the Lord is talking about, or David is talking about how the Lord saw him when he was being formed in his mother's womb. And God knit him together while he was there. And it says, "Your eyes saw my unformed body before I was ever born." And said, "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

**Dr. Reagan:** Absolutely.

**Glenn Meredith:** And I believe that none of us are a random accident, God had a purpose and plan for which He created every one of us. And so many people it seems like they think they are born and then God watches and observes them for awhile and sees what gifts and talents they have, and then tries to figure out what to do with them. But rather than that I believe that the Bible says that God has a purpose and plan that He is wanting to fulfill in this world, at this time, at this moment in history right where they are. And that God said, "I need someone with these skills, these gifts, these talents." And God designed you. And so, you are not an accident. You are a creation of God by design. And the Bible says that God knows every part of our life, and He knows every day of our life from the time we are born, until the time we die. And all those days ordained for us before one of them comes to be.

**Nathan Jones:** Wow.

**Glenn Meredith:** So, therefore I don't believe that it is possible for a child of God to randomly be killed or taken out, or in an accident, or an act of terrorism. God has it planned ahead of time. I believe that Christians are absolutely indestructible until God gets ready to take us home.

**Nathan Jones:** That argument was so powerful when my son decided he was going to take the life in the military, he wants to be in the Coast Guard for the rest of his life. But before he was considering joining ROTC he was scared; he didn't want to die. And my wife counseled him with that very thing. She said, "Hey, the Lord knows your days. He knows when you are going to die. You are invincible until then." And I tell you it was like a new person. He was now ready, and he jumped right in and joined. That works. That absolutely works.

**Glenn Meredith:** Absolutely.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well, Glenn, a lot of churches teach something called soul sleep. What do you think about that?

**Glenn Meredith:** Well, I know where they get it from. They get it from passages that you've probably taught on many times on this program. The passages like 1 Thessalonians 4 when it says that we are going to sleep, our bodies are asleep, but their soul and their spirit are in Heaven. So, the Bible says to be absent from the body is to present with the Lord, 2 Corinthians chapter 5. So, when Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "Today you will be with my in Paradise." He didn't say, "Well, sweet dreams, and I'll see you in a couple of thousand years." He said, "Today you are going to be with Me in Paradise." And so, Luke chapter 16 Jesus tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus, and immediately Lazarus is comforted in the place of the righteous dead, and the rich man is consciously alive.

**Dr. Reagan:** But you are right there are so many references in the New Testament particularly about the dead being asleep. But, the point about that is at the moment we die our spirit goes to be with the Lord, and they use the concept of sleep because the body is in effect sleeping because they day is coming when that body is going to be resurrected.

**Glenn Meredith:** Absolutely, it is a temporary condition.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yeah. So, they refer to the body as sleeping.

**Glenn Meredith:** Correct.

**Dr. Reagan:** But the soul is with the Lord.

**Glenn Meredith:** That is correct.

**Nathan Jones:** It seems as eastern mysticism continues to infiltrate the United States more and more people are believing in reincarnation; this idea that you come back and back. A Willy Nelson song, "The Highway Man" where he keeps coming back as a different person. Do you see that infiltrating the church? Do people believe in the church that they are coming back again and again in different lives.

**Glenn Meredith:** I haven't particularly run into that in our church with people like that. But I don't have any doubt, that you can see it pervading the culture. The people are more and more beginning to believe that, or that somehow when they die that their energy is somehow united with this oneness of the universe, all that eastern religious thought. But, the Bible tells us that it is appointed unto man once to die, and then after that they are going to face judgment. And so, you die once. You don't get reincarnated, you come back and you die again, you get reincarnated, and come back and die again. You live, you die, and then the day is going to come that you are going to stand before judgment before God.

**Dr. Reagan:** The result of a belief in reincarnation is just unbelievable. I'll never get over my trip to India. I saw people by the millions starving to death with cattle just roaming around everywhere, and they wouldn't kill the cow to eat it because it might be aunt so and so, or uncle so and so, or whatever because of their believe in reincarnation. Or going to they have a temple of rats where people go and they put honey on them or whatever, and lie on the floor and the rats come and eat off of them because the rats are reincarnated people, you know, and we've got to honor them. In the hotel I stayed in every morning they had a basket of fruit offered to the elephant god and had a picture of the elephant there because they believe the elephant is reincarnation of some human being. These kind of beliefs have an impact upon the whole society.

**Glenn Meredith:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Nathan Jones:** What about the atheistic belief? We hear all the time that after this--

**Dr. Reagan:** Annihilation.

**Nathan Jones:** Yeah, you just disappear you are no more. And you got to wonder well, did they get annihilated and then come back from the dead to tell us that? Usually they can't answer that. Is there a concern in the church that there is annihilation?

**Glenn Meredith:** Well, again in our church I've been fortunate to pastor the same church for 37 years, and so we certainly do not believe that. And so, most of the people who come to our church I haven't found that. But clearly in this society we are leaving our biblical bases, so once you leave the truth, then you will fall for the lie, whatever lie.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well, the predominate philosophy in America today is humanism; a belief in man. And part of humanism is a belief that once you die, that's it, you're annihilated, it's over with. Such a wonderful hope.

**Glenn Meredith:** Yeah. Absolutely.

**Nathan Jones:** Eat. Drink. Be merry for tomorrow we shall die.

**Glenn Meredith:** One of the saddest experiences of my life was in my first church that I pastored. There was a gentleman who was a wonderful man who came to our church. Wonderful believer in Christ. But he only had one child and they were not even all the close, and the child had become part of a cult, and so they hadn't spoken in years. And so, this wonderful Christian man passes away. Well his child then was responsible for the funeral. So, this person asked the leaders of their cult to do the funeral. So, we are sitting at this service where of this wonderful Christian man, but it is being conducted by this cult that did not believe that there was life after death. They believed that this is all there was. And it struck me that it was one of the most hopeless situations I've ever seen, been part of. What are they going to say? They had no hope. They had nothing to say. No comment.

**Dr. Reagan:** You know that is one of the characteristics of Christianity as compared to other religions of the world. Most of world when there is a death you hire professional mourners and they come and they wail and they moan as loud as they can, because there seems to be no hope. But in Christianity there is such hope, such incredible hope. I read once about some missionaries who were in India and they had been there for like 10 or 11 years and they felt like they were getting nowhere, they were not bringing anybody to the Lord. And one day they are out driving, and they come around a corner and there was a truck and they hit head-on, and two of their three children were killed. And so, they had a funeral and all of their Indian friends that they had made during that 10 years came, and they were astonished that they were up there singing songs of celebration and talking about how they are with the Lord. And then people began to come to the Lord, because they saw the difference in death for Christians, and death for Hindus.

**Glenn Meredith:** Right. Absolutely. We have worked with an unreached people group, our church has, and this particular group they have no hope of course when people die. And when they've had people in their community who have passed away, it is what you said, they all get together for like 40 days, they just mourn and wail, and dress in black, and it is just a hopeless culture, hopeless situation. It ought to be in the middle of that we ought to be shining forth as bright lights, right, because we have the hope that is in Christ.

**Nathan Jones:** Amen. Hallelujah.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well, I tell you what Paul said in Philippians 1:21 to die is gain. What in the world does that mean, because most people think of death as loss? So, what we are going to do is take a brief break, come back and start with that statement: To die is gain. What does that mean?

## Part 2

**Nathan Jones:** Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and our interview with Glenn Meredith the pastor of the Brookhaven Church in McKinney, Texas. Well, Pastor Glenn first let's look at Philippians 1:21, again, I want to go back to that, what Dave said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." How can when you die you are gaining something? What does that mean?

**Glenn Meredith:** Well, I think it is important the first part of that verse where Paul says, "For me to live is Christ."

**Nathan Jones:** Yes.

**Glenn Meredith:** And only if that's true can you say, "to die is gain." If a person doesn't know Jesus Christ, and if they have not lived their life for Him, then to die may be loss. If you spent your life accumulating wealth, then to die would be loss. But if you've spent your life serving Jesus, telling as many people as you can about Jesus. Making your life count for the kingdom, then for you to die is better. Paul goes right on to say in two verses later, I think it is, he says, "You know I am torn between the two."

**Dr. Reagan:** That's right.

**Glenn Meredith:** He says, "I desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far, far better," he says. And so, he describes death as a departure. And a departure is like the beginning of a journey. So, he says, "Man, I long to start this journey." And of course, the journey doesn't last very long. You know it is kind of like if we went out to DFW airport today and we are taking a flight you would see a departure time, and arrival time and there are often hours in between. Well, earth departure time is heaven's arrival time. You know the moment Paul would say, "I start this journey." We instantly are in the presence of the Lord. But departure, he says, "I want to depart and be with Christ which is far better." So, when we talk about Heaven and all the wonders and beauties, and glories of Heaven, but really what makes Heaven, Heaven is Jesus.

**Nathan Jones:** Amen.

**Glenn Meredith:** He says, "I am going to depart and be with Christ which is far better."

**Dr. Reagan:** And we find that attitude very seldom among Christians today. It's like we are clinging to this world like it's the only thing we've got, instead of looking forward to what's coming ahead. And I wish we could get that attitude across. I know John Wesley once said, they said, "What is the greatest accomplishment of your ministry?" And he said, "My people know how to die."

**Nathan Jones:** What a wonderful statement. That reminds me of that story of the rich man who had everything imaginable and when he was dying he was crying, "Oh, I'm leaving home. I'm leaving home." And then the poor pastor who devoted his life to the Lord he was dying at the same time on the other side of town, and when he was dying he was saying, "I am going home. I am going home." This life is not our home. That's our home.

**Glenn Meredith:** Exactly.

**Dr. Reagan:** Glenn, you conducted a funeral recently at your church that I didn't get to attend, but I heard a lot of people talking about it. They said that you had given an illustration that really impacted them about a person walking through a door.

**Glenn Meredith:** Right.

**Dr. Reagan:** Tell us about that.

**Glenn Meredith:** We were talking about how, the Bible says Jesus when He died on the cross He was buried in the tomb, but on the third day He literally, bodily rose again from the dead. And when He did He conquered death, as the verse that you said as we began this program. In Revelation 1:18 He says, "I am the living One, I was dead and now I'm alive, and I now hold the keys to death, and Hades." So, Jesus has the authority over death. And so, we see often in the New Testament death this idea between earth and heaven it's almost like there's a door. And so, when Jesus was baptized for example it says then heaven opened, and the Spirit of God descended like a dove.

**Dr. Reagan:** John was taken up through a door.

**Glenn Meredith:** John it says the door opened in heaven. I heard a voice saying, "Come up here." And he went up. When Stephen was being martyred and stoned to death, it says he says, "I see heaven open, and I see Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father." Even Peter when he has the vision in Joppa on Simon the Tanner's home, and it says, "Then heaven opened and something like a giant sheet was let down from heaven." I imagine that between earth and heaven, between us and the Lord it is like this door. And Jesus said, "I have the key, and I am in control of when it happens." So, when it comes time for us to die, I believe that Jesus just takes that key, reaches down and opens that door. And I believe as a believer that we just look through that door and we just step through the door and we are right there with the Lord. Right into glory.

**Nathan Jones:** Then what do we see on the other side?

**Glenn Meredith:** Well, I have a wild imagination I suppose but I often--

**Dr. Reagan:** I just want to interject a thought before you do that, when I was growing up in the church we were taught that heaven was going to be an ethereal place, and that we would be sort of disembodied spirits floating around on clouds playing harps.

**Nathan Jones:** However, that works?

**Dr. Reagan:** I couldn't get excited about that.

**Glenn Meredith:** Absolutely.

**Dr. Reagan:** And I think that is the problem that people just don't know any idea of what is ahead of them, so they cling to this world. My wife is in a memory care facility right now, I go read to her every evening. And before I leave her I say, "Now, Ann do you remember our theme verse?" And our theme verse is Romans 8:18, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is yet to be revealed to us." Talk about that glory.

**Glenn Meredith:** Well, I love your point about how heaven is not this ethereal, mystical place. And I think a lot of people including believers get their theology of heaven more from movies and TV shows.

**Dr. Reagan:** And eastern religion.

**Glenn Meredith:** Every time you see it presented on the screen it is always a cloudy, stark white, they are trying to create that it is other worldly.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes. Yes.

**Glenn Meredith:** But, and it is in that sense, but the Bible says heaven is a real place, and it is a physical city. And most people don't realize, most Christians don't even realize that heaven is not a spiritual place it is a physical city. It has dimension. The Bible says that it is a massive city that it is a 1,500 miles cubit city; 1,500 miles wide, 1,500 miles long, 1,500 miles high. That in this city there are walls. And the Bible says the walls of that city are made out of jasper; crystal clear. Which is, I've read that scholars say that word jasper is a Bible word for diamonds. So, could you imagine this beautiful city with diamond walls? And the Bible says that the city is made out of gold; it is so pure that it is transparent. The Bible tells us that this city has a main street, it calls it the great street of the city. So, imagine main street heaven, and it makes it way, and it ends right at the throne of God, and the throne of the Lamb which is right in the center of the city. So, you get this mental picture from Revelation 21 and 22, chapter 22 it says, "And the river of life flowing from the throne of God, flows down the middle of that great street." So, you have main street heaven, which is paved out of gold, which is like this boulevard with the river of the life flowing down the middle of it, and on either side of the river is the Tree of Life. Now, I picture in my mind that lining this river, down main street is the Tree of Life on either side, and it's just going to be beautiful.

**Dr. Reagan:** Puts out a different fruit every month.

**Glenn Meredith:** Every month. I grew up thinking that when you got to heaven it was just timeless, that everything was the same all the time.

**Nathan Jones:** And you don't eat; but there is a tree you eat from.

**Glenn Meredith:** There is a tree that every month it says that it produces a new crop of fruit, and it says that there are 12 crops of fruit, which means every year.

**Nathan Jones:** There's time.

**Glenn Meredith:** There's time in heaven.

**Dr. Reagan:** And there's tangible bodies.

**Glenn Meredith:** That's right.

**Dr. Reagan:** Glorified bodies. Immortal.

**Glenn Meredith:** Jesus rose in a physical body.

**Dr. Reagan:** They recognized Him.

**Glenn Meredith:** He said, "Touch Me. I'm not a ghost. Touch me. I am flesh and bones." And so, when He ascended into heaven, He ascended in the physical body. So, He's not been sitting

up on a cloud for 2,000 years, He is in a physical city. And He says, "I'm going to prepare a place for you." We are going to one day, these same bodies that we have here are going to be resurrected. They are going to be physical bodies, and heaven is being prepared for people who live in physical bodies to be in this place called the Father's House or heaven. And that is I've heard you say so wonderfully, the Bible says there is going to be a new heaven and a new earth. So, then one day when this earth is remade by the Lord, then what we know as heaven now, the Father's House is going to descend, basically become the capital city of earth, and we are going to live here on earth in physical bodies in this wonderful place that God is preparing for us.

**Dr. Reagan:** So, it is all for real.

**Glenn Meredith:** It is. It's real.

**Dr. Reagan:** It's glorified bodies, new bodies, in a new Jerusalem, on a new earth, forever and ever in the presence of our Creator and our Redeemer.

**Glenn Meredith:** Absolutely. Except the curse has been lifted. There is no sin. There is no suffering.

**Dr. Reagan:** No pain. No death.

**Glenn Meredith:** No pain.

**Nathan Jones:** What is this when Jesus says that we get to sit on His throne during that time period?

**Glenn Meredith:** Wow. Isn't it incredible that the Lord gives the opportunity! That what we do for Christ now determines what our role, I think in eternity is going to be. We've talked about before, I think on this program that what we do in this life now, the Bible says there are going to be rewards, and there are going to be distinctions when we get to heaven one day. So, when we get to heaven, then if we've been faithful, we've lived for Christ now, we've been faithful in the responsibility He has given us now, then for all of eternity we are going to be able to serve the Lord in whatever responsibility He gives us. But there will be degrees of responsibility, and opportunities to reign with Him.

**Dr. Reagan:** And you have such wonderful teachings on rewards. And one of the points that you often make is those rewards are eternal, and we'll be able to look at this crown, or that crown and see that this was a martyr, this was a pastor, and this was a bishop and so forth and so on. And often people respond to me by saying, "Well, wouldn't that create a lot of jealousy?" How do you respond to that?

**Glenn Meredith:** That's a good question.

**Dr. Reagan:** And I think we logically deduce therefore that well it couldn't possibly be true because we would be jealous.

**Nathan Jones:** It is all socialism up in heaven.

**Glenn Meredith:** Well, it is sort of like, you know my son is here today with me in the studio and if my son was some how was able to accomplish something in life that was far greater than anything I've ever done.

**Dr. Reagan:** You wouldn't be jealous of him.

**Glenn Meredith:** I wouldn't be jealous. I would rejoice with him. I would be proud of him. I'd be happy.

**Dr. Reagan:** Furthermore, we are not going to have that sin nature.

**Glenn Meredith:** That is exactly right.

**Dr. Reagan:** So, I believe that when we see other believers in heaven we are going to rejoice with them. We are going to look at them and go, "Man, good job. You know way to go."

**Glenn Meredith:** We'll thank the missionaries.

**Dr. Reagan:** Absolutely.

**Nathan Jones:** And it is the Holy Spirit's work through us, too.

**Glenn Meredith:** Absolutely. Absolutely.

**Dr. Reagan:** You know another passage that I often quote to my wife is another statement by Paul, and it is over in the Corinthian letters, and that is, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has the mind of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him." But the very next verse says, "But the Spirit has revealed these things to us." And there is so much that is revealed in the scriptures concerning heaven that most people know nothing about.

**Glenn Meredith:** That's right. Over 500 times in the scriptures it talks about heaven, it calls it different things: the Father's House, He calls it the abode or the dwelling place of God, the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, the City of our God, and many other terms, but over 500 times it talks about this place called heaven; this real place that God is preparing for us. So, it is going to be wild. I don't think anybody is ever get to heaven and when they get there I don't think anybody is going to go, "Well, it is not quite as good as I thought it was going to be."

**Dr. Reagan:** I saw a onetime a poll that was taken among pastors, this was several years ago, and they asked, "What was the most common passage that people ask to have read to them when they are dying?" And I thought it would be the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, and I'm sure that's asked but they said no it was John 14:1-3 where Jesus talked about He is preparing a place for you. Said people love to hear that passage.

**Glenn Meredith:** That's right. "I'll go prepare it, and then I'll come get you, that where I am there you can be."

**Dr. Reagan:** So, we should be looking forward to heaven, not being afraid of it.

**Glenn Meredith:** That's exactly right.

**Dr. Reagan:** Okay.

**Glenn Meredith:** We can live in this world with the confidence that we are indestructible until God gets ready to takes us home. When He gets ready to take us to home there is nothing but glory and gain. And when we get ready to step through that door, even then the Bible says that God is with us.

## **Closing**

**Nathan Jones:** Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and our interview with Glenn Meredith the pastor of the Brookhaven Church in McKinney, Texas. Glenn your fantastic sermon on death, and I think you have one on heaven, and Dr. Reagan does as well is posted on your website. Can you let folks know how they can find those?

**Glenn Meredith:** Absolutely. If you go to our church website: [brookhavenchurch.com/heaven](http://brookhavenchurch.com/heaven) then Dr. Reagan's wonderful sermon on heaven is there and there are two other ones there I think you'll enjoy.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well, Glenn it is always a joy and a blessing to have you on the set, thank you for being here today. And folks, that's our program for this week. I hope its been a blessing to you and I hope the Lord willing that you will be back with us next week. Until then this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries saying, "Look up, be watchful for our redemption is drawing near."

## **End of Program**