

Christ in Prophecy

Interview 53: Bill Perkins & Buck Storm Talking about *The List*

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: The Bible reveals that there were at least two secret believers in Jesus who severed on the Sanhedrin which was the highest governing body of the Jewish people. Those two men were Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Have you ever thought how they might have become believers? Have you ever considered how dangerous it must have been for them to show any sympathy toward Jesus? And have you ever thought about what might have persuaded them to believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah? Stay tuned for a fascinating interview with the authors of a remarkable new book that deals what these two Jewish leaders and the questions I have just raised about them.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I have in the studio with me today two men who are authors of an outstanding new novel about the last days of Jesus leading up to His crucifixion, and the roles of two Jewish leaders who were secret believers in Jesus as the Messiah promised by God. Sitting next to me here is my dear friend, Bill Perkins. Bill is the founder of a ministry called Compass International, which is located in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. It is the ministry that sponsors the great Stealing the Mind Conferences that focus on defending the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Welcome to Christ in Prophecy Bill, we are glad to have you.

Bill Perkins: Thanks so much for bringing us here.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, and sitting next to Bill is another person that is very important to this book, he is the co-author Buck Storm. Buck, is also from the Coeur d'Alene area. He is a very gifted poet, song writer, musician, and novelist. Welcome to Christ in Prophecy, Buck, we are glad to have you.

Buck Storm: Thank you, David, it is really nice to be here.

Dr. Reagan: I tell you guys have traveled a long, long way to get here. That is like a four hour airplane ride. But we really appreciate you coming and sharing about this tremendous new book. And let's just start off by saying where did this book come from? And how did you all end up collaborating?

Bill Perkins: God has sort of given me an idea for a story. And I've been looking at it, and reading about and making notes about it for three or four years, and just rattling around. And you know how those things, you keep forgetting about it, and then God brings it back to your mind. And our purpose of our ministry is to teach the Bible is accurate, and to teach the importance of Bible prophecy. So, the more I thought about this idea of these two characters,

and these two guys; Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea and what it would have been like for them to see Jesus busting on the scene with all these miracles, and how to deal with Him. I thought this should be a story form. This should be good. And by the grace of God my friend Buck is a budding novelist. I didn't quite know how much he was budding at the time.

Dr. Reagan: I would say he has already flowered.

Bill Perkins: Yeah. So, I said, "Buck, look at this. This is something we could do." And he looked at it. And he prayed about it. And he said, "Yes, let's do it."

Dr. Reagan: Do you know what this reminds me of? Is our former, really great friend Tim LaHaye who has gone on to be with the Lord who had written many, many books, but when it came to the concept of writing the Left Behind series he knew he was not a novelist. I mean you can write good books about Bible prophecy, but it is another thing to be a novelist.

Bill Perkins: That's right.

Dr. Reagan: And he had enough good sense to go to a novelist and say, "Here is my idea. Let's work it out." So, you had the idea, and you went to Buck to work it out in terms of a novel format.

Bill Perkins: Writing a novel to me I think it is a gift.

Dr. Reagan: Oh, yeah.

Bill Perkins: You have to organize your thoughts in a certain way. And you and I write books, but we wouldn't necessarily be good novelists. And he has that gift. And people that read the book, will know, he sucks you in immediately and you can't put it down.

Dr. Reagan: Well, tell us about your background Buck.

Buck Storm: Well, I've been a musician and songwriter for a lot of years. But as far as writing novels, writing goes you know I grew up reading constantly. You know my childhood was spent kind of under the covers with a flashlight reading Louis L'Amour novels, and Salinger, and Hemingway. And so I've always wanted to write novels, so, several years ago I just started. I thought it is like writing a long song, right? And I quickly found out there is a lot more craft to it than that.

Dr. Reagan: A long song.

Buck Storm: Yeah, how hard could it be?

Dr. Reagan: Well I tell you what when I was reading this, and I read a pre-publication edition of it that was sent to me on a pdf format. I could see all through the book that you were a song writer, and that you were a poet because of the way you expressed things, it is just beautiful writing. Absolutely beautiful writing all the way through.

Buck Storm: Thank you.

Dr. Reagan: You picked a wonderful writer. God really blessed you.

Bill Perkins: I think God picked him, but yeah.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, the title of the book is "The List" and the subtitle here says, "An ancient riddle...will the answer, be a blessing or a curse?" What in the world does the title of the book refer to?

Buck Storm: Well, the idea is that these two guys are watching Jesus come onto the scene and they don't know what to think or do. And they are rich guys. They are in the Sanhedrin. They are powerful men. And what one of them does and he has all these Torah scrolls and he starts searching through the scrolls.

Dr. Reagan: That is Nicodemus, right?

Buck Storm: Nicodemus, and he is finding these prophecies that Jesus is actually fulfilling, and it interests him and he can't shake that fact. The fact that he knows--

Dr. Reagan: So he starts making a list of prophecies.

Buck Storm: He does. And remember early in John, Nicodemus goes to Jesus by night, and that scene is in the book. And so he is trying to figure this out, and he keeps finding more prophecies. And the list gets longer, and longer. And he has a friend that is an odd friendship because Nicodemus is a Pharisee and Joseph of Arimathea is a Sadducee; he is a rich guy. He's got a lot.

Dr. Reagan: Those two guys are not even supposed to speak to each other.

Buck Storm: That's right. And so they have this odd relationship. And Buck takes all of this from there. And I'll let you elaborate on it from this point.

Dr. Reagan: Well, yeah, so I like to think of it, I love the tension between having a Pharisee and a Sadducee.

Bill Perkins: Oh, its tension alright.

Buck Storm: It is like if Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton they came together and they found unity in Christ, you know somehow. But it is interesting in the biblical account you have these two men at the end are the ones that are burying the body. You know they are coming together to bury the body. So, somewhere between Nicodemus' visit to Jesus at night, which happens very early in the Gospel accounts, and the two men burying the body, there is a tremendous story that has to happen in there. And that is really attracted me to this idea of writing this book. What a great journey to step back and to take that walk through those three years.

Dr. Reagan: Well, one of the things that fascinated me about the book, Buck, is that not only do you develop the stories of these two men who should have been antagonists and who were kind of leery of each but they develop this friendship, and this common interest. But you also develop a story about their wives, and their relationship and it is a wonderful story.

Buck Storm: Yeah, you know I think it was, Bill, and I would meet just about once a week, or maybe every other week and have lunch and just kind of bat ideas around as I was writing the book. And he made a comment one time about Jesus really being a radical, in that, in the sense that His followers weren't all just men.

Bill Perkins: Oh, yes.

Buck Storm: Which was different than the culture of that time, but you had women following.

Dr. Reagan: Who were also helping finance His ministry.

Buck Storm: They were helping to finance. And I thought that was a fascinating aspect to the ministry of Christ that really set Him apart from a lot of the teachers, and rabbis at the time, that He accepted all comers. And I really thought you have these two men, and what about the women behind the scenes? So I really--

Dr. Reagan: And as you presented in the book it seems that Joseph of Arimathea has more difficulty coming to the conclusion this is the Messiah, than Nicodemus. And of course one of the reasons is because he has a lot to lose if he comes out as a supporter of Jesus. I mean he will lose his whole business and everything. But it interesting that it seems in the story that his wife comes to the conclusion that He is the Messiah before Joseph of Arimathea does.

Buck Storm: Isn't that the way it often works?

Dr. Reagan: Yes, wives are often much more discerning.

Buck Storm: Exactly, I can testify to that.

Bill Perkins: 90% of wives--

Dr. Reagan: So, it is called a list, and they are compiling this list, and they are amazed at how it seems to be lining up with the life of Jesus. Bill, what are some of the items on the list?

Bill Perkins: Well it goes through, there are so many prophecies. In fact in the back of the book we actually put a list.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, you have an actual list of the list.

Bill Perkins: Of the list, that's right, that Nicodemus was compiling. But all through the book, the people in the book will contradict the fact that they could be--that Jesus could be the Messiah. Like they would say, "Well, He is supposed to be from David, from Bethlehem, and yet He is from Nazareth." So, you read this but in your mind you know well, He was from Bethlehem, but they didn't know that because it was strange. So, each of these prophecies that he keeps running across, and analyzing them, and he just can't get over the fact of how specific they are, and how accurate they are. And how Jesus is 100% lining up with them.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah, and this is one of the things I love about this book, you know being a teacher of Bible prophecy, the fact that when you get through reading this book you have learned a lot about Bible prophecy.

Bill Perkins: That is true.

Dr. Reagan: And about the First Coming prophecies and how Jesus fulfilled those prophecies. And how they would, like the one you mentioned about Bethlehem, they say, "Well, He can't be the Messiah because He came from Nazareth." And then they discover well, no, He was actually born in Bethlehem. And they begin to discover, make all these discoveries and it is really interesting how it finally comes, seems to all come together.

Bill Perkins: It does. It's fascinating.

Dr. Reagan: Well, another thing that I noticed in the book is that a lot of, there's a lot of scripture in the dialogue between people in the book. And so, you are really dealing, you know if

an unbeliever is reading this, and I can understand an unbeliever being really interested in this story because it grabs you immediately. By the time they've finished they have read a lot of scripture, and scripture is supernatural.

Bill Perkins: It is. And I didn't want to take, Buck and I had this conversation early on. I said, "Buck whenever Jesus speaks we don't want to put words in His mouth. So, we're going to just stick with what we got, in the Bible, coming straight from the Bible." And he said, "That's kind of hard to write that way. It is kind of structured, you know." And I said, "Well, I think that's the safest way, and I think God would honor that. I don't think that we should say that Jesus said this when we don't know that He said that." And he did an incredible job of weaving what Jesus says in those scene into the story.

Dr. Reagan: I also noticed something in the novel, Buck, that was very unusual. Usually in novels they describe in detail the individuals that are involved, but you never describe a true, detailed physical description of Jesus in here.

Buck Storm: Yeah, for me there were some things you could assume. You know, so, you know that He had been outdoors a lot. That He walked a lot. There were somethings that you kind of assumed.

Dr. Reagan: That's right.

Buck Storm: Yeah, but--and I think maybe early on I had gone into a little more description, and Bill got me in a headlock and said, "No, we are not going to do that."

Dr. Reagan: Well, it is interesting the Bible never describes Him, except in the book of Isaiah where it says He will have nothing about Him that will naturally attract people. Not a good looking guy. He's not going to look like Kevin Costner, which so many drawings and paintings of Jesus He looks like a Hollywood movie star. And it says that is not the way it is going to be. People are going to be attracted to Him by what He has to say.

Buck Storm: Yeah, so many movies, and depictions of Christ you have this kind of cool surfer, mellow Jesus, you know. So, we didn't want it to be-- I didn't want to pull from all those references. You know, but actually like you said, He was not a man that we would be attracted to, and these kind of descriptions.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah, I had a wonderful artist who sent me a picture one time that she had just painted of Jesus. And she said, "What do you think of it?" And I didn't want to hurt her feelings. I said, "You know, you are a great artist. But this looks exactly like Kevin Costner." I said, "You know Jesus was not blond headed, and He was not super good looking. He was probably a very plain looking Jewish man." And Isaiah says that, nothing about His countenance is going to draw people to Him, it is what He has to say, and what He stands for and all. So, I appreciate the fact that you all remain faithful to the Scriptures in this. And I appreciate the fact that when I person gets through reading this they are going to know a lot more about Scriptures then they knew beforehand.

Bill Perkins: And prophecy.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah, and Bible prophecy. Yeah, that's great. Okay, well in just a moment we are going to come back and I'm going to have some further questions for these two guys.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and my interview with Bill Perkins and Buck Storm, the authors of a great new novel about the crucifixion of Jesus and the power of Bible prophecy as a tool of evangelism.

Well, fellas I wanted to mention that this book is full of wonderful maps. I love maps. And this really all the way through it you have maps of Israel, and the cities that are mentioned in the book. You also have detailed maps of the Temple Mount and so forth, and very, very well done. And one of the things about the book when I got drawn into it was that I felt like I was walking the streets of Jerusalem. As I went up to the upper city, and go down to the lower city, and the difference between the two, where the rich live, and where the hoi polloi live, and the bars and the prostitutes and all that in that area. It really drew me into it. And I wondered, I would think that writing this book the most difficult thing would be trying to be accurate about the culture of that time, and the customs of that time. How did you deal with that?

Buck Storm: Well, a lot of research. A lot of talking to smart people. But you know that was one of the things as I wrote this book that was really a joy about writing it was, you know as a writer, at least I do, I tend to sort of step into scenes and the way I think about it is I sort of describe the movie that is going on in my head. And I've been to Israel several times, and to get into the backdrop of this book was pretty astounding to me. What Jerusalem was at the time; the grandeur, the white stone, the fountains, the wealth, the architecture. Herod the Great, these things that were going on. The violence, the Romans. It was a great backdrop to paint. And so, basically it was just you sort of just walk through the streets in your mind and describe what you see. And that was the best part of it.

Dr. Reagan: You know what this reminds me of? It reminds me of back in the 50's and 60's when movie companies would go to Jerusalem to shoot movies that they were going to use of Jerusalem as a background. They would have to pay everyone to take down their television antennas.

Bill Perkins: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: They'd pay them like \$25, \$30 to take down their TV antennas. And this got to be so common that people were putting antennas up that didn't even have a television set, so they got paid to take their antennas down. You did a great job of capturing the culture.

Buck Storm: Ah, thank you.

Dr. Reagan: And the feeling of the time. Well let me ask you this, you present Joseph of Arimathea as a Sadducee and Nicodemus as a Pharisee, what is the basis for that?

Buck Storm: Well, we know Nicodemus was a Pharisee.

Dr. Reagan: Right.

Buck Storm: We see that in Scripture. We also know that the Sadducees were on the opposite side of the Pharisees. The Pharisees would kind of pretend poverty in a lot of ways. The Sadducees though were very wealthy, we know historically the Sadducees were a wealthy people with a lot of political clout in the upper class, as well as with the ruling government at the time. And so we also know through Scripture that Joseph was a wealthy man. And we also see

at the end of the Gospels we see Him walking right into Pilate and asking for the body, so he had some clout there.

Dr. Reagan: He had political power.

Buck Storm: So, yeah. So that was the basis for assuming that he was a Sadducee.

Dr. Reagan: Well, it is a logical assumption. And it certainly sets up a good story between two people who should be very strong adversaries.

Buck Storm: Yeah, you have automatic conflict, which is fun, always fun in a novel.

Bill Perkins: Steel on steel.

Dr. Reagan: But develop a friendship.

Buck Storm: Yeah, absolutely.

Dr. Reagan: Not only between them but their wives. Okay one of my favorite writers is Victor Hugo, he wrote "Les Misérable," and he had this technique of introducing all these characters and you are wondering what do they have to do with each other? And as the story develops their lives start converging in most unusual ways. And you use that technique in here. You have a segment where Joseph of Arimathea is kidnapped while he is out riding a horse at night and he is held for ransom. And I kept thinking: What does this have to do with the story? I don't understand what this has to do with it. And then all of a sudden without revealing this, because this is the biggest surprise in the book to me, all this comes together at the end. And wow, it was really something.

Buck Storm: Yeah, Victor Hugo that is a great reference. But you know when you write a book, especially a book on this scale you've got a lot of characters, and every character has to have a journey. And if you are just following one character it can be very linear. But I love to have--I love stories like "Les Misérable" or you know these stories where things do come together in the end, so.

Dr. Reagan: Well you do, and it is a big surprise.

Buck Storm: Well good. Let's keep it that way.

Dr. Reagan: Let's keep it that way. Yeah, we are going to keep it that way. But I'm telling you the truth when I got to there and thought, wow, now I see where it all came from!

Buck Storm: Yeah, I like to pretend that I planned all that out but a lot of times I'm just saying, "I wonder where this is going to go? I don't know. Let's find out."

Dr. Reagan: Oh, me.

Bill Perkins: True confessions.

Dr. Reagan: Well, of course again, one of the stories that I found in here that was so powerful was the story between the two wives and their friendship. And it really comes to a point where they have to part from each other because of political pressures and all, but they still love each other and want to come back together. And it was written with great sensitivity. Great sensitivity. I really, really love that. You know the book takes us up to the crucifixion and then it says, "To be continued." What does that mean?

Buck Storm: Means there's going to be more books. Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: Has the second one, is it in process?

Buck Storm: It is in process, yes.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, so the sequel is already in process. Do you have a name for it?

Buck Storm: "The Light."

Dr. Reagan: "The Light."

Buck Storm: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: I assume it is going to pick up with the crucifixion and move on maybe through the establishment of the Church, or whatever?

Buck Storm: That's the plan.

Bill Perkins: That's it.

Dr. Reagan: I can hardly wait.

Dr. Reagan: I'm telling you folks, when I talk about a great book, this is really a great book. And it is just so beautifully put together, and it is so biblical. And it will teach you so much about Bible prophecy. In fact in the back of the book there is an appendix, which you very seldom find in a novel, but there's a couple of appendices.

The first one has to do with a list of 25 Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah. There are really more than that, but these are the 25 of the most important of those prophecies. And you know one that probably just about everyone knows is the prophecy that Jesus would be born in the town of Bethlehem, that was a prophecy by Micah, 500 years before Jesus was born, he prophesied it. But it says more than that it says He's going to be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. And the thing about that is that at the time he wrote there were two Bethlehems in Israel; there was one up near the Sea of Galilee and one south of Jerusalem. So, he doesn't just say Bethlehem, he said Bethlehem, Ephrathah which nails it as the one south of Jerusalem. That's how precise Bible prophecy is, and people don't often realize it is that precise. You know they think Bible prophecy is sort of kind of like Nostradamus gobbledygook things that don't really mean much that you could put anything into them. But that's not the case with Bible prophecy. So, again the point is that you are going to learn somethings about Bible prophecy in reading this book.

And then you have a second appendix, the first one has to do with 25 crucial prophecies that were on the list of these men. The second one is biblical verses referring to Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, so you actually give them the specific verses that refer to these particular men. So, that also is valuable.

Bill Perkins: All through the book Jesus is interacting in different places. And I've had many people tell me that read the manuscript that they would read the scene and then they'd have to get their Bible out to see if Jesus really say it like that? And sure enough it is there but it is done with interaction.

Dr. Reagan: I did that a couple of times myself.

Bill Perkins: See there. See there.

Dr. Reagan: I sure did. I didn't remember that. So, yeah. That is very good. In other words it drove me into the Scriptures, and that is good. Well what else would you like people to know about this book? Either you, Buck or Bill, what would you like for people to know about it?

Buck Storm: Well I think it is a book of a lot of layers. You know that is one thing, you sort of write--when I approach a book you sort of write with fear and trembling. You know? And hope that God is going to take something and use it. And then you watch it unfold. And what I've enjoyed about this is it is not just a book of Bible prophecy, it is also a book of the story of Christ is a story of love, and a story of grace, and a story of the interaction with man. And so, to me that all comes together at a time in our world more then ever where people need to see love, and to find unity. And the only thing that will truly bring unity that is Jesus. And so that is what I hope for this book. You know that the return will be spiritual.

Dr. Reagan: And you emphasize that in your writing not only in this book, but another book of yours that I read. Where you talk about how Jesus interacts with people and His interactions are always the least thing that people expect. They expect something else but He always catches them it seems off guard in the way He responds to people.

Buck Storm: Yeah, He doesn't seem to get my e-mails at all. I tell Him how to do things all the time. And it never seems to be the way He acts it out.

Bill Perkins: Well, I know so we tend to respond to people with judgment, condemnation and so forth, and He doesn't do that.

Dr. Reagan: No.

Bill Perkins: He responds to what they are thinking. We respond to what someone is saying because we don't know what they thinking. But Jesus knows what they are thinking.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah, that is a good point.

Bill Perkins: So, He can go on down, He doesn't have to go through the politeness of interactions, just jump to the end.

Dr. Reagan: So, you say this book has been bouncing around in your head for two years or more?

Bill Perkins: Three or four years.

Dr. Reagan: I remember Tim LaHaye saying that he got the idea for the Left Behind Series when he was on an airplane and he saw the pilot, the co-pilot I believe it was, came out of the cockpit and started flirting with one of the stewardess and he had a wedding ring on, and Tim is watching this going on. And he is thinking, you know, what if this Rapture suddenly occurred and we are all taken out of here, and that airplane pilot is left by himself? And that is where he got the idea. And he began to work on it for, it was probably in his head for three or four years before he began to move on it.

Bill Perkins: Wow.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah. I'll tell you another story about him that is wonderful, I know you'll love this. And that is when he first started out he was writing books, he would make his sermons into

books. And they would run them off on a mimeograph machine. And then they would put all the pages in boxes all around the garage, and then he and his wife would go and they would put these mimeograph pages together, and staple them and then go and do another chapter, and staple them. And that's how they sold their books when he went to speak, mimeograph pages. I've actually seen one of those.

Bill Perkins: Wow.

Dr. Reagan: And he said one day they were doing that and his son came home and pressed the remote, and the garage door came open, the wind came in.

Buck Storm: Oh, no.

Dr. Reagan: And he said pages went everywhere, and they spent the rest of the afternoon trying to--that night she took him to the airport, and as she let him out, she said, "Before I let you out, let's just pray." He said, "Pray about what?" She said, "Let's pray that one day you will find a publisher." And boy, God answered that prayer! And He has answered a prayer here with this tremendous book, and I praise God for it. And I endorse it without any reservation whatsoever.

Bill Perkins: Thanks so much.

Dr. Reagan: Okay.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and my interview with Bill Perkins and Buck Storm the authors of a great new historical novel about the crucifixion of Jesus and the power of Bible prophecy as a tool of evangelism. Fellas, I want to thank you for being our special guest today, you have been a real blessing to us. May the Lord continue to anoint your efforts to reach people with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through the writing of historical novels. You have really done a great job. Bill how about telling our viewers how they can get in touch with you and your ministry.

Bill Perkins: It is pretty simple compass.org, C-O-M-P-A-S-S-O-R-G

Dr. Reagan: Well, that is our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you and I hope the Lord willing you'll be back with us next week. Until then this Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our redemption is drawing near."

End of Program