

Christ in Prophecy
New Years 6: “Looking Forward with Hope”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: As you look forward to this New Year do you have any hope? If so how would you define it? Do you find it difficult to put into words? The Bible says that the Creator of this Universe is a God of hope. The Apostle Paul wrote, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard nor has the mind of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.” Do you have any idea what Paul was talking about? Stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus our blessed hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. Our topic for this program is looking forward to the future with hope. But before we get into the discussion let me introduce you to our panel members. The first is my associate Nathan Jones who serves very ably as our Web Minister. Welcome Nathan.

Nathan Jones: It is good to be here Dave, thanks.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, and once more this week Nathan and I have as our special guest Dennis Pollock. Dennis was my colleague here at Lamb and Lion Ministries for 11 years before he decided to form his own ministry called Spirit of Grace; it’s an evangelistic ministry that reaches out primarily to the people of Africa. Welcome Dennis glad to have you back.

Dennis Pollock: Well thanks Dave, I always enjoy being with you.

Dr. Reagan: Folks we live in a world characterized by increasing fear and despair. People fear such things as terrorism, war, cancer, bankruptcy the list goes on and on. Perhaps I could sum it up by saying that people fear the uncertainties of life and the certainty of death. The bottom line is an overwhelming need for hope and most of mankind seems to be seeking that hope in all the wrong places.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Gentlemen let’s jump into a discussion of hope by talking about how important is hope to life itself. Is it essential or not?

Dennis Pollock: Dave I think the answer to that can be found if you look at where people are and what the situation is when there is no hope, when things are hopeless. You know one of the, probably the worst and the ugliest thing that a person can do to them self is to kill

themselves. And suicide is always the case when Satan is lying and whispering in someone's ear, "Your life is bad, it's going to be bad tomorrow, it's going to be bad next year. It will never improve." You know no matter how bad your life is if you get the idea it will get better eventually you can get through that hard time. But if you're convinced not only is it terrible now, it will always be this way; that's basically hopelessness, that's when people start to think about suicide. Let me give you a little illustration of; when we were children I don't know if it happened to you but in my case there were times when we we'd be playing softball and you choose up teams. And after the first inning the score would be 10 to 1 and you are on the losing side. Now let's say you are playing seven innings and you are thinking after the first inning, well we had a lousy inning, but next inning we'll get it back. So you play one more inning and now it is 15 to 1. And the realization comes into your mind, we've lost this game, we don't have what it takes. There is no way.

Dr. Reagan: We have no hope.

Dennis Pollock: You've still got five more innings to play. Now how does that affect you? Well for most kids if I remember right, now it has been a while since I was in that place, but what happens is you get silly, you fool around, you daydream. You don't take the game seriously, you don't give it your best effort because in your mind you're already a loser, there is no hope. Now the good thing about that situation is finally the game would mercifully come to an end and you could get on, and maybe the next day you would be on a better team. But it's not quite so funny when people see that about their own life. Their life is bad, they are a loser already and there is no hope. And that is hopelessness and the Bible has so many good things to say about hope and that's why we're having this program.

Dr. Reagan: Well that is true. You know in Romans 15:13 it says point blank, "Our God is a God of hope."

Dennis Pollock: Absolutely.

Dr. Reagan: But Satan loves to whisper in people's ears there is no hope.

Nathan Jones: I don't think you have to even be a loser. I mean you are talking about people who feel like their life is a loser, I think about Simon and Garfunkel, they did this song called, "Richard Cory," very famous song, about a man who had everything. He was born of a banker, he had power, grace and style, and he had money. And the guy singing was talking about how wretched it was to work in his factory. And then one day he read the paper Richard Cory had killed himself; and he was aghast, how could a guy who had everything kill himself? And even if we are winners in life according to how man sees it, we are not winners. There is still that emptiness, that God hole in us that needs to be filled. And not matter how successful we are in life; we will always despair in the end without the Lord.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, you know Dave when I first started working with you I noticed that one of the themes that you would major on was hope. And you preached about hope, you wrote about hope. And I started to think, "What is the connection between hope and the coming of Christ?" Because I knew that your main theme was the return of the Lord. And so I began to

study the Scriptures and (1) I found hope is all over the place, it is a major theme of Scripture, but (2) it has a special connection with the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact probably the classic passage on the Rapture 1 Thessalonians 4 where Paul says the Lord will descend from Heaven and the dead in Christ will be raised and will be caught up together with them. That entire line of thought is preceded by Paul saying to the Thessalonians believers, "I don't want you to sorrow about those who have fallen asleep, as others who have no hope."

Dr. Reagan: No hope, yeah.

Dennis Pollock: So the whole idea of what Paul is going to present about the Rapture is based on the fact that we do have hope.

Dr. Reagan: I was reading 1 Corinthians 13 one time that beautiful love poem by Paul and I got to the very end and the last verse says there are three great Christian virtues, faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love. And I started to move on and the Holy Spirit said, "Wait," you know, "read this again."

Dennis Pollock: Okay.

Dr. Reagan: And so I read it again and again and suddenly as I read it I began to think back over my life. I grew up in the church, I was there every time the door was open and I could think of hundreds of sermons I had heard about faith. I could think of thousands I had heard about love. I could not think of a single sermon I had ever heard about hope because hope is directly related to Bible prophecy and Bible prophecy is ignored in the preaching and teaching programs of most churches.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: The more you know about Bible prophecy the greater your hope will be.

Dennis Pollock: That's right.

Dr. Reagan: Because you learn about the promises of God for the future.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah.

Nathan Jones: We had that happen this week, you know we get all these e-mails that come in and I answer all these e-mails which is a blessing. But this one gentleman named Christopher says, "I live with chronic pain. I can't sleep I'm in agony all the time. And at 3 in the morning I get on-line and I watch Christ in Prophecy because your message of the Lord's Soon Return gives me hope." I mean it is stories like that that prove that knowing Jesus is coming back gives us hope.

Dr. Reagan: That's right. One of the things that impressed upon me many, many years ago the essentiality of hope for life was this book here; the book is called *Man's Search for Meaning*, and it was written by Viktor Frankl. Viktor Frankl was a psycho-analyst who spent World War II in a Nazi death camp, all of his family members including his wife were killed in that death camp. He was the only one who survived. And out of it he came up with a whole new concept of

Psychotherapy called Logotherapy. And until that time Psychotherapy was built upon the Freudian concept that the fundamental motivating factor in life is the sex drive. And he came out of it saying, "No, not at all." The fundamental drive in life according to this man who is not a Christian this is a man looking at it from a worldview said, "The Fundamental drive in life is the will for meaning, the desire to find meaning in life." People must find meaning, if they cannot find meaning life becomes meaningless, it becomes hopeless, and people die. And the thing that revealed that to him was that he noticed while he was in the death camp that as Christmas approached the Jewish people would say, "We are going to be released at Christmas." And he said there was no reason for that, no rationality for it except for the fact that they knew that all of their captors claimed to be Christians; and that Christmas was an important day to them. So they said, "We are going to be released at Christmas." And it would spread all over the camp and everybody would get their hope up, we are going to be released at Christmas. Christmas would come, Christmas would pass and he said by the hundreds they would just lie down in bed and die. They gave up, they had no hope. That's how important hope is to just life going on.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: You mentioned to me one time a story that I think Chuck Colson told about the Nazi work camps. What was that Dennis?

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, it's a fascinating story it goes exactly along with what you've been saying. And that is he tells of a Concentration Camp where they were, it was a work camp where they were working for the Nazi machine. They were prisoners, so they didn't want to but they had no choice and so they had their particular jobs to help the army out with whatever it was they were making. But one day the Allies came over on a bombing raid and blew up the whole place. And they had no more machinery to do any kind of work. Well the leaders of the prison camp were determined to keep these guys busy but they had no more machinery to do anything. So they told them, "Alright tomorrow you are going to go out, you are going to dig this hole." And they had them working on a huge hole, a huge pit that they dug out for that particular day. And you know there were a lot of them so they made this huge gaping hole. And they went to bed and wondered, "Why in the world did we do that? What's the point of that? Maybe we are going to hid in it the next bombing raid or whatever." So the next day comes along and the commander tells them now you are going to go fill that hole up. So they just went and undid what they had done the day before. The next day now you are going to dig a new hole over here. And he just had them digging holes, and filling them up. Now in some ways you might think would be superior, at least they weren't helping the Nazis anymore they were just doing meaningless work. But despite that the people began to crack the prisoners did. Some of them committed suicide, some ran for the fence and they were shot down.

Dr. Reagan: Electrocuted.

Dennis Pollock: Electrocuted, and shot, so they could not handle the reality that what they were doing had no meaning whatsoever. And if you don't believe in God, in Christ, in the coming of Christ and the future of the world, then life is meaningless; and if life is meaningless than that is when you do these kinds of irrational things.

Dr. Reagan: I was reading an article by Dave Hunt recently and he was talking about the Atheist view of life. And he said, “Stop and think about it for a moment. How disheartening it must be for an Atheist. The Atheist greatest hope is that there is nothing after life.”

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, that is the best he can hope for.

Dr. Reagan: What kind of hope is that?

Nathan Jones: It reminds me of Hebrews 6:19, “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain.” I mean what a great thing. It’s great to be a Christian.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah an anchor.

Nathan Jones: It is great to be a Christian...

Dr. Reagan: Holds you down.

Nathan Jones: ...because we have that anchor to our soul that gives our life purpose, to do good works for the Lord until His return.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Okay fellas we’ve been talking about the essentiality of hope to a meaningful life. But let’s turn our attention now for a moment to the Christian hope. We hear a lot of talk about Christian hope, but what in the world does that mean? What is our hope as Christians? Nathan how about you?

Nathan Jones: Our hope is that there is something beyond this wretched miserable life; that there is something beyond the pain and suffering that people have to endure every day. And the Bible gives us that hope that this life is like this (snap), and a never ending future of just glory and wonder. And boy we can go through a list of different things about that but I think that’s it, our hope is in the future. The Bible says that, “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see;” so hope, and faith, and love go together so that we have that hope in the future.

Dr. Reagan: Dennis.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, you know in the Christian world hope is gotten kind of a bad rap in a lot of cases. A lot of people see hope as for the wimpier believers and faith for the strong believers. So if you are really strong in the Lord...

Nathan Jones: They are like this.

Dennis Pollock: ...you’ve got faith; if you are not so strong we’ll you can at least hope for a few better things.

Dr. Reagan: I didn't know I was a wimpy believer.

Dennis Pollock: Now I didn't say I agreed with that I just said that is how a lot of people see it. Actually the reality is hope and faith do go hand and hand.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Dennis Pollock: And hope is very close to faith, not quite the same. The Bible says, "Abraham in hope believed," so there was faith, but there was also hope. One thing about hope is well there are two things, first its future, the Bible says hope that is seen is not hope, so hope is always a look forward. And secondly there is an emotional content to it. The Bible uses several different Scriptures to speak about the rejoicing of hope. The Bible says we become partakers of Christ if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm to the end. And then Paul says we should be rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation. So faith says its mine, faith looks at the promises of God and says they're true. Christ's death on the cross, the shedding of His blood, His resurrection means I can have eternal life. Faith believes it, marks it down as done. But hope does more than just believe it, hope gets excited about it, hope says, "Man I just can't wait 'til it happens." Hope gives you the courage to endure. And that's why the Rapture and hope are tied in so closely together because they say no matter how bad the world is, no matter how bad our situation is there is a glorious coming of Christ that is going to make everything good. And Peter says, "Set your hope fully on the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." So Peter is talking and Peter's writing is to a suffering people, a persecuted people, that things are not really very much fun, they are not very happy. He says, "Take your hope and place it entirely on the glory, the grace that is going to come to you as Christ is revealed and as He appears for us."

Dr. Reagan: Okay now what I want to do is get very specific about this hope for a moment, because what I have noticed is that I go to Christian groups all the time and I have noticed what happens. I'll get up and I'll say, "Okay what is your hope as a Christian?" And nearly always they will say, "My hope is Heaven."

Dennis Pollock: Right.

Dr. Reagan: So ok, what does that mean? And there is just total silence nobody knows what to say. Where is Heaven? What does it mean to go to Heaven? Are you going to have a body? Are you going to be recognizable? Are you going to know people? I mean and people, "Well we don't know." But the Bible tells us.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: What are some of the specifics about our future hope?

Nathan Jones: Oh I love this verse 1 Corinthians 2:9, "However it is written, no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him." The Bible gives us hints about what that future is.

Dr. Reagan: But the very next verse says, "God has revealed those things to us through His Spirit."

Nathan Jones: Amen.

Dr. Reagan: So they are there.

Nathan Jones: They are there.

Dr. Reagan: But people don't know what they are because they haven't heard the preaching on Bible prophecy.

Nathan Jones: Exactly.

Dr. Reagan: So where are we going to spend....where is Heaven?

Dennis Pollock: Well actually Heaven is what we call the city New Jerusalem.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah.

Dennis Pollock: It is where God is. It is where Christ is. And the Bible not only tells us that, but tells us there will be a time where there will be a new heavens and a new earth, this New Jerusalem will merge with this restored earth and this will be our home base forever. So you are right a lot of people don't get very specific about it primarily because they don't take these things that are written and say, "I believe this will literally be the case."

Dr. Reagan: I think most Christians have an ethereal view of Heaven. Their idea is they are going to be float around a cloud playing a harp in an ethereal world, maybe where they are kind of merged with the God of the universe...

Nathan Jones: (yawn) Yeah boring.

Dr. Reagan: Kind of a Hindu concept of the spirit being merged with the spirit.

Dennis Pollock: Right.

Dr. Reagan: And the Bible says, "No." We're going to have tangible bodies, perfected bodies. I'll have some hair; my knee won't hurt me anymore. We're going to have perfected bodies. We are going to live on a new earth; refreshed and redeemed. Live in a New Jerusalem in the presence of Almighty God, forever and ever serving Him. I mean I can get excited about that.

Dennis Pollock: Amen.

Nathan Jones: Think about how long the Lord has been working on it. John 14:2, "In my Father's house there is many rooms, if it weren't so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you." Now if it took six days to create the Universe, and Jesus has been working at the New Jerusalem for 2,000 years it is going to be incredible and that is going to be our home base for the future.

Dr. Reagan: You've got that right. You know I find that quite often since Christians don't know really what is going to happen. You talked about excitement, how can you get excited about something you don't know anything about? How can you get excited about a surprise birthday party? You can't. How can you get excited about the Coming of the Lord if you don't know what is going to happen when the Lord comes? The more I study Bible prophecy the more excited I got about what is coming. Instead most Christians are clinging to this world, this wretched world that we live in. Clinging to it as if it is all we've got.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah.

Nathan Jones: It reminds me of my old track and field days. I used to be a runner and sometimes they would put me from a sprint into a long distance race. And the long distance race means you have to go a quarter mile around the track. It's agony for a sprinter to have to do that. And you couldn't see the finish line. And as you were running you are like, "It is never going to come, it's never going to come." And once you are around the last turn, you saw the finish line, and hope would spring, and life and everybody starts going faster, there is a destination. And if that destination seems like it's never there, and we don't know what's the result of it, than we are not excited about it. But when we know what it is; we know there is a medal waiting at the end of it. Excuse me. We know that the race, thank goodness is finally done. It gives us hope and a bright future, and that is what Heaven does for us.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah, and when you look at the specifics, and basically what you are describing is the fact that the Bible does give specific details.

Nathan Jones: Yeah.

Dennis Pollock: And the church a lot of times want to throw out the details and just say, "Well let's just sum it up by saying it will be good, and we will be happy." But no there are tremendous details. When you look ahead and you read what God has said, and you begin to believe it, it makes a tremendous difference in the way that you live right now. And I have to share this quote from C.S. Lewis, he says it better than any of us ever could, he said, "If you read history you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were those who thought the most about the next world." He says, "The Apostles themselves who set foot on the conversion of the Roman Empire. The great men who built up the Middle Ages. The English evangelicals who abolished the slave trade, they all left their mark on the earth precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven." He says, "It's since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become ineffective in this one." He said, "Aim at Heaven you'll get the earth thrown in. Aim at the earth you'll get neither."

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to our discussion of hope. Well fellows we have been talking now about the essentiality of hope to a meaningful life. We've also discussed: What is the meaning of Christian hope? What I would like to do now is to turn our attention for a moment to what it is that a person must do in order to be an heir of the hope that is offered by Jesus Christ. And I

would like to get into this last part of our discussion by quoting the words of a great Christian hymn, the words are these, "My faith is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness." What in the world does that mean?

Dennis Pollock: Well Dave that gets right to the heart of Evangelical Christianity. And Evangelical Christianity comes from the fact that we just take the Bible seriously. We read the New Testament we believe what it says. And at the heart of that is the fact that we can only be acceptable in God's eyes through faith in who Christ is and what He has done for us. Mans natural inclination is to try to find acceptance before God by his own works, his own deeds, being a good guy. You now I'm not as bad as my neighbor I'm a lot better than these people I see in these news. And those Hollywood people, oh, my I am so much superior to them. So surely God will accept me. But the Bible says regardless of whether you are a pristine little PTA President, old lady who wears a white bun in her hair and all that, whether you are a motorcycle gang member that's done horrific things and shoots drugs into your veins, we are all sinners, we all need Christ. And the only hope we have is Jesus Christ; faith in Christ, His Death, the shedding of His blood. The Bible says so much about blood, without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. The Bible says so much about faith. We have peace with God thru our Lord Jesus Christ through faith. So it is through faith alone, it is through faith in Christ alone. And it is because of the power of His blood, by that by receiving Christ; by believing that His death and His resurrection were for our sins we are received in God's sight. We are accepted, it's an amazing thing, but we are made as if we had never sinned. The Bible says, "He made Him who knew no sin," that is Christ, "to become sin for us." He was hanging on that cross becoming sin for Dave Reagan, becoming sin for Dennis Pollock and everyone of us. And the Bible says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." So there is a tremendous transfer. Our sins transfer to Christ, His righteousness transferred to us. But we've got to get it right, and that is it is only through faith in Christ, not faith in Christ plus being a good guy, not doing a lot of good deeds; but simply faith in Christ. Now once we have that faith and we are born again we do good works. We live a good life as best as we can. But we are justified by faith in Christ.

Dr. Reagan: Nathan.

Nathan Jones: It reminds me of that very Christianize word "atonement."

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Nathan Jones: Atonement, dictionary.com describes it, "satisfaction, or reprobation for a wrong or injury," or basically in Christianity being reconciled back to God. What does reconciliation mean? Back in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve they walked with God, they talked with God, there was this fellowship this intimate fellowship. But sin came, a rebellion against God and separated man from God. Since then God has worked all of history through Christ's death on the cross to bring us back in Heaven one day to that reconciliation, that relationship with God again. And that is what history is, that is what all of human history is all about. So that we can walk with God, and talk with God, and fellowship with God and see Him face to face again. And we can only do that by accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Dr. Reagan: Follows the Bible says in the End Times one of the signs will be gross apostasy and we are in the midst of that right now.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah.

Dr. Reagan: There are many evidences of it. But I ran across one the other day that directly relates to this, and that is the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in New York City, a woman. This woman called a press conference and she said, "I just want to let you know I am sick and tired of a bloody religion. And so we have taken our hymn book and we have cut every song out of the hymn book that refers to blood because we don't want people to think we are a vampire religion." Of course they are going to have to change the name of the Church because it is Calvary Baptist.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, exactly.

Dr. Reagan: What is your reaction to that? That we've got to get the blood out of this?

Dennis Pollock: Well if you do that with the Bible, then you basically throw the whole Bible out. The Bible makes it clear. The only question is this: are you going to make your own religion, or are you going to accept the religion of Jesus, and Paul and Peter what they had to say? Who is the better theologian? Christ and Paul or this gal from New York City who says we are going to do away with the blood? The Bible makes it clear it is by the blood that we are justified, by the blood that we are forgiven. And we either go with the Bible or we throw it out and create our own religion. I'm not willing to do that.

Nathan Jones: Well I think we use the word blood without giving its context. Christians are always talking about blood, blood, blood to the point where when people took the communion they thought Christians were cannibals. I think we have to explain what we mean when we say blood. The blood isn't just the flowing of blood, or that we have to have blood all over the place. It meant sacrifice of one's life in place for your life. So in the Old Testament your sins separated you from God. So God temporarily gave you the death of an animal in place of your death. When Jesus died on the cross His sacrifice, His shedding of His blood takes our place so that belief in Him....

Dr. Reagan: The penalty had to be paid for our sins.

Nathan Jones: Justice, yes.

Dr. Reagan: And it had to be paid by a perfect human being.

Nathan Jones: Exactly.

Dr. Reagan: And Jesus was that human being, and His blood paid the price. How can you get away from the blood if you are truly a Christian?

Dennis Pollock: Yeah.

Nathan Jones: No way.

Dennis Pollock: You cannot, and that is what makes Evangelicals, Evangelicals, we believe what Paul had to say. We believe what Peter said. We believe what Christ said. You must be born again; it is through faith in Christ and the shedding of His blood.

Dr. Reagan: Praise God for that sacrifice Jesus made.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: Well folks our time is gone. We must bring our program to a conclusion and I would like to do so by asking Dennis to share some final thoughts with you. Dennis.

Dennis Pollock: Well I would like to extend to you an invitation to become an heir of the hopeful promises of God. You may feel like you have no hope, there is hope for you in Jesus Christ. You can do that by reaching out to God in prayer, accepting His Son Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and repenting of your sins. The Bible says the only reason Jesus has not yet returned is because God does not wish any to perish but that all should come to repentance. The Creator of this universe is a God of love, grace and mercy. He is also a God of hope; He wants you to have hope. You cannot find that hope in politicians, or in wealth. The only true hope comes as a gift of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Put your faith in Jesus today as your Lord and Savior and your heart will be flooded with hope.

Dr. Reagan: Thanks Dennis, I really appreciate that and thanks to you also Nathan for your contributions today. Folks, we hope this program has been a blessing to you and that you will be back with us again next week, the Lord willing. Until then this Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries' saying, "Look up be watchful for our redemption is drawing near."

End of Program