

Christ in Prophecy

Interview 54: Buck Storm's book *Finding Jesus in Israel*

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: I have been to Israel almost 50 times, and I have read many Holy Land travelogues, but the most unusual and fascinating book I have ever read about visiting Israel is one called, *Finding Jesus in Israel*. For an interview with its very talented author, stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. My special guest this week is Buck Storm, the author of this book, *Finding Jesus in Israel*. I love its whimsical cover. Also in the studio with me is Bill Perkins. Bill, is a great friend of mine. He is the founder of a ministry called Compass International which sponsors the Stealing the Mind Conferences that focus on defending the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

Welcome to Christ in Prophecy, guys. Glad to have you here! And Buck, I have just been looking forward so much to interviewing you about this book which has such a whimsical cover on it. I love it. And of course having been to Israel as many times as have, I could imagine myself in all these places that you're describing. And I found a few new ones that I haven't been to, but most of them I have been to and I could put myself there.

Okay, both of these fellas incidentally have written a wonderful new book called, *The List*, they have co-authored that together. And it is a wonderful book about the crucifixion of Jesus, and the involvement of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in that. And it also emphasizes the importance of Bible prophecy as a tool of evangelism. Now, that is one of the reasons I've got Bill on the set because he and Buck have written a book together. But, there is another reason I've got Bill on the set and that is because Bill is the one who introduced Buck to Israel. And in fact Buck has a comment in his book about that, he says, "My first trip to Israel was with Bill Perkins and Compass International. I like Bill, he's generous. He's a walking Bible commentary." My favorite part, "He has that super smooth southern accent that makes you want to sit on a front porch swing, dipping ice cold lemonade, or sippy ice cold lemonade or sweet tea." That's the kind of writing this fellas does folks. I mean it is just unbelievable what he can. How about that Bill? What can you say?

Bill Perkins: Really?

Buck Storm: That is exactly right.

Dr. Reagan: I guess you could say, "Shalom y'all."

Bill Perkins: Shalom y'all. Yeah, I tell you.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, well Buck, I must begin this interview by asking you a very personal question: Is your name really Buck Storm, or is that a literary name?

Buck Storm: That is my name, yeah.

Dr. Reagan: Well, it is a great literary name.

Buck Storm: Well thank you.

Dr. Reagan: Be a great name for a movie star. I mean that's a great name. So your mom came up with that, huh?

Buck Storm: That's right.

Dr. Reagan: Okay. Well, Buck I have often heard that it's said that a pilgrimage to Israel converts the Bible from black and white into Technicolor. What do you have to say about that?

Buck Storm: Well, I think it's really true. You know we can imagine things. We can read about things. From the time, many of us went to Sunday school we've seen the flannel graph of Noah's Ark, you know. But when you actually set foot in the land, and you walk the land, yeah you see where this valley is in conjunction with this mountain. And you walk the streets of Jerusalem. You walk the steps up to the temple that you know Jesus stood on.

Dr. Reagan: Right. Right.

Buck Storm: You know you would go to Caesarea Philippi and you stand where Jesus asked the question: "Who do men say that I am?" Those things stick in your mind. And when you go back to the Scripture you never read the Bible the same.

Dr. Reagan: Well, Bill you take a lot of groups to Israel just like we do, and I know that when you take those groups that you can just see them their eyes enlightening, understanding things they never understood before. Because you know before you go to Israel Capernaum is a word on a page. But after you've been there, you've been. You've seen it. You've smelled it. You've tasted it. And you get a sense of distance; of how far Capernaum is from Jerusalem. Which you don't have before. Talk about going to Israel.

Bill Perkins: You know I think--I took my seven year old, and I was a little, felt like it was kind of an expense, and was worried that I had done the wrong thing. And when we got back home from Israel we are doing our Bible studies and we were going through the book of the Gospels. And it got to a point where Jesus had just been resurrected from the dead. And He said to His disciples, "Meet me in Galilee." And she looked up at me, as a seven year old, and said, "Way up there?" And I was like, ah, it was worth the trip.

Dr. Reagan: It was worth the trip.

Bill Perkins: Because she got the perspective. And that's what happens to people. You understand where things are. And you understand the Temple Mount. And you understand the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Mount of Olives, and Caesarea, and all those things in driving around the Sea of Galilee and all that. And it just sticks with you forever.

Dr. Reagan: That's right. Well, Buck, your first introduction to Israel was with a formal tour. But then you decided to go back on your own with a friend, and also with a group of friends. You've done several trips back on your own where you really ventured off the beaten path. Stayed at hostels, where you know you got to fight the cockroaches, and the bathroom is all the way down the hall where everybody uses the same one. This book is full of interesting stories about off the path places that you visited and very colorful characters that you visited. Tell us a little bit about visiting Israel off the beaten path.

Buck Storm: Well you know to get a sense of a country it's always good to step out and talk to people. And kind of see what a place has to offer. And I remember one of my favorite interactions was a guy, and I write about it in the book, is a guy on the boardwalk in Tiberius.

And I just walked out of an ice cream shop. My wife was off shopping. It was nighttime. And this kind of wild looking Jewish guy, his hair was kind of askew, and you know he came walking up and he is holding up two fingers and shouting, "Two things," at me. He's just saying, "Two things. Two things."

Dr. Reagan: He's a scary guy.

Buck Storm: Yeah. And I'm going, "Two things?" And so he comes up and he says, "Two things you can't mention if we are going to have this conversation." And I'm thinking, so we are having a conversation? You know? Okay, I'm in. I'm here. He says, "Clinton, and Obama, you can't mention those two things."

Dr. Reagan: He assumed all Americans supported them.

Buck Storm: Apparently. So I said, so I of course I went I said, "Well, so is that Bill or Hillary that I can't mention?" He said, "Either one." I said, "Well, that is technically three things." So, we debated about how many things we weren't going to mention. But you know things like that where you just have these immediate conversations with people.

Dr. Reagan: Well, Buck your book is full of 30 brief stories about experiences in Israel. And each one of these stories ends with a profound spiritual insight. That's one of the things I love about this book. And I want to give people a taste of it. So, let's go to one of your chapters, chapter titled, "A Little Angel Offers Little Sins," and let's read the section at the end. But before you read that section what do you mean a little angel offers little sins?

Buck Storm: Well, you know I wrote, when I set out to write this book. I was asked to write the book. I didn't want to write another you know theological, you know dissertation on Israel, or political, I wanted to get into the people. And I read an article awhile back about a guy who had seen one of the tart cards that you see sometimes in some of the tourist cities; Tel Aviv, you know Eilat. That they will go out and litter the ground with these pictures, of basically prostitutes; provocatively dressed women. And one of the cards said, "A little angel offers little sins." And it broke my heart. It literally broke my heart because I've got a daughter. You know? And so I was out one morning very early I left one of the hostels that you're talking about on the shores of the Mediterranean in Tel Aviv, and was walking around just looking at these tart cards. And I wanted to tell that story. You know I wanted to tell the story that Israel is a wonderful place. And Israel is a chosen place. But Israel is also human. And what Israel really is, is the story of God's interaction with mankind, at its very heart. So, that's why I wanted to tell the story.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, let's read the last section of that chapter about the prostitutes.

Buck Storm: Sure. "We are weak, but God will be God, He can't change. His eyes are on the sparrow, and on the lowest sinner. On the mountain tops and in the valleys through the miles, He is there offering love before we ask. He rejoices in our joy. He weeps in our pain because He knows what it is to suffer. When we can't take another step He smiles, and should we choose He will pick us up and carry us in his arms. And He is there where red light burns on a narrow dark Tel Aviv street. His heart is broken to pieces for a little angel. Please pray for her.

Dr. Reagan: Wow. Doesn't that move you, Bill?

Bill Perkins: Whoa.

Dr. Reagan: Well, let's go to another example. You have a chapter in here titled "The Climb" and this is about you and a group of guys who are just driving around Israel. And you suddenly you are in the Golan Heights and you've got this steep hill to go up. And all of a sudden here's a

hundred bicyclers in front of you, and you can't get around them; and you just got to go ten miles an hour up that hill, and it takes you 45 minutes to get up there.

Buck Storm: Yeah, get comfortable.

Dr. Reagan: And then they're gone, and you're on your way. But then later you stop at a café and there are the bicyclers. And you got to have a cup of coffee, and you sat down and you meet this very unusual fella. And I want you to tell us a little about that, and then read to us the ending of that chapter.

Buck Storm: Yeah, we actually stopped for ice cream, we pulled off the road, but I wandered into a little coffeehouse there. So, I was kind of alone in that one. And I saw one of the guys sitting there that had been on the bicycle. And so I thought I would try to strike up a conversation with him, which proved not very easy to do. He was not really interested in having a conversation with me. But we did talk a little bit. And his English was a little broken. But, you know when I think back on the trips I've had to Israel that was one of the most profound conversations I think I've had. You know it wasn't a warm fuzzy--

Dr. Reagan: Even though he didn't want to talk with you?

Buck Storm: No, it wasn't a warm fuzzy conversation. But, he really left me with some insight.

Dr. Reagan: Well, let's read about that. On page 225 starting with that last sentence there.

Buck Storm: "He exemplified the dogged strength of these people, this nation. Babylon to Auschwitz to ISIS, the Jews have done more than survive. They have fought. They have lived. They might not feel that they are guaranteed another five minutes, but if they get them they are going to wring every ounce of life out of them. Joy, pain, and everything in between. They will get on their bikes and conquer the hill. Along the way they will pass no rest stops, or big ball of twines. And no Wall Drug Store. And at the end of the ride they'll pay for their coffee." I said that, you know I started that chapter because talking about America a little bit. You know we have the American dream here and it kinds of rolls on Los Angeles to New York. And I talked a little bit about the road trips in America. Passing the big ball of twine. And Wall Drug there is always a free cup of coffee waiting for you. We always have the future to look forward to. But the Jews really if you look at Israel from their very inception have never been guaranteed physically, from a worldly stand point another five minutes. So, they live in the immediate. I love what that guy said, one thing he said--I said, "It looked like a tough climb." I said, "I saw you on the hill, it looked like a tough climb." And he looked me in the eye and he said, "This is Israel man, everything is a tough climb."

Bill Perkins: Wow.

Dr. Reagan: You know that reminds me of what happens when I take groups to Israel by the end of the trip they're all saying, "Boy, we'd like to move here. We'd like to live here." And the guide always says, "No, it's one thing to be a tourist. It is another thing to live here. Living here is tough."

Buck Storm: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: And it is.

Buck Storm: Absolutely.

Dr. Reagan: I mean you have to pay taxes that are beyond anything you can imagine because you've got one of the smallest nations in the world with a big military. You have to put up with a lot of constant threats of missiles coming in and that sort of thing. It is just a tough place to live.

Buck Storm: Absolutely. Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: And you really have to--I admire the tenacity of the Jewish people. How about you Bill?

Bill Perkins: And they all have bomb shelters. They all know where to go when they hear the sirens, you know the incoming missiles.

Dr. Reagan: And yet they continue to come from all over the world because God is drawing them back. It says in the Psalms that He has put the highway to Zion in their hearts. And He has suddenly triggered that, and they all feel a desire to go back.

Bill Perkins: And you're right, God says, "I will bring you back." And that's what He's doing.

Dr. Reagan: Amen.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and my interview with Buck Storm about the remarkable book, *Finding Jesus in Israel*. Buck, you have a chapter in here titled, "Bones" and it is all about the Mount of Olives where 70,000 Jewish graves are located. And you end that chapter with a very powerful observation that I'd like for you to read to us. I don't know if you want to say something to lead into that? But anyway what a scene that is when you stand on the Mount of Olives, you look out over all those graves. And of course the reason those graves are there is because it says in the book of Zechariah that when the Messiah comes He is going to come back to the Mount of Olives. Of course we are told that in the New Testament also in Acts chapter 1. And so Orthodox Jews want to be buried there because they believe they'll be the first ones to be resurrected.

Buck Storm: Yeah. Well, I'll read and they I'll say a little bit. "Israel is a miracle, because when it comes down to it God is not in the business of death. He is the giver of life. He is the breath of Adam, and He's an empty tomb. He is joy and life and eternity. Israel is impossible. An undisputable miracle on the modern stage. And Israel exists because God promised it would. I love that fact. I think of it every time I stand on stage and sing about Ezekiel's dry bones. If God could work this miracle of Israel against all worldly odds and dark spiritual forces, there is one thing I can take to the bank: His promises are true; they will not be denied. And God promises me He will never leave me, nor forsake me. He promises to complete the work He began in me. He promises that one day He and I will walk arm in arm through the canyons of eternity. And when the stars fade around us, suns burn out, the galaxies are nothing but a distant memory, hosts of angels will sing His praises still. And He will still love me, and I will still love Him. And, bones forgotten, our story will just be getting started."

Dr. Reagan: Wow. Well, you write like a poet.

Buck Storm: Well, thank you.

Dr. Reagan: Because you are a poet, and a song writer, and a musician. And I wish you could just sing some of that to us. It sings off the page. That is just so wonderful. Well, Buck you cover 29 to 30 different sites in the book. But you didn't write anything about Israel's most gut wrenching site, Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum. Is there a reason you didn't write about that?

Buck Storm: Yeah. You know you are the first person to ask me that question actually. I actually started to write about that more than once. I've been there several times. And as I got

into it I felt for me personally it wasn't my story to write. It's such a horrific event in the history of the world. And frankly, I felt like anything I could put down on page was trivializing what it was to actually be at that memorial, and to actually address that historical event. So, in the end I figured just for me personally it wasn't my business to write.

Dr. Reagan: Well, I want to share something with you. Back in 1987 I took a sabbatical. We started the ministry in '80 so that was the seventh year and the trustees asked me to take a sabbatical which meant I was not to hold any meetings that year. I was only going to do radio. And during that year I wrote my very first book. It's this book here called, "Trusting God: Learning to Walk by Faith." It is now in its third edition. Still going strong after all those years. And it's a book that we send to every one of our Prophecy Partners. When somebody signs up to be a Prophecy Partner they get a free copy of this book because it will give them a feel, a real feel of what this ministry is all about, and what we're doing.

And this is really a book of antidotal stories in which I tell stories about the ministry. And I have chapters like, "Walking by Faith," "Receiving Blessings," "Relying on Prayer," "Believing in Miracles," "Leaning on the Spirit," "Preaching with Power," and one of those chapters is "Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus." And I talk about experiences that I had in the Holy Land. And one of them focuses on Yad Vashem. And I want to read this to you. You've been reading to me. I want to read this to you. Okay.

So this was in 1984, very early in the ministry. And my mom and dad went on this trip, and my oldest daughter, Ruth, who was 23 years old, at that time. "When I visited Yad Vashem with the group that included my family members, everything seemed to go well until it was time to depart. We counted heads, and my daughter, Ruth, 23 years old, was missing. I started searching for her, but I couldn't find her anywhere—in the museum or outside the museum. I went through the museum a second time but still could not find her. As I was about to exit the second time I noticed a stairway was open that I'd rarely seen open during regular tourist hours. And I knew where it led because I'd been there several times. It led to a long, narrow, dark room where individual records are stored concerning every person who perished in the Holocaust. This is a research facility that is rarely visited by tourists. I went bounding up the stairs and peered in the dark room, and at the far end I could see a form of a person in the shadowy darkness. No one ever speaks above a whisper in this room, so I could not call out to see if it was my daughter. I walked to the other end and sure enough it was Ruth. She was standing there holding on to a display stand with both hands. The stand had a dime light on it. The light illuminated a sample document under glass. It showed the photograph of a little girl, ten years old. The document contained her vital statistics: place of birth, parents, home address, place of arrest, place of imprisonment, date and place of execution. It read in a matter of fact style. Ruth was weeping. I put my arm around her and hugged her. "Daddy," she whispered, "how could this happen?" I couldn't speak. We just stood there arm-in-arm, weeping together, staring at the picture of a child who represented six million of God's Chosen People."

Bill Perkins: Wow.

Dr. Reagan: It's an awesome place to visit.

Buck Storm: It is, yeah.

Dr. Reagan: And I have seen people who simply could not take it. They would run through it and run out. They just could not take it. And I remember in the old Holocaust Museum before they redid it, when you walked in one of the very first signs, very first pictures that you saw was a picture of a crucifix of Jesus on the outskirts of a town. And it was a large crucifix and above it was the name of the town, a German town, and under the name of the town in German it said,

"No Jews allowed." And here was Jew on a cross, but no Jews allowed in the town there in Germany.

Bill Perkins: Wow.

Dr. Reagan: Bill, tell us about some of your experiences over there that have touched you deeply.

Bill Perkins: I think that one of the things that, it's so moving to be in there. In fact they have what they call the Jerusalem Syndrome, that some people just its overwhelming. And I had a lady one time that we were on the Sea of Galilee and we were singing and she was getting into it. And it was so moving to her that she thought Rapture was happening. And she went up on the back of the ship and threw her passport in the water, and threw her wedding rings in the water, and threw her shoes in the water, and threw her arms up to be raptured. And of course she didn't get raptured, and then she was embarrassed. But those type things I mean Israel is a moving place. It captures your heart. And if you're not careful you can lose it over there emotionally.

Dr. Reagan: What's your favorite site in Israel?

Bill Perkins: My favorite site is the top of the Mount of Olives where you can see so much in there. Where you can see Caiaphas' house, and you can see the Temple Mount, and you can see the Garden of Gethsemane, you can see where Jesus' was crucified. And it's a great place to do a Bible study. I mean it's the most, it's such a privilege to do a Bible study up there. What's your favorite place?

Buck Storm: You know that's like saying what's your favorite food? Sometimes, you know I've thought about that before because people have asked that before, sometimes it is Galilee, or maybe up north by Lebanon where you see the blossoms in bloom, or sometimes it's the desert. I love the desert. Honestly there's been times it has been sitting on the tarmac on the plane on the way home. You know just tired. But then when I land I'm ready to go back.

Dr. Reagan: You know it's interesting that you should mention that because quite often people who go to Israel with me will say, "Boy, I just love that trip. It was wonderful. I've never had anything like it. But I'll never go again because that airplane trip is just too awful, and too many hours on that plane. I can't stand it again." And within a year they are calling and saying, "When is your next trip to Israel?" It is kind of like a woman having a baby and she forgets about all the birth pains and everything and wants to have another one. But that has happened so many times. When I think about Israel I certainly think about standing on the Mount of Olives and looking out, because when you stand there if you have any spiritual discernment whatsoever you understand what Ezekiel says when he says, "This is the center of the world." This is it. This is the spiritual center of planet earth. This is where God came. This is where He is going to return. This is where He died. This is where He was resurrected. And you can just sense it in your spirit. And you know why that Satan inspires, if anybody gets close to the Temple Mount he inspires the whole world Press to condemn, whatever. But my favorite place is the Garden Tomb. I just love to go to the Garden Tomb. And I just love to sit there and meditate. And we love to take groups there and sing, and have a devotional about that. It's just something very special about that place.

Bill Perkins: When we take groups to Israel we give each of them a silver pendent that I designed and it is the garden entrance to the Garden Tomb. And its design it looks exactly like the Garden Tomb, for them to take home as a memento. They always wear it on that Garden Tomb day, girls do, but it reminds them of it. And we use it as an evangelism piece because people will ask a woman: "Where is that? What is that?" And I tell them, I said, "Just watch their

reaction and say, 'It's where Jesus rose from the dead in Jerusalem.'" And I said, "If they're excited your fellowshipping, and if they're confused you're witnessing." So you know what you're doing just by their reaction.

Dr. Reagan: My wife's favorite place was always the Mount of Beatitudes, the chapel there. And I went 25 times before she went, or maybe 20 times, because she didn't like to travel. And I finally talked her into going. And then she wanted to go back again, and again, and again. And I will never forget something I did that almost ended our marriage and that is on our 25th Anniversary she went. And the second night a fella came to me and he said, "I'm traveling with my dad who is 85 years old. He is driving me nuts. He snores like a Boeing 747. I haven't gotten any sleep since I got here. What can I do?" I said, "I'll get you a private room." "I can't afford a private room." Well, they were giving the tour host a suite. And I said, "Well, why don't you come and just sleep in our suite. We'll put you on the couch." And Ann said, "I can't believe you invited a total stranger to come and share our room on our 25th wedding anniversary." She never let me forget that. Later on we looked back and just laughed about it. We had a lot of fun. But we have so many wonderful memories there. And I just encourage any of you who have never been to Israel this is the time to go. Just pray about it. I've had people say, "I can't afford it." I said, "Pray about it. Pray and see if God will open a door and provide the funds." And I've seen it happen time, after time, after time, that God will open the door and supply the funds and they get to go and it changes their lives.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: Well, Buck and Bill, I want to thank you for being my special guests today. Let's tell our viewers how they can get in touch with your ministry by giving your website addresses.

Bill Perkins: Thanks for having us. It's compass.org.

Dr. Reagan: And Buck?

Buck Storm: Very simple buckstorm.com.

Dr. Reagan: That is simple. Okay. Well, folks, in a moment our announcer will tell you how you can get a copy of Buck's book about Israel. And you will also be told how you can get a copy of the new historical novel written by both Buck and Bill about the crucifixion of Jesus and the roles that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea played in that particular event.

Well, that's our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you. Until next week, the Lord willing, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries, saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our Redemption is drawing near."

End of Program