

Christ in Prophecy
Prophecy 40: Andy Woods on the Millennium

© 2016 Lamb & Lion Ministries. All Rights Reserved.

For a video of this show, please visit <http://www.lamblion.com>.

Opening

Dr. Reagan: Is there going to be a literal reign of Jesus on this earth for a thousand years, and, if so, for what purpose? Why would the Lord want to return to this wicked world to reign for a thousand years? For the answers to these questions, stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I had the opportunity recently to sit down with a great scholar of Bible prophecy and talk with him about what the Bible teaches concerning a future millennial reign of Jesus here on this earth. His name is Dr. Andy Woods. He is the pastor of the Sugarland Bible Church in the Houston, Texas area. He has written extensively about the Millennial Reign of Jesus, and his many articles can be found on the Internet under the title, "The Coming Kingdom." After graduating from the University of Redlands in California, Dr. Woods obtained a law degree from Whittier Law School. He practiced law for a while before deciding to pursue a theological education. After attending several seminaries, he earned a doctorate in biblical exposition at Dallas Theological Seminary. In addition to pastoring a church, he currently serves as a professor at the College of Biblical Studies in Houston. He and his wife, Anne have one daughter. Now, don't let all those academic credentials scare you because Dr. Woods is a down-to-earth communicator, and you will be enlightened and encouraged by what he has to say about the future reign of Jesus on this earth.

Interview with Andy Woods

Dr. Reagan: Well, Andy I was born into a Christian family, and was raised in a Christian church. In fact when I look back on my early years all I can remember is going to church. I was there Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, Vacation Bible School, crusades. We were in church all the time. That was before television, but we were in church all the time. We didn't have the distractions that we have today. And the church I attended was a very conservative church and they--problem was they called themselves a New Testament Church and they really meant that. If they said, "Bring your Bible," everybody brought their New Testament.

Andy Woods: Wow.

Dr. Reagan: Because it was when Old Testament was stories for children.

Andy Woods: Ok.

Dr. Reagan: Of course we didn't understand the New because we didn't know the Old.

Andy Woods: Right.

Dr. Reagan: But anyway they were militantly Amillennial. In the sense that if you had any other view of Bible prophecy you were officially dis-fellowshipped from the church and kicked out. It is amazing that I ended up as a Bible prophecy teacher, particularly with a Pre-Millennial viewpoint. But anyway I heard only one sermon about Bible prophecy over, and over, and over. It was the sermon of our brotherhood and that sermon was, "There is not one verse in the Bible that even implies that Jesus will ever put His foot on this earth again. He's just going to appear. We are going to be taken off. The earth is going to be burned up and that was it. What about it are there any verses that imply that Jesus will put His foot on the earth again?"

Andy Woods: Um, how much time do we have to answer that? Just a handful, Job 19:25. Job of course the oldest book of the Bible. "I know that my Redeemers live, and in the end He will take His stand on this earth."

Dr. Reagan: Stand on this earth. That's right.

Andy Woods: Zechariah 14:4 talks about Christ's feet touching the Mount of Olives.

Dr. Reagan: And it says in verse 9, "On that day He becomes King over all the world."

Andy Woods: There we go. Isaiah 11:4, "He'll come and strike the earth with the rod of His mouth." I even thought of the verse that closes the Old Testament, "Lest He come and smite the land with a curse, or the earth with a curse." You get into the New Testament Acts 1:9-11 remember the angel said, "He's coming back just as you saw Him leave."

Dr. Reagan: Just as you saw Him leave.

Andy Woods: Which would be physical, literal. Revelation 5:10, "He's made us into a kingdom of priests and we'll reign upon the earth." Matthew 19:28. You need to tell me when to stop, I'll just keep rattling off verses here. The 12 tribes are going to govern the tribal allotments for the land of Israel. So I'm not sure when people make statements like that I just--

Dr. Reagan: And Revelation 19 certainly pictures Him coming back to earth.

Andy Woods: Absolutely the whole Scripture. That kind of question baffles me.

Dr. Reagan: I know. Well Amillennialists often argue that we are in the Millennium now; it began at the Cross it will continue until the Lord returns. I think in the early years they said it would last 1,000 years then the Lord would come back. And He didn't come back in 1000 AD. But they argue now that 1,000 is just figurative language, it just means a long period of time. So the Millennium began at the Cross and it is going to continue until the Lord comes back. And we are in the Millennium right now.

Andy Woods: Well I like to quote my friend Tommy Ice on this. He says, "If this is the Millennial Kingdom I must be living in the ghetto section of town."

Dr. Reagan: Isn't that the truth?

Andy Woods: You know because you just don't see the conditions spoken of for the Millennium. Is Jerusalem the center of worldwide political and spiritual authority today? No, it's not. Do we have world peace and perfect justice on the earth today? No, we do not. Do we have agricultural prosperity all over planet earth like Amos 9 says? No, we do not. Is the earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord? We can't even get the Bible in our public schools anymore.

Dr. Reagan: That's right.

Andy Woods: So--

Dr. Reagan: Is the animal kingdom living together in peace and with man in peace?

Andy Woods: Last time I was at the zoo I noticed that the wolf and lamb were in different cages. So, it is just a matter of people using the New Testament to deliteralize the Old Testament. And that is how they come to these strange ideas.

Dr. Reagan: A lot of that comes from the fact that Amillennialists argue that end time prophecies constitute a very special form of literature, and that literature must always be interpreted symbolically.

Andy Woods: Uh-huh. Well I guess they are talking primarily about the book of Revelation. Let's just think about that for a minute. You look at the first chapter of the book there is a guy named John, he's obviously a literal character. He's on an island called Patmos that is obviously a literal island off the coast of Asia Minor. They mention seven letters to seven churches like Ephesus, those are obviously literal places. So, I guess I would say this I agree that there is a lot of symbolism in the book of Revelation, but not everything in the book is a symbol. And generally when the book of Revelation wants to be understood symbolically it will give you some kind of clue. Like it will like use words like in Revelation 11:8 spiritually. Or Revelation 12:1, "I saw a great sign." Or John will say something like Revelation 8:8 "a giant mountain came from the sky and it went to the ocean."

Dr. Reagan: The turnaround for me came with the book of Zechariah. Again I grew up in a church never studied the Old Testament. One day I just opened the book, started reading Zechariah and I notice something that I had never noticed before it is full of First Coming prophecies. And every one of them meant what they said. Why don't the Second Coming prophecies mean what they say?

Andy Woods: Exactly.

Dr. Reagan: And furthermore if you don't believe prophecies mean what they say how can you ever determine if they are fulfilled?

Andy Woods: Right. And the great, as you say the great validator of coming prophecy is God's track record.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Andy Woods: You know I am fascinated by Isaiah 53. It talks about Jesus being buried in the tomb of a rich man. Low and behold that happened a man named Joseph of Arimathea. It talks about Him being pierced in Isaiah 53 verse 5, low and behold that happened. It talks about Him being numbered amongst the transgressors. Low and behold He is crucified between two thieves. Not to mention Micah 5:2 and a gazillion other prophecies we could go through. Why would the Holy Spirit change horses in mid-stream? And say well these are literal, but what's coming is not literal.

Dr. Reagan: Right. Ok, Amillennialists argue that the book of Revelation is the only book in the Bible that mentions anything resembling a future reign of Christ on earth, and they such a reign is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible.

Andy Woods: Um, I think that is almost a backwards statement. I would say that the majority of the passages that we have--

Dr. Reagan: The overwhelming majority yes.

Andy Woods: --regarding the earthly reign of Christ come from the Old Testament.

Dr. Reagan: And really the only new information in Revelation 20 is the length.

Andy Woods: The length the duration.

Dr. Reagan: Which is says what six or seven times?

Andy Woods: Six times. So, see Revelation is assuming we already know the Old Testament so it is not going to repeat everything. But if the listeners look up Isaiah 2:1-4, Isaiah 11:6-9, Isaiah 65:17-23 these are all Old Testament passages. They will see a wonderful description of what the earthly kingdom is going to be like.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah, I often make the point that the Book of Revelation is really a book primarily about the Tribulation. If you want to know about the Millennium go over and read Isaiah. I mean from beginning to end he is talking about the Millennium.

Andy Woods: Exactly. And even going back to Genesis you know God was very clear regarding the land parameters that the nation of Israel would have one day. They have never possessed land to that quantity and we are waiting for a Millennial Kingdom for it to happen.

Dr. Reagan: And again one we already mentioned Zechariah 14 which says the Lord is going to come back. His feet is going to touch the Mount of Olives, it is going to split in half. He is going to speak a supernatural word and the Antichrist and his forces will be destroyed. Verse 9, on that day He will become King over all the earth.

Andy Woods: That's right.

Dr. Reagan: How much more do we need? But you know the thing that is interesting about that is that when I first started studying Bible prophecy I ran across a remarkable book called, "The Millennium" by Loraine Boettner who was a very famous theologian in the 20th Century. And he took that passage, Zechariah 14 and he said, "This doesn't mean what it says. Let me tell you what it means. The City of Jerusalem stands for the human heart. The forces around it are the evil that surrounds the human heart. When you ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior He comes and He stands on your heart and it splits in contrition. And on that day He begins to rule over your heart."

Andy Woods: Wow. If you put your ear to the ground you can hear poor Zechariah rolling over in his grave, because he would think that is such a foreign idea compared to what he said.

Dr. Reagan: I know. But you know people love to spiritualize Scripture. They love it because it makes them god.

Andy Woods: Exactly.

Dr. Reagan: They can make it say anything they want it to say.

Andy Woods: Yeah, and it sounds like some of our folks on the Supreme Court. The Constitution can't be interpreted by the Framers intent because we want to read our socialistic ideas into the document.

Dr. Reagan: That's right absolutely.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: I want to pause here in my interview with Dr. Woods in order to give you a very special treat. That treat is a great song about the Lord's Second Coming to reign on this earth.

The singer is Jack Hollingsworth, the man who has been our featured vocalist ever since we began broadcasting this program back in 2002. Jack lived on the streets as a homeless person for 20 years before he found the Lord in December of 1988 and his life was completely transformed.

The song Jack is going to sing is one of the greatest that has ever been written about the Lord's return. The author is a lady by the name of Dianne Wilkinson who lives in Dyersburg, Tennessee. She is a prolific song writer who has written more than 1,000 Gospel songs. I sent her a recording of Jack's rendition of her song, "We Shall See Jesus," and she wrote back and said it was the best she had ever heard. Listen carefully to the words of this song. It's a song about three hills that were important in the life of Jesus. And now, here is Jack Hollingsworth singing, "We Shall See Jesus."

Jack Hollingsworth

We shall see Jesus
Just as He is.
Once on a hillside
People were gathered
Hoping to see Him
As thousands were fed
He touched the blind eyes
Healed broken spirits
Moved with compassion
He raised up the dead
But once on a hillside
People were gathered
Watching as Jesus was crucified
No one showed mercy to the one who had healed them.
Yet, Jesus loved them as He suffered and died.
But once on a hillside people were gathered
For Jesus had risen and soon would ascend
And then, as He blessed them
Listen.
He rose to the heavens
But He gave them His promise to come back again.
And we shall see Jesus just as they saw Him.
There is no greater promise than this
And when He returns in
His power and glory
Yes, we shall see Jesus
We shall see Jesus
Just as He is!M

Dr. Reagan: Wow! What a powerful song about our Lord's return. And now, let's return to my interview of Dr. Andy Woods about the millennial reign of Jesus. Well Amillennialists argue that the Church is the fulfillment of all Kingdom prophecies.

Andy Woods: Well, it is only true if you don't care about details. If you get into some view that says the New Testament rewrites the Old Testament like what you just explained. You know reading these soteriological, salvation concepts back into Zechariah 14. But that is not how you

do Bible study method, you let the author say what he wants to say. You know frankly a lot of times we don't like what the authors says. But who cares what we think.

Dr. Reagan: That's right.

Andy Woods: God has spoken and we need to adjust our own beliefs according to what the author says. And you look at the Church today very clearly you know don't have, for example Ezekiel talks about a temple that would function in the Millennium. You have no such structure today that Ezekiel describes.

Dr. Reagan: That's right.

Andy Woods: It even talks about the Millennial River going into the Dead Sea bringing the Dead Sea back to life biologically. I just was in the land of Israel and the sea is just as dead as it's always been. So, I look around the world today and I don't see kingdom conditions.

Dr. Reagan: But you just don't understand that that description of the Temple is really a description of the Church.

Andy Woods: Well, I guess if you want to rewrite, completely rewrite what Ezekiel says. Ezekiel with the amount of detail and specificity that he gives he's obviously not talking about somebody that trusts in Christs at a Vacation Bible School.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah. Well do you think that a lot of this is motivated, I'm not saying all of it, but a lot of it motivated by a rejection of what the Bible says about the Jews, and the fact that God is going to fulfill a lot of prophecies among the Jewish people in the end times? And it is just Replacement Theology?

Andy Woods: There is I think, and I can't prove it and I'm not God and I can't see people's heart. But to my mind and in my opinion, you asked me my opinion there is a lot of mentality particularly among Gentile Christians that we believe in Jesus, they, the Jews nationally I am talking about didn't. And it's just not fair that Israel would be raised to a place of preeminence again. Because that is what the Old Testament says. It doesn't just say--

Dr. Reagan: That's right, prime nation of the world.

Andy Woods: Exactly. The Word is going to go forth from Zion. Jesus is going to rule the world not from Washington D.C.

Dr. Reagan: When a Jew walks by ten Gentiles will grab his robe and say, "We want to walk with you because we know God is with you."

Andy Woods: Exactly.

Dr. Reagan: This is hard for people to swallow.

Andy Woods: Well a Gentile looks at that Scripture and says, "Why do they deserve that?"

Dr. Reagan: They don't. It's grace.

Andy Woods: It's called grace. But there is this--

Dr. Reagan: Why do we deserve it?

Andy Woods: We don't deserve anything. But you know they say, "Why would they get that? We got it right, they didn't." And there is this sort of brewing resentment. And I honestly believe that's what fuels a lot of this allegorical approach to the Old Testament.

Dr. Reagan: When I began to study Bible prophecy intensely, and began to realize that I had grown up in a teaching that really was not biblical. And I began to realize that the Bible teaches Old Testament and New in many, many scriptures that Jesus is coming back to reign in righteousness, and in power from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem and the whole world is going to be flooded with peace, righteousness, and justice. The first question that came into my mind was why? Why in the world would God have a Millennium? Why not just have Jesus come back and everything ends, and the earth burns up? What does He need a Millennium for?

Andy Woods: Well I think there is a lot of reasons. If you were to take the doctrine of the Millennium away there is a ton of themes, particularly in the Old Testament that never get resolved. One of them is God's authority over this earth was challenged by Satan and Adam. And if that's true and Satan is now the God of this age there has to be a time in history where God reasserts His authority over the planet. Where He rules through a man the last Adam, just like He intended to rule over the planet through a first Adam. And that theme never gets resolved. And beyond that there are many verses we've talked about today that really don't fit today like Ezekiel's Temple. They don't fit the eternal state either because there is no temple in the eternal state. So where are you going to put that prophecy? The only place it really fits is during that intermediate 1,000 year time period prior to the destruction of the earth.

Dr. Reagan: Well basically what you're saying is that a lot of prophecies whose fulfillment depends upon that 1,000 year period. Jesus is promised that one day He is going to receive the honor and glory and power that He was denied the first time He came. We have the promise to the nations that they are going to experience peace. We have the promise to nature that everything is going to be reconciled and brought back and redeemed the way it was originally with peace in nature. We have the promise to the Jews that they are going to be the prime nation of the world. We have the promise to us that we are going to reign with Jesus Christ over the nations of the world.

Andy Woods: There's also a great lesson God wants to teach the world once and for all; where evil comes from.

Dr. Reagan: Amen. Amen.

Andy Woods: Does it come from the environment? Or does it come from the human heart?

Dr. Reagan: I think that is one of the most important reasons for the Millennium is. The liberal today says what we need to do is give everybody a guaranteed income, a nice home, a beautiful job, a wonderful car and everything will be alright, just redistribute the income. Well, the Bible teaches that man is basically evil. There is nothing more evil than the human heart.

Andy Woods: Right.

Dr. Reagan: And I often say to people, "You know you can take that guy and you can put him that nice neighborhood. Maybe living in the ghetto he is going to throw a rock through a window and steal a TV set, or he's going to pay \$50 for a prostitute. But you move him over to this new environment what's he going to do? He is going to put on his suit and tie and go to work and manipulate the computer and embezzle 2 million dollars and he's going to chase his neighbor's wife."

Andy Woods: Guess what you get when you educate a blue collar thief? You get a white collar thief.

Dr. Reagan: That's exactly right. And so, God began it all with two people in a perfect environment, and they rebelled. He's going to end it all by putting a whole world in a perfect

environment. I mean they are going to have 1,000 years of perfect peace, righteousness, and justice. But, think what that's like to live under that in the flesh? The flesh is wanting some extra marital sex here, and wanting some booze here, and some drugs here. And yet there's going to be a justice system that is swift, just like that. Every judge is going to have the mind of Christ. It's going to be--there's not going to be any fooling around with this. There's not going to be legislatures, the law is going to be given. And people living in the flesh are going to be boiling inside. And they'll say, "Oh, yes, we love you Jesus, but."

Andy Woods: And you can't blame the Devil either because the Devil is bound during that time.

Dr. Reagan: The Lord is going to show you don't change people by changing the environment. You change them by having the Holy Spirit come into their lives and reshape them in the image of Jesus.

Andy Woods: That is the whole Christian message.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah. And that's how it's going to end, the way it began.

Andy Woods: Absolutely.

Dr. Reagan: Alright, well, one final point here and that's always thrown at me is people turn to 2 Peter chapter 3 and they look at verse 10 and they say, "The day of the Lord will come like a thief in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." And they say, "Look, David, the Lord's coming. The earth will be burned up. That's it. There is no mention there of any millennial reign."

Andy Woods: Well, are we just going to build our whole doctrine of the end times on one verse?

Dr. Reagan: On one verse?

Andy Woods: think--

Dr. Reagan: It goes back to the point you made, you've got to look at everything to develop a doctrine.

Andy Woods: Sure, and you get into Revelation 19-22 there is an order. Jesus returns chapter 19. Chapter 20:1-10 a thousand year reign of Christ. Chapter 20:11-15 the Great White Throne Judgment. Then John no longer saw the present earth for the former things had passed away. That's what I think Peter's talking about. And then what follows is the eternal state. Peter's not giving a commentary on the whole eschatological scheme, he is just commentating on one little aspect of it.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: Well, folks, that's our program for this week. I hope it has 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."