

## ***Christ in Prophecy***

### **Interview 41: “Tommy Ice on the Rapture”**

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#### **Opening**

**Dr. Reagan:** There are many arguments that people have come up with to try to disprove the concept of a Rapture occurring before the beginning of the Tribulation. So, what about it? Are the arguments valid? Is the concept of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture wishful thinking? Stay tuned for an interview with one of Christendom’s foremost authorities on the Rapture.

#### **Part 1**

**Dr. Reagan:** Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. My co-host Nathan Jones, and I have as our special guest a renowned Bible Prophecy teacher, Dr. Tommy Ice. Tommy is the head of the Pre-Trib Research Center and is a prolific writer on all aspects of Bible prophecy. Tommy, welcome to Christ in Prophecy.

**Dr. Ice:** Well thank you it is good to be with you Dave.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well we are glad to have you.

**Nathan Jones:** Good to have you here.

**Dr. Ice:** Thank you, Nathan.

**Nathan Jones:** I have two questions I would like to open with (1) since some people might not know, what is the Rapture because that is what we are talking about? And (2) what is the Pre-Trib Rapture?

**Dr. Ice:** Well the Rapture refers to people who are alive, who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ who are saved who are taken up to Heaven in a moment of time. And so in essence that is when the Resurrection of the Church will occur in conjunction with it. But the Rapture and the Resurrection are two separate events because the Rapture is for living people, the Resurrection is for dead people. But both end up in their new resurrection bodies and they meet Christ in the cloud and follow Him back to the Father’s house as John 14 says. And the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is the belief that that event is separate from the Second Coming.

**Nathan Jones:** Ok.

**Dr. Ice:** And it will take place before the 70th week of Daniel, the 7 year period of the Tribulation.

**Nathan Jones:** Hence, Pre-Trib.

**Dr. Ice:** Yes.

**Nathan Jones:** Ok.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well now what Scripture is this based on, the concept of the Rapture?

**Dr. Ice:** Well Jesus introduced it in the Upper Room Discourse less than 24 hours before He died. And if you look at the Upper Room Discourse Christ said 3 times and that is John 13-16.

**Dr. Reagan:** Right.

**Dr. Ice:** And He says there 3 times that there is too much for you to understand but when He the spirit of truth comes, the Holy Spirit, He will guide you into all things. I think that is referring to the Apostles. And every doctrine from chapter 14 onward is brand new, it is Church truth, so to speak. So you have the seed plot for what is later developed in the New Testament. And you have John 14 where Christ said that He is going to come back and take them to Himself, some say receive, but it is a word that means for Him to take us to Himself and return with us to the Father's house. And of course that is expanded upon by the Apostles as Christ predicted in 1 Thessalonians 4. In fact it is amazing, you look at the structural analysis of what Jesus said in John 14 1-3 and what Paul taught in 1 Thessalonians 4:12-18 and you have the same sequence of events there. So it is very clear they are talking about the same event.

**Dr. Reagan:** Talk about the sequence of events in 1 Thessalonians, what does Paul say is going to happen when the Rapture occurs?

**Dr. Ice:** Right, He is going to, Christ is going to give a command and it apparently will be passed down like we do in the military through an echelon and then.

**Dr. Reagan:** There is going to be a blowing of the trumpet, right?

**Dr. Ice:** Yes, and then that is the general command. And in that moment and we know from 1 Corinthians 15 that it says it will be a twinkling of an eye. And we will be taken up.

**Dr. Reagan:** The dead first.

**Dr. Ice:** Snatched up. Yeah, the dead will raise first because they have 6 feet further to go, as they say.

**Dr. Reagan:** Is that the reason?

**Dr. Ice:** Well pure speculation.

**Dr. Reagan:** Ok.

**Dr. Ice:** And then you have believers being caught up together with them into the clouds.

**Dr. Reagan:** So you are talking about a bodily resurrection at that point?

**Dr. Ice:** That's correct.

**Dr. Reagan:** And then the believers will be translated on the way up- mortal to immortal.

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

**Dr. Reagan:** Wow, what an event.

**Dr. Ice:** It is. And then we will be taken to Heaven and we know from other passages that we will experience the Bema judgment during the Tribulation period and all of this. And return with Christ at the Second Coming.

**Dr. Reagan:** Now a lot of people, in fact probably the majority viewpoint in Christendom today is that of a combining the Second Coming with the Rapture, there is going to be kind of a yo-yo Rapture. You are taken up and you come right back down at the end of the Tribulation it is all one event. Why isn't that correct?

**Dr. Ice:** Well there is a lot of reasons because when you look at the passages that talk about what we call our "catching up" the Rapture passages the nature of the event is qualitatively different then the nature of the event related to the Second Coming. And you know there is a lot of differences and basically it is Christ coming for His Church versus the Second Coming where He is coming with His Church. The Saints come back with Him.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes.

**Dr. Ice:** And so when you analyze these you see that they are different. And then when you realize that there are passages and promises throughout the New Testament especially in Paul's writings that we are going to escape the wrath of God, the coming wrath he calls it in 1 Thessalonians. And so the term wrath is one of the 23 terms used in the Old Testament to describe the 70th Week of Daniel. And so it is a technical term and he is saying that the Church will not pass through the wrath of God. And so it is like the fact that the Church is going to be caught up in the air and right before the Second Coming according to Revelation 19 the Church will be married. So if the Church were to go through any part of the Tribulation it would be Christ beating up His Bride, you know, then saying "Hey, Babe let's get married."

**Dr. Reagan:** Well very quickly tell us what is the Pre-Trib Research Center?

**Dr. Ice:** Well it is an organization started back in 1994 by Tim LaHaye and myself, actually '92 by Tim LaHaye and myself to research, teach and defend the Pre-Tribulational Rapture and related Bible prophecy doctrines. And it revolves primarily around our annual conference where we have people like yourself, and others who are experts in areas. And we will usually take a topic like Israel, or last year was the Rapture because it was our 20th Anniversary and we dealt with, and had people present papers. And it is a little on the academic side because we think this is what people need to give ammo from the Bible. So we interact and deal with a lot of people that oppose our views. As well as presenting the truth of what the Scriptures say about this.

**Dr. Reagan:** Now you are the full-time director of this right?

**Dr. Ice:** Right.

**Dr. Reagan:** Ok, and you available for speaking?

**Dr. Ice:** Right.

**Dr. Reagan:** Ok. Well at the end of our program we will let you tell people how they can get in touch with you to do that.

**Dr. Ice:** Ok.

**Dr. Reagan:** We are going to pause for just a moment and then we are going to come back and we are going to put you on the hot seat because Nathan and I are going to begin to bombard you with arguments against the Pre-Tribulational Rapture. So get ready with your defenses.

**Dr. Ice:** Ok.

## Part 2

**Nathan Jones:** Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and our interview of Dr. Tommy Ice concerning the Rapture.

**Dr. Reagan:** Tommy I want to start off this segment by saying that many argue that the Rapture has to be an unbiblical concept because the word isn't even found in the Bible.

**Dr. Ice:** Well it depends on what Bible you read.

**Dr. Reagan:** What do you mean by that?

**Dr. Ice:** Well the Greek word in the original language was "harpazo" we get our word harpoon and stuff like that from there. Which means to seize, and take suddenly with force. In fact it is the same word that is used of the soldiers taking Jesus away from the Garden of Gethsemane.

**Dr. Reagan:** You are talking about in 1 Thessalonians 4 where it talks about "caught up."

**Dr. Ice:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** The word is "harpazo."

**Dr. Ice:** Caught up. And they could have translated it rapture. They could have translated "to snatch up," the great snatch.

**Dr. Reagan:** In fact they did translate it as rapture in the Latin version didn't they?

**Nathan Jones:** Rapio.

**Dr. Ice:** Well yes, in fact Jerome around 400 when he did the Vulgate which as we were saying off air a while ago that it was 1,500 years it was the main Bible that everybody used. But in Europe during the Reformation period you had people from different countries that spoke different languages. When they came together they spoke Latin. So this is why we have a lot of Latin terms, like Trinity, you know that are not in the Bible. And it started in the 1600's people started using in scholarly circles the word Rapture to refer to the "harpazo," or the catching up. And I have probably about 115-120 commentaries on 1 Thessalonians and virtually every one of those use the word rapture in those commentaries because it is another term to refer to the catching up. And because it is a big event in Christendom then of course there is a special word that is used for that. And so that is how it came into parlance in our usage so the concept of Rapture is taught in the Bible.

**Dr. Reagan:** Ok.

**Nathan Jones:** It is so much easier to say Rapture, then the Great Snatching Up or the Great Catching Away in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 has it.

**Dr. Ice:** Yes.

**Nathan Jones:** Some will argue though that the Rapture is too new a concept it was only invented during Darby in the 1800's there is no history to the Rapture being taught in the church, is that true?

**Dr. Reagan:** Too new to be true.

**Dr. Ice:** Well it is in a certain sense. But in another sense we are getting today where you have access to literature and all this and we are finding that in periods where people studied the Bible. For example the Puritans in the 1600's was a great Bible study movement because after 1,500 years of basic illiteracy throughout the world were only 1 in 2,500 could read. And you know if you look at Church history only about 1 every 40 years even knew Hebrew in the Church let alone Greek. You had the learning in the 1500's of Greek and Hebrew and the translation of the Bible into people's language.

**Dr. Reagan:** Right.

**Dr. Ice:** And as a result for the first time really in history an average person had access to a Bible because you had the rise of the middle class and they could afford them. And you also had the average person learning how to read. And they started studying the Bible and people started talking about Pre-Millennialism, the Rapture and all of this and Israel. And during the Middle Ages this stuff could be controlled by a few.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes, in fact the Church was very anti-Israel, very anti-Semitic.

**Dr. Ice:** Oh, yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** And didn't want anybody to even know about the Jewish roots of the Church.

**Dr. Ice:** That's right. In fact most people during those first 1,500 years would have thought that Jesus was not Jewish at all.

**Dr. Reagan:** Right.

**Dr. Ice:** Because He criticized the scribes and Pharisees and they would use that against them.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well basically what you saying is that once people got the Bible in their own languages in the 1500's in the 16th Century, they got it in their own languages and once they could read.

**Dr. Ice:** Right.

**Dr. Reagan:** They began to interpret the Bible.

**Dr. Ice:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** And say, "Well the Bible says this, and the Bible says that."

**Dr. Ice:** See the average person for the first 1,500 years just knew the big events they didn't know the details especially the Old Testament. And you know they knew the Creation, the Flood, and a few other events.

**Dr. Reagan:** And the facts about Jesus' life. In fact if you go into cathedrals in Europe today every one of them has the life of Jesus painted on the walls all around. And they would take

them in and say, "Alright He was born of a virgin." And they would go around and that is all they knew.

**Dr. Ice:** Yes, that's all they knew. And if they had a question they would ask their priest who couldn't even read.

**Nathan Jones:** Historically though I mean the idea that it wasn't even taught, I mean I found it in Barnabas 100-105, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, you go into the Middle Ages.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well that is Pre-Millennialism, I'm not so sure about a Pre-Trib Rapture.

**Nathan Jones:** Ephraem of Nisibis, Abbot Codex. Then you've got Increase Mather, Phillip Doddridge, all these guys were about 1600-1700's and they were teaching the concepts around the basis for Pre-Trib, not necessarily a Pre-Trib Rapture but the central tenant that Jesus was returning and it was separate from the Second Coming.

**Dr. Ice:** Right, we basically have, I mean we found Pseudo-Ephraem you know in the 4th Century. We have recently found one even sooner in the Apocalypse of Elijah from North Africa.

**Dr. Reagan:** Of course that points to another thing and that is even if people wrote about this if it is different from the Church doctrine not only were they burned at the stake but their writings were burned. A lot of writings were lost.

**Dr. Ice:** Exactly. And they were suppressed especially starting around the year 500.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes.

**Dr. Ice:** You know Jerome said away with a 1000 years in his Daniel commentary. Augustine shifted from Pre-Millennial to Amillennialism. And what you had in North Africa is Alexandria had become the center of Greek philosophy and moved from Athens to Alexandria and that they hated for some reason the idea that we were going to have a literal, physical kingdom.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well you know when people say it is too new to be true one time I was thinking about that and it suddenly occurred to me if you are going to go with that argument then you would have to say that salvation by grace through faith is too new to be true.

**Dr. Ice:** Exactly.

**Dr. Reagan:** Because, hey come on.

**Dr. Ice:** 1500 years.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes.

**Dr. Ice:** Or the substitutionary atonement with Anselm in year 1000.

**Dr. Reagan:** And particularly with Bible prophecy, because the Bible says itself many things about Bible prophecy will not be understood until the time comes for them to be understood.

**Dr. Ice:** That's right. So you have a development of the Church understanding its doctrine. So the early Church was futurists like us, they believed in a literal Tribulation. But the biggest thing missing actually from the theology of the early Church is their anti-Israel attitude that they developed.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes.

**Dr. Ice:** And it's not until the Puritans basically re-established and this is where we get the idea of Judeo-Christianity it didn't come from Europe. You have it developing in the English speaking world primarily from the Puritans who fell in love with the Old Testament. And our Puritan forefathers in America because we did not have the European anti-Semitic mid-evil tradition that they have. And that's why Americans are probably more open to Bible prophecy and all this compared to the rest of Christendom. And as a result they started studying the Old Testament. And it still took another couple 100 years to the late 1700's early 1800's to begin to see a distinction between Israel and the Church. And that is when people when they saw that they were open to the idea of a Rapture because the Church had to be removed before God could finish His plan and program with Israel during the 70th week.

**Dr. Reagan:** Ok, now this brings us to another argument against the Pre-Trib Rapture that I consider silly but I have to mention it because we just hear about it all the time. A fellow by the name of Dave MacPherson wrote a book a number of years ago in which he tried to debunk the Rapture, the Pre-Trib Rapture and he argued that the whole concept came from a teenage girl who went into ecstasy and began to speak led by the Holy Spirit or something, or a demonic spirit of whatever to tell about the Rapture of the Church, and that Darby stole this idea from her.

**Dr. Ice:** Right.

**Dr. Reagan:** And he has published this book under about 10 different names.

**Dr. Ice:** Yes. But that has been disseminated very widely, in fact Dave MacPherson used to call me on the phone. He was a very paranoid guy. He lived in an earth home in Utah. And he hated computers, I think he had just gotten one last I heard. And he talks about how when he was first going to write this his normally docile dog name Rolf savagely bit his writing hand and postponed for 3 months the event of writing this information because he became demon possessed.

**Nathan Jones:** Interesting.

**Dr. Ice:** But nevertheless I have talked with him many times over the years. And I have spent, in fact 2003 I went on a month trip over to Great Britain to the libraries to research all this. And I found that basically Darby came up with the idea of the Pre-Trib Rapture during December 1827 and January 1828. Ok the Margaret MacDonald event didn't occur until April of 1830 so at least 3 years before, 3 ½ years before she is alleged to have done this.

**Dr. Reagan:** Right.

**Dr. Ice:** Darby had already talked about this. And I have documented it through 2 letters; one was Francis Newman Stages of Life, he is the younger brother of Cardinal Newman and he was the tutor of Darby's sister's family who lived in Dublin. And Darby was recuperating there at her house and he talks about Darby coming up with the Rapture back then during his convalescence from an injury.

**Dr. Reagan:** The thing that gets me about this book is I finally I had some questions about it I got the book and I read it.

**Dr. Ice:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** And he talks about how all this came from this teenage girl in a trance. Then in the back he has the trance, I mean he has a transcription of it.

**Dr. Ice:** Yes. There are two versions of it by the way.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well I read that thing, I'm not kidding I might of read of 50 times and I couldn't find the Pre-Trib Rapture anywhere.

**Dr. Ice:** Right, it's not there. It's not there. But the Irvingites were a totally different movement who still were historicists, and what they were teaching is something that goes all the way back to the early 1600's. And it taught that anywhere from a few days to 45 days there would be a catching up, a rapture of people in conjunction with the Second Coming, after the Tribulation, you see. And therefore they would hover up in the air while the earth was burnt up- it is called the conflagration of the earth from 2 Peter 3.

**Dr. Reagan:** I've heard that.

**Dr. Ice:** Yes, and Joseph Mede came up with this who is the father of British Pre-Millennialism in the 1620's. And if that was a Pre-Trib Rapture which the Irvingites were teaching because this lady is connected with what is called the Irvingite Movement or the Catholic Apostolic Church then people had been teaching the Pre-Trib Rapture for 400 years by the time Darby came along.

**Nathan Jones:** What is sad too is that most people when they talk about the Pre-Trib Rapture that is all they know about it, they will bring up Margaret MacDonald and they will say it is too new so they will discount it. But they have idea what the concept of the Pre-Trib Rapture is. And then we have people who talk about the Pre-Wrath Rapture or a Mid-Trib Rapture can you debunk those theories?

**Dr. Ice:** Well the Mid-Trib Rapture is kind of like a guy from the North and the South, well he couldn't decide if he wanted to be on the North or the South during the Civil War and he put on a grey top and a blue bottom and he gets shot from both sides. You know, because you have the Church going through half of the Tribulation and being taken out in the middle. And the Bible clearly teaches in Revelation 6 that the first part of the Tribulation is the wrath of God. In fact it says, "Who will protect us from the wrath of the lamb who sits on the throne." And the entire period is called the wrath of God. So you violate the clear Scripture teaching if you go through any part of the Tribulation because the so called Pre-wrath, Pre-Tribs are pre-wrath is a 3/4 Rapture view, but they don't like that or they would say about a 3/4 Rapture view. And so you have people going through the 70th week of Daniel, the Church when Daniel 9:24 says it is for Israel, and it doesn't say it's not for the Church, but it is very clear it is for Israel.

**Nathan Jones:** So they see the bowl judgments at the end only being the wrath of God even though Jesus is the one who opens the very first seal, right?

**Dr. Ice:** Right, instead of seeing the multiple descriptions that describe the entire 7 year Tribulation and the different facets of it they take different terms that refer to the Tribulation and they chop them up into segments.

**Dr. Reagan:** And argue that all the wrath at the beginning is the wrath of man and the wrath of Satan as if God is not sovereign.

**Dr. Ice:** Right. The term wrath of man is not used.



**Dr. Reagan:** I know.

**Dr. Ice:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** But God is sovereign here.

**Dr. Ice:** Sure.

**Dr. Reagan:** And if He is going to allow wrath it is still His wrath.

**Dr. Ice:** Yeah, exactly and we are going to be kept from that hour as Revelation 3:10 points out.

**Dr. Reagan:** Speaking of kept from many people say, "Well the problem with you guys who believe in a Pre-Trib Rapture you are just a bunch of escapist."

**Dr. Ice:** Yeah.

**Dr. Reagan:** What do you say about that?

**Dr. Ice:** Well I would say, tell that to all the millions of martyrs and people who have been persecuted for the faith. In Revelation 3:10 he talks about how that church has been faithful through the time, in essence the Church Age so we are not saying a lot people say, "Well you know we have to go through persecution." And I say, "Well that is an American viewpoint because we happen to live in a unique time in America where we haven't been persecuted." But most Christians down through history and in other parts of the world have been persecuted. Go to Saudi Arabia and start doing street evangelism if you want to be persecuted.

**Dr. Reagan:** And the persecution is coming here as well.

**Dr. Ice:** It is coming but the point is that the Church Age is a time in which we have tribulation and we are persecuted in fact there is a lot of talk about it. And it's not talking about that because that is the wrath of man or Satan, but the Tribulation is said to be the wrath of God. In fact it is all throughout the Old Testament and in the New Testament. This is a time when God is going to judge, He is going to use wrath to purge out the rebel in order to convert the Jews. And secondly he is going to judge the earth dwellers for rejecting Christ.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well you know when people tell me that I am an escapist I say, "Well did you know Jesus Christ is one? He said in Luke 21, 'Pray that you may escape these things.'"

**Dr. Ice:** That's true. Yeah, He seems to be anticipating something there.

**Dr. Reagan:** What would you say is the most, single most important argument in behalf of a Pre-Trib Rapture?

**Dr. Ice:** Well it is hard to come up with a single most thing Dave because it is somewhat complicated in the sense that there are many factors that contribute to it. And just like the Trinity is complicated.

**Dr. Reagan:** What about imminence?

**Dr. Ice:** Well yeah, the fact that Christ could come at any moment is one of those. And how could He come except through a Pre-Trib Rapture?

**Dr. Reagan:** He can't come in the Second Coming because there are too many prophecies that have yet to be fulfilled.

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

**Dr. Reagan:** I shouldn't look for Him today if I don't believe in the Rapture.

**Dr. Ice:** Right. And there are in the New Testament epistles primarily, there are these comments about how we are to be ready at any moment because Christ could come. But you have for example Luke 21 where He says, "When you see this," He is talking about the first events of the Tribulation He says, "The end is not yet." And then He says, "When you see this," talking about the mid-point, the abomination desolation, "the end is not yet." And then when He is at the end in verse 28 of Luke 21 it says, "But when you see this," talking about the Second Coming, then He says, "look up for your redemption draws nigh." So obviously when signs are involved those are referring to the Tribulation of signs leading up to the Second Coming." But the Rapture is something that we are always to be ready for. That is why you can't date it. I asked you out for a date one time, and it said, "I can't," I mean I may or may not, you know.

**Nathan Jones:** That means then that there are no prophecies that need to be fulfilled before the Rapture happens?

**Dr. Ice:** That's right. But things can happen like Israel coming back to the land. And those are not signs of the Rapture they are related to the Tribulation events that are going to follow the Rapture.

**Nathan Jones:** Ok, separate then.

**Dr. Ice:** So if you see Thanksgiving you know Christmas is near.

**Dr. Reagan:** Amen.

**Nathan Jones:** Amen.

### Part 3

**Nathan Jones:** Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and our interview of Bible Prophecy expert Dr. Tommy Ice who serves as Director of the Pre-Trib Research Center. Now Dr. Ice you said you were available for speaking engagements. Maybe you could tell our folks in the camera there how they can get in touch with you and what is on your website.

**Dr. Ice:** They can get in touch with me at pre-trib.org on the worldwide web. And we have our monthly newsletter with Tim LaHaye and myself there as well.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes, and I want to emphasize that, it is an outstanding newsletter and it always has Tim's picture on one side and your picture on the other, and a major columns by each of you. And in addition to that you also have guest writers some of the best. So folks, I really encourage you to contact that website to get on that mailing list. And also to invite Tommy to come to your church and do a weekend conference you will be greatly blessed by it.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well Nathan, I guess that is it for this week. I want to thank you again Tommy for being with us. And folks until next week this is Dave Reagan speaking for myself and Nathan Jones saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our redemption is drawing near."

**End of Program**