

Christ in Prophecy

Christmas 5: “Christmas Prophecies”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Jesus fulfilled 109 prophecies when He came the first time. And anyone who thinks that is an accident knows nothing, absolutely nothing about the laws of probability. Prophecy is proof positive that Jesus was God in the flesh. Stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our blessed hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I am delighted to have two colleagues with me again this week. The first is my former Associate Evangelist, Dennis Pollock. Dennis serves now as the Founder and Director of Spirit of Grace Ministries located in McKinney, Texas. It is an evangelistic and healing ministry that is aimed primarily at Africa and India, and we are glad to have you back here in the United States.

Dennis Pollock: Well thanks Dave, I love being with you and all the wonderful folks at Lamb and Lion.

Dr. Reagan: Well thank you. And also my other guest today is our newest staff member, Nathan Jones. Nathan serves both as an Evangelist and as our Web Minister. He is on our website 8 hours a day answering questions about Bible prophecy and assisting people in defending the Christian faith, praying for them all kinds of things.

Nathan Jones: Everything.

Dr. Reagan: All kinds of interaction, so if you have a question you send it to Nathan he gets all the hard questions. Now every year at Christmas I am reminded of the

remarkable prophecies concerning the birth of Jesus and how they substantiate His deity and the faithfulness of God. In this program, we are going to take a look at some of those prophecies. The first that came to my mind are those that established the general time period when the Lord would appear. Tell us about those prophecies, Nathan.

Nathan Jones: I'll be happy to Dave, there are two of them it is Genesis 49 and Daniel 9.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, I'll tell you what let's take them in order, let's begin with Genesis 49.

Nathan Jones: Genesis 49. The verse that I have in mind is Genesis 49:10 which contains the words spoken by Jacob on his death bed to his son, Judah. Jacob said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah ...Until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples." Now, the term, "Shiloh," was recognized by the Jewish rabbis as a Messianic title, so the term, "scepter," refers to the judicial power of the nation. Thus, this prophecy is saying that the Jewish nation's judicial power will never be lost before the Messiah comes.

Dr. Reagan: But, Nathan, didn't the Jews lose their judicial power during the Babylonian captivity, about 500 years before Christ?

Nathan Jones: Well, Judah's national sovereignty was lost, but they never lost their ability to have their own courts and judges during that time.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, so then, the loss of judicial power must have been during the time of the Romans?

Nathan Jones: Exactly, it was during 7 AD the Jewish Sanhedrin Council had actually lost the ability to pronounce the death penalty.

Dr. Reagan: Well you know Nathan that is remarkable because the Messiah had come 11 years earlier when Jesus was born say in 4 BC. So, Shiloh had arrived shortly before the scepter departed, just as prophesied!

Nathan Jones: Exactly.

Dr. Reagan: Well Dennis, tell us about the other first coming prophecy the one that is contained in Daniel 9.

Dennis Pollock: Okay, well it is a pretty complex prophecy, so let me just summarize it. The prophecy was written during the Babylonian captivity. Basically, what it says is that the Messiah will come and be killed 483 years after an order is issued for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. That order was given by the Medo Persian ruler, Artaxerxes, and 483 years later, Jesus entered Jerusalem to be crucified.

Dr. Reagan: You know Dennis, that is absolutely amazing and the world of course would call that a coincidence.

Dennis Pollock: They might call it a coincidence but the truth is that when you have these kinds of prophecies and their precise fulfillment that goes well beyond the realm of coincidence. That would be a God-incidence, that is, historical events that are orchestrated by the hand of Almighty God.

Dr. Reagan: I like that term "God-incidence". You know I would agree Dennis. You know I spent some seven years cataloguing the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the first coming of the Messiah, and in that process I discovered a total of 109 separate and distinct prophecies that were fulfilled in the first coming of Jesus. 109! Folks, a science professor by the name of Peter Stoner has calculated the odds of just 7, 7 of those prophecies being fulfilled accidentally in the life of one person. He concluded that the odds are 1 in 10 to the 17th power. And that's the number 1 with 17 zeros after it, that is 100 quadrillion, about 10 times the size of our national debt. Have you ever pondered the odds represented by this phenomenal number? Now, you know I have never met Peter Stoner, in fact he has gone on to be with the Lord. But I know he must have been a good guy because he uses the state of Texas to illustrate the meaning of 1 in 10 to the 17th power. Here is what he says, He says, "Just conceive of the odds you would fill the state of Texas, knee deep in silver dollars, with one of those dollars having a black checkmark on it. Then you take 10,000 bulldozers and let them just kind of mix up the silver dollars really, really, good for 10 years. And then you would

blindfold a guy and turn him loose in that sea of silver dollars and the odds that on the first draw he would reach down and pick up one of those silver dollars with the black checkmark on it, is 1 in 10 to the 17th power!

Nathan Jones: You're right, Dave, that's just beyond the realm of possibility. That's why some people try to argue that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies on purpose. But most were incapable of being purposeful, and being self-fulfillment. For example, consider the two we just looked at concerning His birth. How many of us have been able to control the timing of our birth?

Dr. Reagan: And not only the timing the same is true about the place of his birth.

Nathan Jones: Oh yeah, that's right Dave that brings us to one of the most important prophecies concerning Jesus' birth. And you can find it in Micah 5:2.

Dr. Reagan: Well tell you what, Nathan, before you read from Micah let's take a moment for a song. A song by Jack Hollingsworth of Acts 29 Ministries.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Thank you Jack, for that beautiful song. And now, Nathan, let's go back to you and take a look at Micah 5:2 which speaks of the birthplace of the Messiah.

N: Sure thing, Dave. The passage reads as follows, "But as for you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you one will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel." This prophecy, written 500 years before Jesus' birth, specifically names the town where the Messiah will be born.

Dennis Pollock: Yes it does, Nathan, and folks it does it more precisely than most people realize because there were two Bethlehems in Israel at that time, one in the north near the Sea of Galilee, and the other in the south near Jerusalem. This prophecy says the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, Ephrathah, meaning the Bethlehem near Jerusalem. Let me illustrate it this way. If I were to ask a person where he was born, and

he said to me, "Springfield," I would have to ask, "Which Springfield?" That's because there's a Springfield in almost every state of our nation. We are talking here, folks, about very specific prophecies not the kind of vague and indecipherable prophecies that characterize the writings of false prophets like Nostradamus, so-called prophecies that are written in such linguistic mumbo-jumbo that they can be "understood" after the event and then they can be applied to numerous events, over and over again.

Nathan Jones: Before we leave the prophecy in Micah, I'd like to point out something else it says that is very important and which is often overlooked. Beginning with the latter part of verse 2 and continuing through verse 3, the passage says, "From you Bethlehem one will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity." Now these verses make it very clear that the Messiah will be divine that He will be God in the flesh for these verses say He will be the one who has existed eternally.

Dr. Reagan: And folks, this is not the only prophecy that affirms the divinity of the Messiah. Another can be found in Isaiah 9:6 where it says the Messiah will be called, "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace."

Dennis Pollock: And let's not forget that last week when we focused on the scriptural evidence of the virgin birth, we took a look at several prophecies that indicated the divine nature of the Messiah. Like the one in Genesis 3:15 which said He would be born of "the seed of woman," and the one in Isaiah 7:14 which said point blank that He would be born of a virgin.

Dr. Reagan: Folks, there are many other details in the Hebrew Scriptures about the birth of the Messiah that were prophesied long before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. For example, the prophet Balaam mentioned that a special star would mark the Messiah's birth, and that is exactly what happened. And Solomon in one of his psalms stated that the kings would send the Messiah gifts, the New Testament tells us that those gifts were brought by Persian wise men. Hosea prophesied that the Messiah would be taken into Egypt, and that is exactly what happened when Jesus' parents fled Bethlehem due to the threats of King Herod. And Herod's subsequent slaughter of the children of Bethlehem was prophesied by Jeremiah. The New Testament also contains many

prophecies about the birth of the Messiah, and in a few moments we will take a look at them.

Part 3

Nathan Jones: As Dave said before the break, in addition to Old Testament prophecies that were given hundreds and even thousands of years before the Messiah was even born, the New Testament contains a cluster of prophetic statements that were made shortly before the birth of Jesus. The first was given by the angel Gabriel to Zacharias, the priest who was to become the father of John the Baptist. Gabriel told Zacharias that his barren wife, Elizabeth, would conceive a son to be named John, and that this son would serve as a forerunner of the Messiah, preparing the hearts of the people for the Messiah's appearance.

Dennis Pollock: Gabriel next appeared to Mary to announce that she would be the mother of the Messiah by the power of the Holy Spirit. He told her that her child's name would be Yeshua, or Jesus, in English, meaning, "God's salvation." He also said the child would be divine, that He would be "the Son of the Most High."

Nathan Jones: The next prophetic words came out of Mary's mouth after she became pregnant with the Messiah. Luke records a glorious song which she sang to Elizabeth. In the song Mary prophesies that her son will, "scatter the proud," "bring down rulers," "exalt the humble," and "fill the hungry"

Dr. Reagan: And three months later, Elizabeth's husband, Zacharias, was filled with the Holy Spirit when his son, John the Baptist, was born, and Zacharias also sang a prophetic song. Referring to the baby in Mary's womb, he proclaimed that God had, "raised up a horn of salvation," for the Jewish people. He then declared that his own son would be called, "the Prophet of the Most High," and he prophesied that his son would "go before the Lord to prepare His way." Zacharias concluded his song with one of the most beautiful poetic prophecies concerning the Messiah that can be found anywhere in the Scripture. Here is what he said, "Because of the tender mercy of our God . . . The

sunrise from on high shall visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace.”

Dennis Pollock: The next prophetic song of celebration was sung on the night of the Messiah’s birth when an angel appeared to the shepherds of Bethlehem and proclaimed, “Behold, I bring you good news of a great a joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord.” That angel was suddenly joined by a multitude of angels who sang a triumphant chorus, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

Dr. Reagan: The final prophetic song related to the Messiah’s birth was sung by a righteous and devout man of Jerusalem by the name of Simeon. The Holy Spirit had come upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die before he saw the Messiah. He was given that glorious privilege forty days after the Messiah’s birth when the parents of Jesus came to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate their baby to God. Simeon took the Christ child in his arms, he thanked the Lord, and then he sang, “My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”

Nathan Jones: Folks, the bottom line is that the fulfillment of all these prophecies in the life of one person, Jesus of Nazareth, is proof positive that He was who He said He was, namely, the Messiah of God.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, Nathan, and folks, God’s faithfulness in fulfilling each of these prophecies in detail is also significant because it gives us assurance that He will likewise faithfully fulfill all the prophecies He has given to Christians regarding the soon return of Jesus. God has made some great promises to the Church.

Dennis Pollock: He certainly has, Dave. And that’s why Paul wrote that, “The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is yet to be revealed to us.”

Dr. Reagan: And likewise, in 1 Corinthians 2:9 Paul wrote, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has the mind of man even conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him.”

Nathan Jones: And one day very soon Jesus is going to appear in the heavens and take the Church, both the living and dead out of this world. On the way up we are going to receive glorified, immortal bodies that will never age again, never again feel any pain. After the Tribulation, we will return to earth with Jesus to help Him reign over the earth. And we will see this world flooded with peace, righteousness, and justice, as the waters cover the seas.

Dr. Reagan: And, Nathan those are only a few of the glorious promises that God has made about the future. Folks, we can be assured that God will be just as faithful in fulfilling those as He was in fulfilling all the promises He made about the first coming of the Messiah. And now let’s pause for another song by Jack Hollingsworth of Acts 29 Ministries.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: Thank you, Jack. That song was a great blessing. Now folks we want to return to one of the prophecies that we consider earlier. It’s the one that was given to Mary by the angel Gabriel when he informed her that she had been chosen by God to be the mother of the Messiah. It is recorded in Luke 1, beginning with verse 31. Nathan, why don’t you read that for us.

Nathan Jones: Okay. “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of his father, David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom there will be no end.”

Dr. Reagan: Now folks, this magnificent statement contains 7 promises. Four of them relate to the first advent of the Lord, and they have thus been fulfilled. Let’s consider those four, the fulfilled prophecies are number one, Mary will conceive and give birth to a

son. Second, His name will be called Jesus. Third, He will be called great. And fourth, He will be called the Son of God.

Dennis Pollock: But Dave, what most people don't realize is that Gabriel's statement to Mary contained three other prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled. Those three unfulfilled prophecies are these: First, He will be given the throne of David. Secondly, He will reign over the house of Jacob. And thirdly, there will be no end to His Kingdom.

Dr. Reagan: Folks, I call these three promises the, "forgotten promises of Christmas" because they are not taught by most churches in Christendom today. That's because most churches take the position that Jesus will never return to this earth again. That is called the Amillennial viewpoint.

Dennis Pollock: The Amillennial view is based on the supposition that the Bible does not mean what it says. To substantiate the viewpoint, its proponents are forced to spiritualize Scripture. Thus, in their interpretation of these three unfulfilled promises, they convert the throne of David into the throne of God and the house of Jacob becomes the Church. They then conclude that the promises have been fulfilled in the current reign of Jesus from His Father's throne over the Church.

Dr. Reagan: Now folks, there is no doubt that Jesus is currently reigning from His Father's throne over His kingdom, the Church. But to identify that reign with the one promised to Mary takes a great leap of imagination. The throne of David is not the throne of God. The throne of God is in Heaven. The throne of David is in Jerusalem. Jesus himself clearly differentiates between the throne of God and His own throne in Revelation 3:21. In that verse, Jesus says, "That He will one day allow believers, to sit with Him on His throne just as His Father has allowed Him to share His throne." Folks, Jesus is not on the throne of David today. He is sitting at the right hand of His father, on His Father's throne. He will occupy the throne of David when He returns to earth to reign from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem.

Nathan Jones: Nor is the Church the, house of Jacob. This is an Old Testament term for the children of Israel. The Church is never referred to in the Scriptures as the house of Jacob. The Bible teaches that a remnant of the Jews will one day accept Jesus as

their Messiah. This will occur at the end of seven years of terrible suffering called the Tribulation, or the time of Jacob's trouble. Now when Jesus returns at the end of that time of suffering, the Jewish remnant will be gathered to the land of Israel and will be made the foremost nation in the world. Jesus will then rule over the house of Jacob.

Dennis Pollock: Another important point to keep in mind is that the current Church Kingdom is not an everlasting kingdom. The Church Age Kingdom will end with the Rapture of the Church. The Church Kingdom will be followed by the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus will reign over all the earth from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. That kingdom here on this earth will last one thousand years. The final, eternal kingdom of Christ will be established on a new, perfected earth.

Nathan Jones: Folks, why can't we accept the promises made to Mary to mean what they say? The first four meant exactly what they said. Why must the last three be spiritualized? The only reason for spiritualizing them is to force them to conform to some preconceived doctrine.

Dr. Reagan: Folks, I believe God knows how to communicate. If God had intended to promise Mary that her Son would reign from Heaven over the Church forever, He would have said so. Instead He reaffirmed to her the promise He had made many times through out the Old Testament through the prophets there that his Son would reign from David's throne in Jerusalem over Israel and that He would be given a kingdom that would last forever.

Dennis Pollock: If the promises God made to the Jews didn't mean what they said, then how can we be sure that His promises to the Church mean what they say? I believe God says what He means and He means what He says.

Dr. Reagan: And I would agree whole heartedly Dennis. Folks, during this Christmas season I am going to praise God for sending His Son to die for my sins. But I am also going to praise Him for the fact that He has promised that He will soon send His Son again to fulfill the "forgotten promises" which Gabriel made to Mary. The church may have forgotten those promises, but I thank God that He never forgets a promise.

Dennis Pollock: Amen.

Part 5

Dr. Reagan: As we bring our program to a close, I would like to introduce our Lamb & Lion family to you. First, my wife Ann who has been by my side since the beginning of the ministry in 1980, encouraging me every step of the way. Our senior staff member is Gary Byers who joined our staff in 1983. Gary is our financial officer in charge of donations. He is also the person who does all our telephone counseling. Our next staff member in seniority is George Collich, Jr., our financial officer in charge of expenditures. The Lord brought George to us in 1990. George doubles as one of our camera operators when we are recording television programs. My fellow teacher and preacher Nathan Jones and his wife, Heather came to the ministry in 2007. They are the parents of 3 children. Nathan serves as our Web Minister. Heather transcribes our television programs and encodes them for closed captioning. My daughter, Rachel, and her husband, Leo, have also been working for the ministry since 1993. They are the caretakers of our grounds and buildings. Rachel also works in our mail room and serves as one of our video camera operators. Leo heads up our mail room operation and serves as our video switcher. In 1998 the Lord brought us two ladies who do most of the behind the scenes work in our ministry. Without them, we just could not function. They are Kay Bien, our Executive secretary, and Cathie Grubb, our administrative assistant. Kay does all the proof reading of our television programs. Cathie gets involved in TV production when we need a teleprompter operator. Our Media Department is composed of 3 staff members. Larry Watts serves as our Media Director. He and his wife Cheri are the parents of 4 children. Larry is assisted by Trey Collich, and Jack Smith. When video taping Trey serves as our camera operator and Jack operates the audio control board, both of them assist with the editing of our programs. And now, with everyone gathered here on the set, I must admit it is a little scary to think that there is no one behind the cameras and no one in the control room. Folks, we are on autopilot! And now as we say goodbye to you and to the old year we want to join together in saying, "Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!"

End of Program