

Christ in Prophecy
Interview 18: “Dennis Pollock on Death”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: I’m standing here at the grave of a little girl who died at the age of seven in 1883. Do you have any idea what will happen to you when you die? Many people believe that death ends existence, that when you die you just simply cease to exist. Christians believe there is life after death, but what kind? Some believe in soul sleep, that you just lie comatose in a grave until the Lord returns. Others believe that when they die their spirit will be ushered into the presence of God by His angels. And speaking of angels, some Christians believe they will become angels after death. Others argue that we will be disembodied spirits floating around on clouds playing harps. And some believe we will have tangible bodies just like we have now, and that we will live eternally in the presence of God on a new earth. For a discussion of what the Bible has to say about all these issues, stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus our blessed hope and welcome to another broadcast of *Christ in Prophecy*. It’s good to be back with you this week, thanks for tuning in. And it’s good to have in the studio with me this week my two colleagues, Dennis Pollock and Nathan Jones. Dennis was on our staff here at Lamb and Lion Ministries for 12 years as I explained last week, and then felt called of God to form his own ministry called Spirit of Grace. Later in this program we’ll tell you specifically how to get in touch with that ministry. Nathan is our newest staff member; he is our Web Minister that you would talk to if you go to our website. Fellows, I want to jump right into this topic because there’s a lot of material we need to cover and I want to start with a verse in Hebrews 2:15 where it says, “That most people live in life long slavery to the fear of death and that Jesus came to deliver us from that fear.” Dennis, I know you’ve given a lot of thought to this point, share with us some dramatic examples you’ve found of the fear of death.

Dennis Pollock: Okay, well I must be a little bit strange because I do like to collect quotes and things that I read about celebrities that have died or expressed thoughts about death. You know, I'm a big Alfred Hitchcock fan.

Dr. Reagan: Oh I am too.

Dennis Pollock: Now the ones he made in the '70s weren't much good but the '40s and the '50s were great, but this isn't an Alfred Hitchcock commercial. Anyway, it's interesting that he was the master of death to a previous generation. His movies all involved, or nearly all involved a murder, and you know, he just kept you on the edge of your seat with the fear of death, or with the idea that somebody's about to get killed or whatever. But the interesting thing was, that in real life, as it was his turn to die. One of the actresses that was one of his favorite ladies to work with, Ingrid Bergman, came to his deathbed to visit him as he was dying, and Alfred Hitchcock cried like a baby. Just tears running down his face as he told her how fearful he was about dying. It was a whole lot easier for him to do it on the silver screen than to do it in person.

Dr. Reagan: Give us another example.

Dennis Pollock: Another example. This one is funny. There was a comic book creator by the name of Mark Gruenwald that wanted to be immortal. So he decided the best way would be to literally put himself into his work. And the way he did that was he made arrangements that when he died they would cremate his body, they would take the ashes and mix them with ink, and that was turned into comic books. It was used to print comic books, so you may want to check your comic book collection at home and see, but that was his attempt to be immortal was to have some of the ink from comic books with his ashes in it.

Dr. Reagan: What about Perry Mason? I heard you talk about him one time. Tell us about him.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, well, of course his name was really Raymond Burr, great actor. I love the Perry Mason shows particularly, did some movies in his latter life. But as he

was dying, he was just determined to live as long as he possibly could. Which I suppose is okay, but in his case, he really took it to extremes. As he felt himself dying of cancer, at one point he forced himself to sit up in his bed. He was convinced that if he would lie down he was gonna die. And I guess he wasn't wrong because eventually that was a case even Perry Mason wasn't gonna win. He finally, out of exhaustion, lay down...

Dr. Reagan: So he sat up for like 48 hours.

Dennis Pollock: Something like that, close to two days. He sat up in bed trying to will himself to stay alive, but he couldn't. Someone asked him as he was going through the process of having the cancer, and so forth. They said, "What have you learned about all of this? What life lessons have you learned?" He said, "Well, I've learned that death is messy, it's ugly, and it's not the least little bit romantic." So, he was right about that.

Nathan Jones: Dennis, this makes me think of Ted Williams, the baseball player, who got himself cryogenically frozen and then hoping that medicine someday will bring him back. But I have a question for you. I can understand why a non-Christian would fear death, they have no hope. But what's really sad is that there's Christians who fear death. They cling to this world as if it's the last thing. Why do you think that Christians have such a hard time with death?

Dennis Pollock: I think probably the biggest reason is carnality, the fact that they don't live close enough to Christ to desire to be with Him. You know when you think about Heaven, especially as you look at what Paul had to say about going there. The big deal is not, "I can't wait until I get to see those golden streets," or you know, "I am so eager to get to where the gates are made of pearl." No, what he said was, "I'm hard-pressed having a desire to be with Christ, which is far better." But he said, "You guys need me to remain in the flesh." His great passion was, "I wanna go be with Jesus." But you can't have that passion if He's not a passion in the way you live. If you're living for...and you know the sad thing is there are Christians, they're saved, they're going to Heaven, but they just aren't living close enough to Christ to have that kind of passion. And as a result they're thinking about plans in the future and you know, buying a new home or whatever. And they can't get excited about being with Christ.

Dr. Reagan: I would agree with you about that but I think there's also another thing that plays here and that is that the average church never has any preaching about Bible prophecy and the promises that God has made for the future. And the average Christian knows absolutely nothing about what's gonna happen when they die. So they cling to this world because they don't know the promises of the future. That's what I want to get to in the next segment of this program. I want to talk about what are some of the things that are going to happen to us when we die? What can we look forward to at the point of death if we're a professing Christian? But before we get to those I want us to pause for just a moment and folks, I want to show you some materials that will help you to better understand death and the promises of God concerning it.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Okay Dennis, I want to ask you know about what does happen when we die. But before we get into that I want to ask you something else. How can people get in touch with your ministry, if they wanted to contact you or get on your mailing list or whatever. Tell them how to do that.

Dennis Pollock: Well the simplest thing, if you have the internet or you have access to it, is to go to our website and that's www.spiritofgrace.org. It's got a phone number there and it's got an email, a place where you can email us and so forth. So anyway, spiritofgrace.org is the thing to remember and we'd love to hear from you. And if you want to be on our mailing list, just send us an email and say, "Hey put me on your mailing list." You'll get our monthly newsletter.

Dr. Reagan: And let me clarify something, I know that you're primarily focused on foreign missions but you are available for speaking here inside the United States, aren't you?

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, I sure am, and I do teaching on a number of topics so I'm kind of a part preacher and part teacher.

Dr. Reagan: Okay thanks. Alright Dennis, let's get into it now. What happens when you die? Do you go into soul sleep? Do you turn into an angel? Do you turn into an ethereal

spirit floating around on a cloud playing a hard? I mean, what happens to a Christian? We're gonna talk about Christians right now. What happens to a Christian when they die?

Dennis Pollock: Well, the question reminds me of...Tom Hanks got up at the Oscars at one point, the academy awards, and he talked about, he had done a movie about homosexuals, and he talked about all the homosexuals that have died of AIDS and they were now angels in Heaven. Tom may be a great actor, and he is, but he's not much of a theologian.

Nathan Jones: *Davinci Code.*

Dennis Pollock: Homosexuals aren't gonna be angels but neither will anybody else, so we do not turn into angels. But we do depart and be with Christ. The Bible says, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." So the implication, really more than an implication, the clear declaration is that we will immediately be in the presence of Christ. Peter talked about his own upcoming death in one of his epistles, and he said, "I must shortly take off my tabernacle, or my tent." And so the idea is that the body that we wear is literally just a shell. It is not the real us at all, when we die the genuine person, the spirit being, goes immediately to be with Christ. And that's why Paul said it's far better to go and be with Christ and to be absent in the body is to be present with the Lord.

Dr. Reagan: Well, so much of Christendom believes in soul sleep, and I guess they get this from the fact that the Bible metaphorically refers to death quite often as sleep. And I suppose that really is based upon the fact that the body will one day be resurrected. The spirit goes to be with the...the body in effect metaphorically sleeps because one day it is going to be resurrected and put back together.

Dennis Pollock: You know, some people when they read about the Resurrection they infer that means that we just cease to exist for awhile, and Christ is gonna bring us back up. But it's not that we cease to exist it is that our spirit is separated from our body. So that when the Rapture occurs and when the Resurrection occurs, the spirit then rejoins the body because God as intended all along that we would live in eternity as a physical

as well as a spiritual being. A lot of people don't really get that and they just assume we're gonna be spirits that float around on clouds and play harps.

Dr. Reagan: So we have a physical body now, and then when we die we have sort of what theologians often refer to as an intermediate spirit body. We'll always have a body of some type. And that intermediate spirit body we know exists because we can read in the Bible about Elijah and Moses appearing at the transfiguration. Samuel appearing to Saul when he went to the witch of Endor, these people had some sort of intermediate spirit body. And even in Revelation 7 it says that the tribulation martyrs coming out are standing before the throne of God worshipping God. They have white robes on, they have some sort of body during that time. So we are never bodiless, we are never unconscious, we have consciousness. In fact, Jesus told a story about the rich man and Lazarus and they died and one went to paradise, the other when to torment. And they both had bodies they could see each other they could talk to each other, they were fully conscious, they weren't in soul sleep.

Dennis Pollock: Exactly.

Dr. Reagan: And I think Paul makes it clear when he says, you know I want to stay here and work with the Lord but I really want to be with the Lord. I'll work as long as the Lord wants me to, but I really want to be with the Lord. There's no idea he's gonna lie in a coffin for millions of years, but the moment he died he was going to be ushered into the presence of the Lord and live in his presence in consciousness.

Dennis Pollock: And that's not a very hard thing to discern if you read the Scriptures much at all, you can see that pretty clearly. I think the people that are confused are basically people that don't read the Bible too often.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, so we have a fleshly body now. We get an intermediate spirit body when we die and we're with the Lord, but one day we're gonna get a glorified body. Now when in the world, Nathan, when do we get a glorified body?

Nathan Jones: Well, the glorified bodies come, 1 Corinthians 15 is great for that. When Jesus comes back at the last trumpet and the shout, when we're raptured, that's when we get the glorified bodies.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, so the glorified body occurs at the time of the rapture. In fact, 1 Thessalonians 4 it says that when He comes He's gonna bring with Him the spirits of the dead. Their bodies will be resurrected, their spirits put back together, and glorified. And for those of us who are alive, we will just be translated up to meet him, we won't even experience death on the way up we'll be translated from mortal to immortal. Now that's for the Church age saints who are alive at the time that Jesus comes. But the Bible also indicates that glorified bodies are going to be received by other people at a different time, at the end of the Tribulation for example. You're going to have the Old Testament saints resurrected, and you're going to have the Tribulation martyrs resurrected and both of those groups will be receiving their glorified bodies at that time. All of which brings me to an important point. What in the world is a glorified body? I mean, it's kind of hard to get your fingers on? What is a glorified body? Who wants to jump in first?

Dennis Pollock: Well, the best way to understand it is to look at Jesus after the resurrection. The Bible calls him the first fruits of the resurrection. So Jesus was I like to call him the premiere showing. When Hollywood has a premiere, they invite all the big shots...they never invite me for some reason I haven't figured out why I'm not getting invitations.

Dr. Reagan: Oh, you're just such a nerdy guy, you know...something, I don't know.

Dennis Pollock: But they have a premiere showing and it's the very first chance you get to see the new movie, and Jesus was the premiere showing of the glorified body. The disciples when they saw him were in such a state of shock because you know, this guy's supposed to be dead, that their mouths were open they're trembling. Jesus says, "Hey don't be afraid it's me." He said, "Touch me," and this is amazing, "a spirit does not have flesh and bones like you see I have." So He wanted them to feel, I'm not a ghost I'm not a spirit, I have a body, I have bones. And even to make the point further, He says, "You guys have any food around here?" And you know, it's not like He had a sudden hunger pain, I doubt, you know, but I think He wanted to prove, I am so real, yes

I can eat. Which encourages me brother, we're probably gonna get to have some nice meals up in Heaven as well.

Dr. Reagan: And not have to worry about gaining weight!

Dennis Pollock: That's right.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I think that's a good point. And Philippians 3:21 says point blank that we are going to have a body like the glorious body that Jesus Christ had after His resurrection. So looking at him gives us a very good idea of what a glorified body is all about. Now what I'd like to do in a moment is turn to first Corinthians 15 that you mentioned Nathan, we'll have you read that passage. And then I want us to really get specific about some characteristics of a glorified body, so that we can get a better idea even than what we have now of what it's all about. But before we do that, I'd like for us to pause for a moment for a song, and we're going to have a song by Jack Hollingsworth of Acts 29 Ministry. And it's a song that has to do with death, it's one of my favorites along that line, it's entitled *Leaving on My Mind*, so here is Jack Hollingsworth with *Leaving on My Mind*.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Okay fellows, we have established now that immediately after death the Christian receives, for the lack of a better term, an intermediate spirit body. That they're with the Lord immediately, they're in Heaven worshipping the Lord until the time for Jesus to return. But when He returns in the Rapture He will bring the spirits with Him, resurrect their bodies in a great miracle of resurrection. After all we're talking about the One who spoke and the whole universe came into existence. It's nothing for Him to speak and that body come back into existence, whether it's been eaten by the worms, dust to dust, dissolved in the ocean, cremated, preserved perfectly, or whatever. It's gonna come back. And He's gonna put that spirit together and give them a glorified body and those of us alive will receive a glorified body. Now, Paul tries to define a glorified body. And he does a pretty good job of it, although when he gets through you often have more questions than you had before he started. Let's read that segment, it's from 1 Corinthians chapter 15 beginning with verse 42 I believe. Read it for us Nathan.

Nathan Jones: Sure thing, 42. “So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.”

Dr. Reagan: Go ahead, if there is a natural body....

Nathan Jones: Sure. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, now I think the first one there is pretty obvious. It is sown a perishable body, it's raised imperishable, that means we're going to have immortal bodies. They'll never decay, they'll never age, right?

Nathan Jones: What's great for me is I always wanted to fly and you see that Jesus when He ascends he takes off or He just walks through walls and appears in rooms – can you imagine being able to do that? You're like super man.

Dennis Pollock: See, my great theological question is: Do we get capes when we fly or do we have to fly cape less? Do you have the answer to that?

Dr. Reagan: Only you could come up with that.

Nathan Jones: Only a toga.

Dennis Pollock: I've always wanted a cape, actually.

Dr. Reagan: It's pretty clear here we're gonna have imperishable bodies, but what does it mean when it says, “Sown in dishonor, raised in glory.” What do you think that means?

Dennis Pollock: Well, when I think of that I think about the death bed of most people. You know, I've been in hospital rooms where people are dying of cancer. The skin is a different color, often they can no longer communicate; they're just about half conscious.

It's just a very sad, sad thing. And I think Paul may be thinking about how we go down versus how we come up. When a man or a woman dies, they don't look too glorious, they don't look too powerful, they don't look too strong. You know, you may have been the coolest dude on the block when you were in your 20's, but when you're in your 80's or 90's and you're on your death bed dying of whatever, you don't look too hot. And that's not just true for sinners it's true for believers as well. So as we go down, there's a certain element of shame and sadness and dishonor. But on the way up, through the resurrection, there's no shame, there's no dishonor. It's glorious, it's powerful, it's awesome, and I think Paul is contrasting the going down in death versus the coming up in resurrection.

Dr. Reagan: I think you're right on target. And it's gonna be glorious in the sense that we're gonna receive glorified bodies, glorified bodies in the sense that they are perfected bodies. Listen to what Isaiah says, Isaiah 35:5, "The eyes of the blind will be open, the ears of the deaf will be unstopped, the lame will leap like a deer, the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy." All of the problems that we have with our bodies, the inflictions, handicaps are all gonna be taken away. And in that regard I cry out Maranatha every day because I have a grandson named Jason, who had a very peculiar genetic situation that caused his own body to attack his brain and eat away the frontal lobe of his brain, by the time he was three years old. And since that time, he's almost 24 now, he's in a state institution where he's very well cared for, but he doesn't know who I am, he doesn't know who anybody is, he won't let anybody touch him. He has to be put to sleep to have a haircut, and I yearn for that day when the Lord will touch his mind, he will be right, I can sit down I can talk to Jason. I can tell him how much I love him, I can play with him, you know, I just all of us know people like that, and this is it. It's gonna be a glorious thing.

Dennis Pollock: It's amazing. I think if the non-believers could ever really grasp how awesome the plan is God has for those who love them, they'd come to Christ out of sheer selfishness if for no other reason.

Dr. Reagan: It also says here it's sown in weakness but raised in power. Now what does that mean, Nathan what do you think? Power, it's raised in power.

Nathan Jones: Well, we're sons of Christ. Christ is willing to share His power with us. Now it doesn't mean particularly we become Jesus or we become Christ, but we have the abilities that He gives us up there that is powerful, it's imperishable. To use the superman example, again, he's bullet proof; well nothing will hurt us because we are in Christ's hands.

Dr. Reagan: Any other ideas about power?

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, well, when I read that I think of Jesus. When He was on the cross He didn't look very powerful. But when He was standing before the disciples risen from the dead, it was all power. Or when John saw Him in the first chapter of Revelation and He is so glorious and powerful John falls down like a dead man. I mean, it was just sheer power. Part of that is gonna apply to us we likewise will be raised in a powerful state.

Dr. Reagan: I'm wondering if it also refers to a spiritual sense in that we will have complete power over sin. We will no longer be enslaved to sin as we are now.

Nathan Jones: We're completed. We've finally gotten rid of the sin nature.

Dennis Pollock: The thing that excites me is what will be missing along with what we will have in that state and what we'll be missing will be the sin nature.

Dr. Reagan: I won't be struggling with that all the time. You know, even today I still have the Holy Spirit pulling me this way, and the body pulling me that way. And I'm fighting that battle all the time and I'll be so glad when that battle's over.

Dennis Pollock: You know, I've had times where I've felt so in the spirit and God's moved in my life. And then some fleshly thought or you get angry and you think, "Man that shouldn't happen!" You know, this is not supposed to happen, and yet it's sin nature.

Dr. Reagan: It also says we're sown a natural body but raised a spiritual body. If there's a natural body there's a spiritual body and I think this is where people often get

the idea that we're gonna be some sort of ethereal spirits. What do you think that means a spiritual body?

Dennis Pollock: Well I think it will be ultimately spiritual but it will also be physical, it will be spiritual and physical. But it will be the kind again as Jesus so that He could pass through walls. He could go from one place to another at the speed of thought, so ultimately it's spiritual but yet it is still also physical.

Dr. Reagan: I would hope it also means that we're gonna be totally subjected to willingly and happily to the Holy Spirit. A spirit-controlled body, I hope. Well, we don't have much time left Nathan, so let me just move very quickly to one of the questions, and that is...and we're gonna have to handle this quickly. And that is, what about a person who is not a believer? What happens to them when they die?

Dennis Pollock: You know, I heard a testimony of a fellow who was telling how he had gotten saved, he'd come from a rough background, kind of a gangster background. He talked about some of his old buddies that had died already. And he was trying to be colorful in his language and he said, "Yeah they're already crackling and popping in hell right now." Well, that's colorful language it's just not theologically right. There's nobody crackling and popping in Hell, not the Devil, nor Hitler, nor Stalin or anybody else. When the sinner dies he is taken to the county jail, you know when a prisoner is arrested he doesn't go to the penitentiary he goes to the jail. He awaits his trial. When a sinner dies he goes to jail, that is, he goes to a place where he will wait for his trial which is the Great White Throne Judgment, that place is called Hades, and that's where he will wait. Now, it's no picnic even in Hades.

Dr. Reagan: It's called torment.

Dennis Pollock: It's torment and it's miserable but it's gonna get worse yet as he goes into the Lake of Fire.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, so when an unbeliever dies his spirit goes to this place called Hades to this compartment called torment but one day he's gonna be resurrected also. When does that happen, Nathan?

Nathan Jones: The end of the millennial reign of Christ, the thousand year reign of Christ when it's the final judgment.

Dr. Reagan: At which point there's a judgment called the Great White Throne Judgment. What does He judge though?

Nathan Jones: Their works.

Dr. Reagan: And what is the result?

Nathan Jones: Well, Ephesians 2:8 and 9 makes it clear that man's works aren't good enough to get them saved, only Christ can get them saved.

Dr. Reagan: So what must a person do to be saved, Dennis?

Dennis Pollock: Well, what a person must do is put their faith in Christ. The Bible makes it clear that there is no way by good works and good deeds and trying to be a nice little boy or girl you're gonna be a justified in the sight of God. It is a simple act of faith in Christ. We do it through a simple prayer where we receive Christ and make Him our Savior by faith.

Dr. Reagan: Thank you Dennis, folks that's our program for this week. Until next week, the Lord willing, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries, saying "Look up, be watchful for our redemption is drawing near!"

End of Program