

Christ in Prophecy
Revelation 5: “Chapter 20”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: The Bible says that Jesus will return one day to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords over all this world. Does that refer to a spiritual reign where by Jesus reigns today from His throne in Heaven? Or does it refer to a future, literal, historical reign here on earth? Stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings to all of you in the name of Jesus our blessed hope, I'm Dave Reagan, Senior Evangelist for Lamb and Lion Ministries and once again this week I am blessed to have two colleagues here in the studio with me. First is Dennis Pollock, my Teaching and Preaching Associate and the other is Don McGee, the Ragin' Cajun, the Director and Evangelist of Crown and Sickle ministries in Amite, Louisiana.

Now folks, we're in the process of making a fascinating journey through the book of Revelation, and our theme from the beginning has been that the book of Revelation is not difficult to understand, it is difficult to believe. If you will believe it for its plain sense meaning, you will understand it.

Dennis Pollock: In this program, we're going to take a look at the most controversial chapter in the book of Revelation, chapter 20. It's the one that tells us about the Millennium; the one thousand year reign of the Lord over all the nations of the world. We're going to try to determine whether this reign is literal or spiritual in nature.

Don McGee: Let's begin by taking a look at Dave's explanation of chapter 20 as he presents it in his video program entitled, *Revelation Revealed*. Afterwards, we'll return here for discussion of some of the issues that are raised in this very important chapter.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: As chapter 20 opens, Jesus is ready to begin His reign here on Earth. But there's one last piece of business He's got to take care of. He has taken care of the Antichrist and the false prophet. He's defeated them and their armies, and He has thrown them into the lake of fire, which is Hell where they will be tormented forever and ever. But there's still one last rebel left, and that's Satan. So, the Lord's first business in chapter 20 is to bind Satan and put him into a great abyss where he will be confined for the next thousand years. During that time Satan and his demonic hoards will not be allowed to roam upon the earth.

Then chapter 20 says that we, the redeemed, are going to reign with the Lord Jesus Christ for a thousand years. That reign is not described here in great detail. You will find the detailed description of it in the Old Testament, particularly in the book of Isaiah. We are told that Jesus will rule with a rod of iron, and we are told that some people will reign with Him, specifically, those to whom judgment has been given.

Now who, specifically, will reign with Jesus? According to Daniel 7, Old Testament saints will be included in this group, "The saints of the highest one will receive the kingdom, then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the highest one." The apostles will also be included, in Matthew 19:28 Jesus promised his apostles that, "In the regeneration when the son of man will sit on

his glorious throne, you shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Those of us who have become saints during the Church Age will certainly be included. That promise is made in several places in the New Testament. For example, in Revelation 2 it states: "and he who overcomes, to him I will give authority over the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron." Finally, the Tribulation martyrs who die for Jesus will be included according to Revelation 20, "And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

What will we do? Some of us will be administrators, serving as mayors, governors and kings. Jesus made this point in one of His parables that degrees of reigning authority would be part of the rewards that believers would receive, based upon their faithfulness in this life. Others of us will serve as judges. Most of us will serve as teachers, that's right, we're going to provide the worldwide educational system, serving as shepherds and priests of God. It will be our responsibility to bring each person born during the millennium to salvation through a saving faith in Jesus. None of us will be legislators, none of us, because the government of the world will be a theocracy in which Jesus will be both the spiritual and governmental leader. The offices of priest and king will be combined in him. He will give the law and we will teach it and enforce it.

Who will the redeemed be ruling over? Where will the millennial population come from? The people who will be allowed to go into the Millennium in the flesh will be the small number of Jews and Gentiles who live to the end of the Tribulation who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior. You see, when Jesus returns, we're told that He will judge immediately all those left alive. The Jewish judgment is described in Ezekiel 20; the gentile, in Matthew 25. Those who have not accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior at the end of that Tribulation period will be consigned to death. You and I, The redeemed, will be in glorified bodies, like the body Jesus has now. And just as He mingled and interacted with His disciples after His resurrection while He was in a glorified body and they were in

fleshly bodies, in like manner, we who will be in glorified bodies will live among and rule over those who are in fleshly bodies.

Jesus will reign in His glorified body as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords from Jerusalem. We're told in the Old Testament that David in his glorified body will rule as the king of Israel. And as I said before, some of us will be administrators and some of us will be judges, and most of us will be teachers. We will be scattered all over the earth reigning over those who are in the flesh.

We're told in the book of Isaiah that life spans will be returned to what they were at the Fall in the Garden of Eden, that is, a thousand years. That means the people who enter the Millennium in the flesh, and the children born to them during the Millennium, will live the entire time. And because death will be curtailed and life spans will be extended, the earth will experience a great population explosion. Most likely, by the end of the Millennium, there will be more people on the face of the earth than ever before in the history of mankind. And it will be the responsibility of the redeemed to bring those born during that time to salvation in Jesus Christ.

You may think, "Well, of course they will accept Jesus. After all, they will be able to see Him in his glorified body. And they will experience first hand the blessings of His rule." But remember, Jesus was here once before, and all he did was love people and heal them and feed them and they responded by nailing him to a cross.

The heart of man is going to be no different during this millennial period. Sin will be less because Satan and his demonic hoards will be restrained, but there will still be sin and rebellion in people's hearts because we are born with a sin nature. According to Jesus, the evil that is in the world comes from within man. All Satan does is multiply it through temptation. In fact, that's one of the purposes of the Millennium. God is going to use the millennium to prove that Satan's religion, humanism, is wrong when it says that the way to change the world is to change society. Humanists take that position because they believe that evil is rooted in

society. But the word of God says that evil is rooted in the fallen nature of man and that the only way to change the world is to change people's hearts.

So God is going to put all of mankind into a perfect environment for a thousand years, and at the end of that time he's going to let Satan loose. Satan will then expose the seed of rebellion that is in people's hearts. He will do this by convincing the nations to rebel against Jesus. At this point you are probably wondering, "Well, why would people rebel after experiencing one thousand years of peace, righteousness and justice?" Well, think for a moment, think what it would be like to live under, "the rule of the rod of iron" in the flesh. The flesh would want all the pleasures of the world; drugs, gambling, illicit sex, and pornography. But these things would not be allowed under Jesus' rule of the rod of iron. Any attempt to indulge the flesh would be met with swift and sure justice. Violators would be tried before judges in glorified bodies, and there would be no appeal, because the judge's decision would be perfect. And so people on the surface will say, "We praise you Jesus!" But there will be seething rebellion in their hearts. Satan is going to expose that rebellious spirit.

We're told in Revelation 20:7 that Satan will be let loose to test mankind, and he will rally the nations of the earth against Jesus. This will be man's last revolt against God, and through it God will prove conclusively that we do not change people by simply changing their environment. It is their hearts that must be changed, and that can be done only through the power of the Holy Spirit. The millennium will conclude with God pouring out His wrath upon Satan and those who follow him. Satan will be thrown into the Lake of Fire to join the Antichrist and the false prophet.

And then, God will resurrect and judge all the unrighteous who have ever lived whether in Old Testament times, the Church Age, or the Millennium. This judgment is called, the great white throne judgment, it is the judgment of the damned. All those who ever lived and died outside a faith relationship with God will be judged of their works to determine their eternal destiny. And since no man

can be justified before God by his works, all those who come before the great white throne judgment, all of them, will be condemned to the Lake of Fire, to experience what the Bible calls, the second death.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Well gentlemen, let's begin our discussion with the Millennium itself. What would be your response to those people who claim that chapter 20 should be spiritualized and therefore we are living in the Millennium right now.

Dennis Pollock: Well, you know, you wonder what gives a person the right to take the plain words of the Bible and turn them into symbolic things that aren't really what it says. Now, there are cases where the Bible can get symbolic, but the general rule is this: unless the words of Scripture are just patently absurd and just make no sense as read, it's much safer to take them for the way that they say. And in this case, what is so absurd about Jesus reigning on the earth for a thousand years? What is so crazy about that? Well, some people say well it just doesn't really fit with how I think it should be. Well, you know, God I don't think needs to ask you about that. But there's nothing absurd about that. I mean, it says He'll do it, why should we think differently?

Don McGee: Well, one of the reasons we should think differently in the minds of some folks is that God only said it one time. A man told me that, he said, "You know, why should we believe that there is going to be a Millennium because He only says it one time that He's gonna reign for a thousand years."

Dr. Reagan: How many times does God have to say something?

Don McGee: That was my question. I said, "Well, my friend, well how many times does God have to say He's gonna reign for a thousand years for you to believe that He's gonna reign for a thousand years?" He said, "Well, actually, this

thing needs to be spiritualized.” I said, “Well, let me ask you something, what is your precedent for spiritualizing? How do you know when to spiritualize something and when to take something literally? What about the virgin birth, are you gonna take that and are you gonna spiritualize it? Well, what about His being born in Bethlehem, what about the great promise in John 14 where Jesus said I’m going to prepare a place for you and if I’m gonna do that I’m gonna come back and take you to be with me. Let’s spiritualize that. If we do that then we have no hope in his return.”

Dennis Pollock: Well some people have even spiritualized the resurrection of Jesus, they said, well He didn’t physically resurrect, He just resurrected in spirit. Well, that’s crazy. Typically, the farther away you get from a relationship with God, the more you tend to say, I don’t really believe this, you know, it’s gotta be meaning something else.

Dr. Reagan: Well of course and the reason for that is because when you start spiritualizing Scripture, you become God, because then it means anything you want it to mean, instead of what God intended for it to mean. You know, I don’t understand why people want to spiritualize chapter 20. Why would somebody want to say that chapter 20 doesn’t really mean what it says? When it says Jesus is coming back, He’s going to reign over all the nations of the earth. The earth will be flooded with peace righteousness and justice as the waters cover the sea. Hey man, I want to see that!

Don McGee: One of the reasons Dave is because it doesn’t fit with their preconceived idea of theology. But it goes a little bit deeper than that. You know, what does it mean if I believed all my life that this did not mean what it said and then one day I’m confronted with the truth and I have to make a decision, what about all those people that taught me, my Mom and my Daddy, my Grandma and my Grandpa, and all that kind of thing. Am I going to say that they’re wrong? You know, I think that has a lot to do because...

Dr. Reagan: ...oh that could very well be, yeah.

Dennis Pollock: That was exactly what the argument was against Martin Luther when he came out with the idea that we're justified by faith, and not by all kinds of sacramental works and so forth. They said, "You little monk, are going to tell us for a thousand years the church has been wrong, all these great thinkers and church leaders have been wrong for a thousand years and you're right?" Well, he was right because he happened to believe what the Bible. As long as you stay with the Bible, doesn't matter how many people have told you otherwise.

Dr. Reagan: You know, when you start talking about spiritualization, the fundamental argument I use about it is that the only way we can really determine for sure how the Second Coming prophecies are going to be fulfilled is to look at how the First Coming prophecies were fulfilled. The First Coming prophecies meant what they said, people say, "Oh well, they don't mean it in an apocalyptic book." I used to think that was a disease or something but it's a style of writing, and they say, "In an apocalyptic books things never mean what they say." Well, listen, the book of Zechariah is an apocalyptic book. The book of Zechariah says the Messiah will come on a donkey, He will be hailed as a king, He will be betrayed, He will be betrayed by a friend, He'll be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, the 30 pieces of silver will be used to buy a potter's field, that he will be lifted up and that he'll be pierced. And guess what. Every one of those prophecies meant exactly what they said. If that's true, then why don't the Second Coming prophecies mean what they say?

Don McGee: One of the reasons, another one of the reasons Dave, I think, is because people who started with this, going back to Origen and Augustine and those guys is because they came out of a Greek background where nothing could be taken literally, nothing in the physical world, especially. So, when they looked at this they said well, this can't be because this has to do with the physical world so it must mean something else.

Dr. Reagan: Don that's a very important point and I'd just like to develop it a little bit because the Greek mind, the Greek philosophy taught that everything that is tangible, everything you can see is evil. That the ultimate thing is for the spirit to be released from this evil body and for the spirit to be released into the spirit world, and so, when they began to read this and it says you're gonna spend eternity in a new body on a new earth, they said, "Oh that can't be, we've got to spiritualize that because nothing pure and holy can be in a body and on a new earth or whatever because the whole material universe is evil." The Bible teaches the opposite. The Bible teaches that God created the whole universe in absolute perfection, and has been corrupted by the sin of man and one day God's gonna put it back the way He originally created it, and it's gonna be perfected again.

Dennis Pollock: And it shows us the danger of taking your presuppositions when you go to read the Bible and study the Word of God. You've got to lay those down, you've gotta say what does the Bible say? One of the safest things to do in studying Scripture is to say, if I knew nothing about anything, and I just picked up this book and read it, what conclusions would I draw? Now it's very difficult to do that and you need to ask the Holy Spirit to help you to do it, but I mean, that's the safest thing, and like you say, these people are coming along with this preconceived idea that the physical matter is evil, it's wrong, God surely is not gonna have in physical bodies, that's just crazy. Well, it's crazy because of their presuppositions, therefore the Bible cannot mean what it says. Well, who says? You know, the Bible does mean what it says.

Dr. Reagan: Another point and that is that at the beginning of Revelation 20 it says that the first thing Jesus Christ is going to do when He comes back is bind Satan for a thousand years. Now those who argue that we are in the Millennium right now, who argue the Millennium began at the cross and will continue until Jesus returns argue that Satan is bound. Is Satan bound?

Don McGee: I don't see how in the world Satan could be bound. At least not in my life he's not bound. I don't know about anybody else. Peter warned us about this in 1 Peter 5:8, he said Satan is like a roaring lion, he's running around trying to find somebody that he can consume, devour, eat up. Think of all the other warnings, too. Does God warn us for nothing? Look at all the times we are warned to be careful of Satan. He appears as an angel of light, and that kind of thing. Are those empty warnings? Or did the writers, the inspired writer's know what they were talking about? I think they did.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah.

Don McGee: I think the threat's real. And one of the things that it goes on to say, not only is he bound but it says he will deceive the nations no more. Yes, he's gonna be bound in a special way. So the deception is going to cease to exist, well you look around at the nations including this particular nation we happen to live in, there is a whole lot of deception going on, Satan is very much busy deceiving the nations.

Dr. Reagan: As one fellow once put it, if Satan is bound he is bound on a very long chain 'cause he's always gnawing on my leg.

Don McGee: That's right, that's right. Hey you know Dave, I think our viewers should consider this when they're considering a church where they're going to worship, where they're going to work, where they're gonna spend their time, their effort, their money. The leadership of that church, what do they believe? Did they come out of a background, a seminary background, where these things are being taught? Where they were taught that you can't take these things literally, that everything has to be spiritualized. One of the reasons there is such ignorance among Christian people today, especially in the western world is that they've been taught by people who've come out of seminaries believing this kind of stuff.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah, I'd like to go back to a point you made earlier Don, and that is, a fellow said to you, well God only says it once in the Bible, it's going to be a reign of Jesus Christ here on the earth and therefore it really couldn't be all that important or it doesn't really mean what it says. As if God has to say something over and over, but you know, I've had people say that to me many times and Don, that's just as false as it can be. This is not the only place in the Bible where it says that Jesus is coming back to reign. The Bible is full of Scripture that talks about Jesus coming back to reign and people who say that are people who primarily don't know the Old Testament because you can turn over the Old Testament and you can find... in fact, the whole book of Isaiah from beginning to end is primarily about one thing, the reign of Jesus Christ. You don't read the book of Revelation to find out about the reign of Jesus Christ. You read the book of Revelation to find out about the Tribulation. That's what it's about. But you want to find out the reign of Jesus, you better go over to Isaiah, it tells about the sociological aspects, the economic aspects, the political aspects, everything. But the Bible is full of information about the reign of Jesus.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, Revelation describes the fact that there will be this millennial reign, Isaiah goes into detail. He gives you some of the pictures of what it will be like with the animals getting along together, and the lamb and the wolf feeding together and so forth.

Dr. Reagan: Beating the swords into plowshares.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah, a little child putting his hands into a snake's den and it's no big deal because the snakes are no longer poisonous, they no longer will bite. An incredible story, and again, some people say, "Hey that really can't be can it? I mean, would God do that? It just doesn't seem right to me." Well, you know, God doesn't need to ask you about these kinds of things. He said that's how it's going to be and safest thing you can do is simply believe God's word.

Dr. Reagan: I've had people actually quote to me Luke 24 and they say that Jesus said there in Luke 24 verse 44, "These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you that all things which are written about me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." And they said, see, all prophecy has been fulfilled. I've heard people use that over and over and over. Jesus himself said, all prophecy has been fulfilled therefore there are no prophecies to fulfill.

Don McGee: That's not what He said. He said all prophecy must be fulfilled.

Dr. Reagan: Amen.

Don McGee: And they miss that little four-letter word. All prophecy must be fulfilled but there is nothing anywhere that says it must be fulfilled prior to His ascension into Heaven. Everything didn't end in AD 30. I promise you.

Dennis Pollock: The First Coming prophecies were fulfilled, but the Second Coming prophecies haven't been fulfilled, and the Bible is filled with prophecies that have not yet come to pass. They will. Zechariah 14, a great example, the Lord's gonna go forth and fight against the nations that are coming against Jerusalem, His feet are gonna stand on the Mount of Olives, has that happened yet?

Dr. Reagan: No.

Dennis Pollock: No, it has not happened. Says the Mount of Olives is going to split in two, waters are going to gush forth, has that happened yet?

Dr. Reagan: No.

Dennis Pollock: Has not happened. It will happen because God says it will. God's gonna come and be king over the whole earth and in that day the Lord is

one, His name is one. Has Christ ever come and become King over the whole earth? Has that been fulfilled? No. Will it? Absolutely.

Dr. Reagan: In Peter's first sermon on Pentecost, the whole sermon from beginning to end was prophecy, just one prophecy after another, concerning the first coming. And he says, "Jesus has fulfilled all this." And the people said, "What must we do to be saved?" His second sermon recorded in Acts chapter 3 begins to get into Second Coming prophecies. He says that, "Jesus has been sent and that Jesus was appointed for a time for you." And he says, "He's gone to Heaven, and he says Heaven must receive Him until the period of the restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of the Holy prophets from ancient times." He's talking about future prophecies yet to be fulfilled. Jesus will stay until it's time for the restoration of all things.

Don McGee: A man asked a preacher one time about that passage that you were talking about, about Jesus doing all of these things on the earth. And about Zechariah 14, about the cleft there in the Mount of Olives, and this older gentlemen asked this guy and he said, "Well is there a cleft in Jerusalem, in the Mount of Olives?" And the preacher said, "Why of course there is! Absolutely there is!" Now, here is a man who knew better, who actually lied to this old man, knew that there was no valley on the Mount of Olives today, and because he could not answer this man's question in the context of what he believed, he lied to this guy.

Dr. Reagan: Well, you don't need to do that, I mean, the Scriptures are just as clear as they can be.

Don McGee: Very clear, very plain.

Dr. Reagan: Sometimes people refer to Second Peter chapter 3 where it talks about how the world was once destroyed by water and is being saved up for wrath to be destroyed once again by fire. And they say it says here that when the

Lord comes the earth will be consumed by fire and they said there's no mention of a Millennial Reign, therefore there is no millennial reign.

Dennis Pollock: Yeah. Well, you know if that was the only verse in the Bible, you would probably conclude that there wouldn't be because it talks about the earth being destroyed by fire, the Lord coming back, the earth being destroyed by fire and that seems to be about it. When I teach this, I use this illustration. Imagine that you found a note that I had written, referring to my wife saying she's crazy. You might conclude that I thought my wife was insane. But suppose you had a longer note that was all mushy and just filled with words of love and all the rest and you had to compare the two and you said, "Well, you know, I think that because this longer note that's much more detailed talks about how much he loves her, and this little note says she's crazy, I think we're gonna have to make the little one blend in with the larger one." Now, the truth of course would be that I said she's crazy in the sense that she's funny, she hilarious, she's a joker. Well, yeah, Second Peter for a few verses has this little section that does seem to indicate that the world's gonna burn up when Christ comes. But when you compare it with a longer section, such as Revelation 20, such as what Isaiah, and you put it all together, you have to conclude that we're gonna make the smaller section mesh with the larger. In which case, Peter was simply given an overview of the whole scenario from start to finish. Time gaps in between.

Don McGee: Every Scripture has to be interpreted in context of the whole idea. You can't take one out and stand on it and say this is everything that God has said about the matter.

Dr. Reagan: And when you do, you get in big trouble.

Don McGee: Big trouble.

Dr. Reagan: Thank you gentlemen.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: Revelation 20 says that those who die outside a faith relationship with Jesus will be condemned to what the Bible calls the second death. Gentlemen, is it possible for a person to die twice? What in the world is this passage talking about?

Don McGee: Yes, folks, it is possible for people to die twice. Listen to me carefully. If you're born once, you will die twice. If you're born twice, you will die only once. Now, at this point many of you are probably scratching your heads and thinking is this guy nuts? What does this double speak mean? Let me explain. All of us experience natural birth, and all of us will experience natural death if the Lord doesn't return first. Now the Bible says that no one can be saved and expect to live eternally with God unless they are born again. That happens when you put your faith in Jesus as your Savior, and your spirit which is dead to sin is rejuvenated. If you're born again, the only death you will ever experience is physical death. But if you refuse to put your faith in Jesus and you remain dead in your sins, you will one day be resurrected, judged and condemned to Hell, where you will experience what the Bible calls the second death. The second death is eternal separation from God.

Dr. Reagan: Dennis, what specifically must a person do in order to avoid this second death?

Dennis Pollock: Well friends death is a terrible thing. If you've ever watched someone you cared about go through the process of dying I know you'll agree with that. But there is something worse, in fact far worse than physical death it's the second death the Bible speaks about. That death as Don indicated is the everlasting destruction of the soul, a process so horrible that Jesus tells us, if you have to cut off your hand or pluck out your eye to avoid it, by all means do so.

Now, there are diseases that cause physical death and they are called terminal. Likewise, there is a disease of the soul that leads to this second death. That disease is called sin. And no amount of positive thinking, turning over new leaves or pop psychology can make the slightest difference in that condition. But there is a remedy. God has provided an answer for our condition and that answer is in the death and resurrection of His son Jesus Christ. Jesus took all the penalty of our sins on Himself at the cross, and He says that whoever believes on Him will not perish but have everlasting life. Repent of your sins, believe on Jesus Christ receive him as your savior today.

Dr. Reagan: Thank you Dennis, and thank you also Don, it's been a pleasure to have you with us. Well, folks, that's it for this week. Please be back with us next week as we take a look at the last two chapters of Revelation, and also consider some of the signs of the times that point to the soon fulfillment of the prophecies contained in the book of Revelation. Until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries saying "Look up, be watchful, for our redemption is drawing near!"

End of Program