

My Pilgrimage to a Premillennial Viewpoint and Ministry

Dr. David R. Reagan

I have spent the last 43 years teaching and preaching Bible Prophecy full time, and that is a miracle of God.

Let me explain.

My Personal Church Background

I was born in 1938 into a family who were members of the Non-Instrumental Churches of Christ. This group of churches were established in the early 1800s as a part of what was called “The Restoration Movement.” That title came from the fact that the founder and leaders of these churches claimed that they were restoring the First Century Church in all its simplicity and purity.

Over the years, the movement split into three separate groups:

The Disciples of Christ – Liberal
The Independent Christian Churches – Moderate
Non-Instrumental Churches of Christ – Conservative

But the Non-Instrumental churches were more than just conservative — they were legalistic to the core.

For example, when I was a kid, the Church of Christ my family attended in Waco, Texas nearly split over arrangements for a wedding. One of the elder’s daughters wanted a band to provide music for her wedding. Her father argued it would be okay since a wedding was not a worship service. The other elders said, “No way!”

After days of negotiations, it was finally agreed that the band could be placed on a flat bed truck and the truck could be parked parallel to the building. The windows of the church could then be opened, and the music could waft into the building!

This acute legalism led to constant divisions to the point that in the 1940s there were more than 25 different Non-Instrumental Churches of Christ, none of which would have anything to do with each other. Here are ten examples of what I’m talking about:

- 1) The Mainline Churches
- 2) The Non-Sunday School Churches
- 3) The Non-Human Literature Churches
- 4) The King James Only Churches
- 5) The No Kitchen-in-the Building Churches
- 6) The One Cup Communion Churches
- 7) The Juice Before the Bread Churches
- 8) The Non-Located Minister Churches
- 9) The Non-Institutional Churches (Opposed to orphan homes and mission societies)
- 10) The Anti-Churches (Opposed to everything!)

Believe it or not, the slogan used by all these churches was: “In matters of faith, unity; In matters of opinion, liberty; in all things, love.” But in practice, everything was considered a matter of faith. So, there was no tolerance of any differences of opinion.

These were fighting churches who considered every difference of opinion to be a basis for drawing lines of fellowship. It could be argued that these churches believed in salvation by perfected knowledge — by being right about everything!

Militant Amillennialism

And one very strong line of fellowship that all of them but one group drew and enforced had to do with the interpretation of Bible prophecy. Except for a very small group of Premillennial churches, all the rest were militantly Amillennial.

By “militant” I mean that if you held a viewpoint about prophecy that was other than the Amillennial, you were disfellowshipped.

These churches were so Amillennial that they actually taught that it is a sin to say the Lord’s Prayer! And why? Because the prayer contains the phrase, “Thy kingdom come.” Their argument was that the kingdom had already come in the form of the Church, and thus it was improper to pray for the kingdom to come.

Spiritual Blindness

I was affiliated with the Non-Instrumental Churches of Christ for 30 years, and you might wonder why I lingered with them so long. The answer is that when I was growing up during the 1940s and 50s there were very few Christian radio broadcasts and Christian TV did not begin until the mid 50s with Oral Roberts. Also, Christian bookstores were non-existent.

Thus, during that time period it was easy to keep members of our churches from being exposed to other interpretations of Scripture. Further, our preachers regularly declared that all other denominations were “apostate,” and we should keep our distance from them lest we become contaminated.

During my 30 years with these churches, I never heard but one sermon a year on Bible prophecy. It was always the same one, and it was based on the assertion that “There is not one verse in the Bible that even implies that Jesus will ever put His feet on this earth again.”

A Major Discovery

You can therefore imagine how shocked I was at the age of 12 when one day I was thumbing my way through the Bible, when I landed on Zechariah 14. The first nine verses literally stunned me. They said in the end times, when Jerusalem is surrounded by enemy armies, the Lord will return to the Mount of Olives, and when His feet touch the ground, the mountain will split in two — and on that day the Lord will become king over all the earth.

After much reflection, I decided to take this passage to my pastor and ask him what it meant. When I did so, he sat silently for a long time while he read the verses and pondered them. Finally, he looked at me, pointed his finger in my face, and said, “Son, I don’t know what these verses mean, but I can guarantee you one thing, they don’t mean what they say!”

Well, that really troubled me because I had always been taught that the Bible means exactly what it says, from beginning to end. Now, I had suddenly discovered that this rule applies to everything except Second Coming Prophecies. But I'm Irish and therefore I am stubborn, so the meaning of these nine verses became a crusade for me. Every time a preacher would come to town and proclaim, "There is not one verse in the Bible that even implies that Jesus will ever put His feet on this earth again," I would ask him what Zechariah 14:1-9 meant.

And I always got the same answer: "It doesn't mean what it says!"

A Turning-Point Explanation

When I was about 20 years old, a visiting preacher came to our church who was a seminary graduate. Those were very rare among our churches. Sure enough, he made the proclamation about Jesus never putting His feet on this earth again. I challenged him with Zechariah 14, and he responded with one word: APOCALYPTIC!

I had no idea what that word meant — whether it was disease or a doctrine. But he was a seminary graduate, so I assumed he knew what he was talking about.

And thus, when I began preaching on weekends in my early 20s, I would confidently declare that Jesus would never put His feet on this earth again. And if anyone challenged me with Zechariah 14, I would yell, "Apocalyptic!" and my challenger would run for the exit! The sad fact is that I had no idea what I was talking about.

One day I decided to find out what Apocalyptic meant. I went to my new pastor who was also a seminary graduate, and he said it was the name for a form of literature in the Bible that never meant what it said. He further explained that all such literature had to be spiritualized.

He proceeded to give me a classic example of what he was talking about. He explained to me the true meaning of Zechariah 14:1-9. He said the Mount of Olives stands for the human heart. The enemy armies portrayed in Zechariah 14 represent the evil in the world that surrounds the heart. The return of Jesus occurs when you accept Him as your Lord and Savior. The splitting of the Mount of Olives takes place when your heart splits in contrition and repentance. And on that day, Jesus becomes the king of your heart.

A Second Discovery

This fanciful interpretation was the one I was stuck with until one day I sat down and did something I had never done before. — I read the whole book of Zechariah. And while doing so, I noticed something very interesting. The book was full of First Coming prophecies concerning the Messiah, and Jesus had fulfilled every one of them literally. Some of the specific prophecies were:

- 1) The Messiah will have a humble spirit. (9:9)
- 2) The Messiah will be a Servant of God. (3:8)
- 3) The Messiah will be "just" and "endowed with salvation." (9:9)
- 4) The Messiah will be a loving Shepherd. (11:4-14)
- 5) The Messiah will arrive riding a donkey. (9:9)
- 6) The Messiah will be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. (11:12)

- 7) The 30 pieces of silver will be cast into the sanctuary. (11:13)
- 8) The silver will be used to purchase a potter's field. (11:13)
- 9) The Messiah's disciples will desert Him (13:7)
- 10) The Messiah will have His hands wounded (13:6)
- 11) The Messiah will have his body pierced. (12:10)

As I surveyed these prophecies, something jumped out at me. I noticed that every one of them meant exactly what they said because every one of them had been precisely fulfilled. That's when it suddenly dawned on me that if the First Coming prophecies in Zechariah meant what they said, then the Second Coming prophecies must also have a literal meaning.

That was the day I decided to stop playing games with God's Word by accepting its plain sense meaning from beginning to end. It was later that I discovered David Cooper's guideline:

“If the plain sense makes sense, don't look for any other sense, lest you end up with nonsense.”

I call that the Golden Rule of Biblical interpretation.

My Educational Background

Now, I have shared my religious background with you, and before I proceed to tell how I made my journey to a Premillennial viewpoint, I need to tell you about my educational background because it is relevant to my story.

I attended the University of Texas in Austin during the late 1950s where I majored in Government and American History. In my senior year, I won a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship that enabled me to attend any graduate school of my choice.

I selected the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Boston. It is a school of international relations founded and operated jointly by Tufts and Harvard Universities. I earned all my graduate degrees there and started teaching international law and politics at Austin College in Texas.

In the mid-1960s I won a Fulbright Fellowship and was assigned to teach at the University of the Philippines in Quezon City, a suburb of Manila.

God Moves Me to the Philippines

I took my wife and two small daughters with me, and we lived in some faculty housing located on the university campus. We had no transportation except buses and jeepneys, and riding in these was always an adventure. The person across from you might be holding a baby pig. The person on the right side of you might have a rooster, and the one on your left side could very well be involved in slitting your back pocket with a razor blade in order to get to your wallet.

The result was that we did not travel much. And so, we started attending the Church of Christ that was located the closest to our house.

I quickly discovered that the pastor of that church was a man in deep cultural shock with no missionary training. His preaching consisted of legalistic diatribes. For example, one Sunday he

preached a hell-fire and brimstone sermon against dancing! What made this so crazy is that the dancing the Filipinos loved was a beautiful form of folk dancing where the men and women hardly even came close to each other.

I finally arranged a personal meeting with this pastor. I told him I was appalled at his preaching. I also told him that it was obvious that he held the Filipino people in contempt. I concluded by asking him why he was in the Philippines.

He responded very bluntly by telling me he had never been able to get along with church elders, so he decided to go into mission work so he could separate himself by thousands of miles from the elders who were responsible for overseeing his work!

A Third Discovery

That was the day I decided to find another church for my family. I did not know at the time, but that decision was going to ultimately change the whole direction of my life. The church I decided to visit was one I had heard a lot about. It was a Church of Christ located in downtown Manila, about a 35 minute drive from where we lived.

I had been told that the pastor was a remarkable person, and I discovered that was true. He held three services on Sunday mornings — one in Chinese, one in Tagalog (the national language of the Philippines) and the third service in English.

I discovered later that the pastor, named Victor Broaddus, had been born to missionary parents in China and learned to speak Chinese before English. When the Japanese invaded China in 1937, his family fled to the Philippines, and they were living there when the Japanese invaded the Philippines in 1941. Victor and his family were captured and placed in a concentration camp located in downtown Manila, where they spent all of World War II.

The first time I attended Victor's church, he was in the midst of preaching a series on Bible prophecy. His topic that Sunday was something I knew nothing about — namely, the Millennium. What really impressed me is that he illustrated every point he made with scriptures. That was my starting point for my study of God's Prophetic Word. God had taken me half way around the world to introduce me to His marvelous promises in Bible prophecy.

My Ignorance of Bible Prophecy

I was so ignorant of Bible prophecy at that time that if you had asked me to define the Rapture, I would probably have said that "It's a sensation you feel when your girlfriend kisses you." Likewise, I would probably have defined Gog & Magog as the name of a comedy team.

When I returned to the States, I continued my study of Bible prophecy.

The next thing that happened to me occurred on the streets of Dallas. I was walking downtown one day when a person came up to me and handed me a brochure about the Rapture. I was about 28 years old at the time, and I had never even heard of the Rapture! I immediately thought the brochure must have been printed by a cult. But when I looked at the back page, it said it came from a Baptist church. So, I started trying to find out what the Rapture was all about.

The Six Day War

In 1967 when the Six Day War broke out, I started following the news reports very carefully since I was a professor of international relations.

One day after war was over, I read a fascinating story by an Associated Press reporter. He said that when the Israeli military leaders were debating how best to conquer the Old City of Jerusalem, the leaders agreed they should not attack from the West at the Jaffa Gate since that would be where the Jordanians would expect their offensive.

Instead, they decided to attack the Old City at sunrise on the Eastern side, but they got into an argument over which gate. One of them suggested that they would catch the Jordanians by complete surprise if they used satchel charges to blow open the Eastern Gate. But when that suggestion was made, a rabbi in the room, who was a military chaplain, strongly protested the idea. He pointed out that the Scriptures stated that the gate was to be closed and remain closed until the return of the Messiah.

So, they decided to make the attack at the Lion's Gate.

My Gate to Prophecy

I was totally baffled by the rabbi's comment. I had no idea what he was talking about. So, I got out my big fat concordance and stated looking up every verse in the Bible that mentioned the word, gate.

That search led me to a prophecy in Ezekiel 44:1-3 that says the Eastern Gate will be closed and will not be reopened until the Messiah returns. I was stunned by this passage.

I started doing research to find out when and why the Eastern Gate was closed. I discovered that no one seemed to know for certain, but the most common story I ran across stated that in 1541 when Suleiman the Magnificent began rebuilding the walls of the Old City, a rumor swept Jerusalem that the Messiah was coming. Suleiman called in some Jewish rabbis and asked them to tell him about the Messiah.

They informed him that the Messiah would come from the East and would enter Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate. They further explained that the Messiah would overthrow Suleiman's government and establish a reign that would spread all over the world, bringing peace righteousness and justice.

Suleiman responded to this information by closing the gate and putting a Muslim cemetery in front of it. He believed that no Jewish holy man would step foot in a Muslim cemetery, and he certainly could not walk through a bricked-up gate.

This discovery of mine hooked me on Bible prophecy. Ever since, I have referred to the Eastern Gate as my "Gate to Prophecy."

Studying Prophecy

A few years later, in the mid-70s, I discovered that the Philippines pastor who had first introduced me to Bible prophecy had moved to Winchester, Kentucky to serve as president of a

Christian College. I called him and asked if he knew of anyone in the Dallas area who could serve as a tutor to help me better understand Bible prophecy.

He said he did, and he directed me to a man who was the pastor of a Premillennial Church of Christ located in far South Dallas. His name was Ben Rake.

I called Ben, and he agreed to start meeting with me on Saturdays to study Bible prophecy together. As a result of our study of the details of Bible prophecy, I decided to write an article about my pilgrimage to a Premillennial viewpoint. The article was printed in an obscure journal published in Louisville, Kentucky by the Premillennial Churches of Christ, of which there were only 119 in existence at the time.

In the article I emphasized that the Amillennial view does not stand the test of either the Scriptures or reality. For example, how can anyone truly believe that we are currently living in the Millennium?

- The Bible says that Jesus will return to earth and personally reign from Jerusalem during the Millennium (Zechariah 14:1-9). That is not a reality today, nor has it ever been.
- The Bible says that during the Millennium, “the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). Does that sound like the world we live in?
- The Bible says that during the Millennium, Satan will be bound so that he can “no longer deceive the nations” (Revelation 20:1-3). Is that our world today? No! Every nation, including the United States is deceived.
- The Bible says that the Millennium will be characterized by worldwide peace with no war whatsoever (Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3). Yet, everywhere we look today we see wars all around the globe.
- The Bible says that righteousness and justice will prevail throughout the world during the Millennium (Isaiah 11:4-5 and Isaiah 42:1-4). In contrast, we currently live in a world where unrighteousness and injustice prevail.
- The Bible says that the Millennium will be a time when the entire world will manifest holiness (Isaiah 4:2-4 and Ezekiel 28:25-26) . That’s not today’s world that is wallowing in immorality and blasphemy.
- The Bible says that when the Millennium begins, all of nature will be reconciled to itself and to Mankind. There will no longer be any poisonous or meat eating animals, and agriculture throughout the world will produce abundant harvests (Isaiah 11:6-9, Joel 3:18 and Amos 9:13). These are not prophecies that have yet been fulfilled.
- The Bible says six times in Revelation 20 that the Millennium will last 1,000 years. We have never experienced a one thousand year period in history with the characteristics listed above for the Millennium. Nor is there any logical reason to spiritualize the thousand years to mean an indefinite time.

To summarize, it takes a lot of spiritualizing of Scripture to end up with the Amillennial viewpoint.

Several months after the article was published, I got a call from John Walvoord. He asked I if I knew who he was, and I said yes. He then said that someone had sent him a copy of my article and that he was interested in publishing a detailed review of it in the Dallas Seminary's academic journal. He asked permission to do that. I told him it was okay with me, but I pointed out that it was not an academic article. He said that was okay. Accordingly, a review of the article appeared in *Bibliotheca Sacra* in the January-March edition of 1979.

At that point in time, I was serving as Vice President for Development of Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma.

My Call to Full Time Ministry

One morning I was praying when the Lord suddenly spoke to my spirit with a crystal clear message. He said:

Give up your academic career, step out in faith and preach the soon coming of Jesus. Preach, "Flee from the wrath that is to come!"

To say the least, I was shocked! Every morning thereafter I received the same message in the exact same words.

What made these words so astounding to me is that I had been called by the Lord when I was 20 years old to commit my life to ministry. But my response had been, "Here am I Lord, send anyone but me!"

I had detailed plans for my life, and they did not include being a full time pastor of evangelist. So, I began to run from the Lord. And although I was very successful in my academic career, it was never fulfilling because I was not in the center of God's will, and I knew it.

Now, 20 years later, the Lord was calling again, and once more, I tried to push the call aside. But it continued to come every morning during my devotional time.

As I was wrestling with this renewed call, I received a cassette tape in the mail from a friend of mine in Houston, Texas. The note that came with the tape read: "While I was listening to this tape, the Lord spoke to me and said, 'Send this to David.'" The tape was one in a series of ten about biblical decision making that had been recorded by Pat Robertson.

I immediately popped it into my tape player and started listening. His theme was that whenever you are trying to make a difficult decision, try the Old Testament principle of seeking the confirmation of two or more witnesses.

And that's what I decided to do. I started making a list of people I might call. The first person I decided to phone was an elderly and godly man named Bob Yarbrough. (Incidentally he was the grandfather of Mark Yarbrough who is the current president of Dallas Theological.)

Conducting an Experiment

I told Bob that I believed God was calling me to give up my academic career and step out in faith to form a Bible prophecy ministry. I asked him to pray about it for three days and call me back and tell me what the Lord had spoken to his heart. He agreed.

Promptly on the evening of the third day Bob called me back. He told me I had better sit down because he had some exciting news.

He proceeded to explain that God had really impressed upon him that I was to take the step of faith. He said when I called he was getting ready to go to a men's Bible study, and that he mentioned my call to them. He said they prayed about it, and that when the study was over, the men started handing him pieces of paper as they left. On each piece of paper was a financial pledge to my ministry for one year. He then said that to his amazement the pledges came to \$800 a month for the first year!

I was stunned! Bob then asked when I was going to take the step of faith. I told him I was running an experiment, and that I had to find a second witness who would confirm the call.

Well, at that point I was scared, really scared. I had put God to the test, and He had come through with flying colors, The ball was now in my court.

The Second Witness

I went back to my list, and I started looking for someone who would say, 'No!' The ideal person came to mind. She was a very cranky elderly lady named Bernice. She was a gold-plated character who was a burr under my saddle.

Every time she heard I had spoken at a church, she would call and order a tape of the sermon. Then she would send me a three to four page letter tearing the sermon apart, asking why I had used a particular scripture instead of a better one that she would point out.

She was also very abrupt on the telephone. When I would call her, I would say, "Hello, Bernice, this is David." And she would reply, "What do you want?" She always wanted to get to the bottom line without going through any pleasantries. And when she got to the bottom line, she always just hung up without saying, "Goodbye."

So, I called Bernice and explained what I thought the Lord was calling me to do. Her response was, "Why are you bothering me with this?" I explained to her what I wanted her to do, and she said, "Okay," and hung up. No goodbye!

I smiled and thought, "That's the end of that!" But I was in for a BIG surprise. Three days later, she called back. She spoke like a person transformed. No gruffness. She sounded happy and excited. She said God had strongly confirmed His call for me to go full time in ministry. And then she said, "You're not going to believe what has happened!"

She explained that she had received a surprise inheritance of \$3,000 the day after I called, and then she said "I'm going to give you \$1,000 of it if you resign your job and start proclaiming the Lord's soon return!" And this offer was coming from a lady living on Social Security who resided in a very old broken-down shack of a house!

I was dumbfounded. But she had only just begun. "I've got more good news," she said. "Aren't you driving a university car?" she asked. I said yes. "Well," she added, "then you are going to need a car, and if you will take the step of faith, I will give you my car," And then she started laughing! I didn't know that she knew how.

I asked what she was laughing about, and she said, “Because it is a holy car.” I asked what she meant by that, and she said, “It’s a car that has been prayed over on the side of the road many times.”

Then she asked when I was going to take the step of faith, and I waffled again by telling her I was running an experiment.

A Third Witness

I remember sharing this story one time with an Episcopal priest friend of mine. When I got to this point in the story, he said, “I’ll bet I know what you did next.” I asked him how he could possibly know, and he said, “Because I’ve been there.”

“Okay,” I said, “tell me what I did next. He said, I figure you got on your knees and asked God for a third witness.”

He was right. That’s exactly what I did. I asked the Lord to send me a third, unsolicited witness. And it came in the mail the very next morning. It was the latest issue of *Christianity Today* magazine.

On the cover was a man I had heard a lot about, but I knew very little about him. It was Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and he was being featured on his 80th birthday. I decided to read the article before going on to the office. It took the form of an interview:

Question: “What seminary did you attend?”

Answer: “I didn’t go to seminary.”

Question: “Where did you go to school?”

Answer: “I went to medical school and became a doctor.”

Question: “How did you get into the ministry?”

Answer: “God called me. I put a note on my office door that said ‘I have gone to save men’s souls.’”

Question: “Did you enter seminary then?”

Answer: “No, I never went to seminary. I simply started preaching. I would read a verse and comment on it. Then read the next verse and comment on it. That’s all I’ve ever done.”

The interview with this remarkable man went on for pages, surveying his whole career in the ministry. The next to the last question was:

Question: “Have you learned anything new in your study of the Bible in the last five years?”

Answer: “Oh yes,” he responded. “Five years ago I began an intensive study of Bible prophecy, and it has led me to the conclusion that we are living in the season of the Lord’s return.”

My chest tightened with anticipation as I looked to the last question. I sensed that God was about to speak to me.

Question: “If you were a young minister just beginning to preach, what would your message be?”

Answer: “Flee from the wrath that is to come!”

I could hardly believe my eyes. Those were the exact words God had laid on my heart.

A Joyous Release

“Thank you, Lord!” I yelled. “Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!”

I was on my knees praising God in prayer. The call had been confirmed in my heart. I was no longer full of doubt. The fear was gone. Resolve had replaced it. I knew what I had to do, and I was ready to do it, regardless — regardless of finances or reputation.

As I drove to my university office, I found myself slapping the steering wheel in glee one moment, shouting, “Thank you, Lord!” Then, in the next moment I would shake my head in astonishment and ask, “But why me Lord? I’m nothing but a miserable sinner.”

I’ve asked the Lord that question many times since, and He has responded graciously in two ways.

First, by reminding me that “there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

And second, by reminding me of my namesake, King David of Israel. The Lord has made it clear to me that the only people He has to work through are sinners. If we have put our faith in His Son, He has forgiven and forgotten our sins (Hebrews 8:12). He calls us to do the same.

Becoming a Fool

When I arrived at the university, I went directly to the president’s office and told him I had decided to resign. He asked what I was upset about. I told him that was not the problem and explained that I was resigning because God had called me to preach. Having been a preacher once himself, the president knew there was no hope in trying to argue with someone who had received God’s call.

So, he simply asked, “What church?” “No church,” I replied. “Well then,” he asked, “where are you going to preach?”

I told him I was going to step out in faith and preach wherever God opened a door.

“What are you going to preach? He asked” I replied, “Jesus is coming soon.” He looked at me in disbelief. “You’re going to preach what?” he asked. “That Jesus is coming soon,” I repeated.

He just shook his head in amazement, smiled and said, “When are you going to do this?” It was the middle of March. I had decided to give him two weeks’ notice. “April the first,” I answered. He sat there for a moment and stared at me incredulously. Then he shrugged his shoulders and replied, “All I can say is that I think you have selected a most appropriate date!”

So, on April Fool’s Day, 1980, I stepped out in faith. Twenty years of running from the Lord was finally over. At long last, with great timidity and only after prolonged soul-wrenching, I had said, “Here am I, Lord, send me.”

Now I had to learn how to trust the Lord for everything in my life.

A Wonderful Gift

One year later, on April first of 1981, I returned to DFW Airport after hosting my first pilgrimage group to Israel. My wife met me at the airport with a package that was beautifully wrapped.

I said, "What is this? It's not my birthday or our anniversary." She just said, "Open it." And when I did, I discovered a very special gift designed by her and executed by a friend who was a calligrapher.

It was a plaque that said, "Happy First Anniversary to Lamb & Lion Ministries" At the bottom was a quote from 1 Corinthians 4:10 that said, "We are fools for Christ's sake."

Difficult Years

Those early years of the ministry were extremely difficult financially. No one knew who I was. I had left my boyhood church, and I had not yet found a new church home. The Internet did not become accessible until 15 years later in 1995. I don't think I spoke for a church bigger than 50 people during the first three years

However, the Lord arranged a major break for the ministry in its third month, in June of 1980. I got a call from a farmer in the Panhandle of Texas, He asked if I was the person who had recorded a cassette tape program called, "Israel in Bible Prophecy." I told him I was.

He then said, "I'm calling you because while I was listening to that tape, the Lord spoke to my heart and said, 'Call David and tell him I want him on the radio.'" I told him I appreciated his encouragement but that I did not have any money to invest in radio. He asked me how much it would cost, and I told him I did not know. He said to find out and call him back.

I called the only Christian radio station in Dallas at that time and found out that the cost of a 15-minute program was \$60 a day. When I called him back and reported that number, he said, "That's peanuts!" I replied, "That may be peanuts to you, but we don't have that kind of money."

He said, "I'm going to send you a check for you to get on the radio, and don't you ever call me and ask for any other money!" I pointed out that he had called me and not me him, and that I had not asked for any money.

A few days later, I received a check in the mail for \$4,000!

Every year thereafter I would report to him how many radio stations we were broadcasting on. He would always respond by saying, "Praise the Lord, and keep up the good work!" And true to his word, he never gave another dime.

Encouragement

The Lord supplied me with a constant stream of encouragement during those early years when I was struggling to learn how to live by faith.

For example, one day I got a phone call, and the person at the other end of the line said, "Hello, I am Moishe Rosen. Do you know who I am?" I told him that I was fully aware of the

fact that he was the founder of Jews for Jesus, He then proceeded to tell me that someone had given him a copy of my tape, "The Jews in Prophecy," and it had greatly impressed him. He urged me to keep preaching that message, and he assured me that the Lord would richly bless my ministry.

On another occasion, I noticed one morning that I had a voice mail on my phone. It was from Jack Hayford, a man I had never met. He had called to leave me a message of encouragement in response to a booklet I had written about the Lord's soon return.

Another person who gave me great encouragement was Charles Halff, the founder of the Christian Jew Foundation in San Antonio, Texas. I made a connection with him as a result of sending out a letter to 20 different Christian radio ministries in which I explained that I was new to radio and needed advice about how best to do it. I got only two responses.

The first was a letter of suspicion asking what I really wanted. Did I want their mailing list? Did I want to know what they were paying for radio? Did I want their list of stations? It was a very upsetting letter. But even more upsetting was the fact that 18 of the ministries just totally ignored my plea for help.

The only positive response I received was from Charles Halff. He called me and invited me to come to the ministry's offices and spend a couple of days interviewing everyone on his staff. You can't imagine how much that man encouraged me.

One of my most cherished encouragers over the years was Dr. Charles Ryrie who also served as a generous donor.

Living by Faith

During those early years, my greatest challenge was learning to live by faith. I discovered very quickly that it is one thing to preach and teach faith and it is another thing to step out and live by faith! That's the reason that the first book I wrote was not about Bible prophecy.

It was titled, "Trusting God: Learning to Walk by Faith." It was published in 1987, and it is now in its third edition, still going strong.

My education about how to live by faith began very simply at the ministry's second board meeting which was held in December of 1980, when the ministry was only seven months old.

I told the board that the car given to me was totally unreliable and that I needed to get a new one. The board immediately voted to authorize the purchase, and we proceeded on to the next item on the agenda. But suddenly, one of the board members asked how I intended to get the new car. I said I would just trade in the current one and set up payments for the new one.

The board member said, "No, we should not do that. This is a faith ministry, and I don't believe we should ever go into debt for anything. The Lord knows our needs, and He will supply them, if we will only ask in faith." We proceeded to pray for the Lord to supply us with a vehicle.

In our next newsletter, I explained the need, and I immediately received a call from a lady in Oklahoma City. "What kind of vehicle do you need?" she asked. I explained we needed a van. She asked how much a van would cost. I told her about \$15,000. She wanted to know if that

included tax, title and license. I told her no. “Okay,” she said, “I will send you a check today for \$18,000.”

I experienced this sort of thing over and over and over again, and each time, my faith was increased.

Miracles

I don't believe in coincidences. I call them “God-incidences.” That's my phrase for modern day miracles. I could talk for an hour about the miracles God provided the ministry. I will mention quickly only three.

A New Network

The first relates to our launching a television program. In 2002, after 21 years of broadcasting a daily radio program, we decided to drop it and replace it with a weekly TV program called “Christ in Prophecy.”

I might just interject that this was a major decision that the staff and trustees had been urging me to make for almost three years. My reluctance was due to two things.

First, the cost of TV is more than double that of radio, and I did not want to spend air time pleading for money. Second, I was concerned about the fundamental difference in radio and television. You see, on the radio, the focus is on the message. But with TV, the focus tends to shift from the message to the messenger, often resulting in overblown egos.

Despite these strong reservations, we began broadcasting our TV program on Daystar, a national network, in September of 2002, and after a year, my staff and I began praying that the Lord would expand our TV outreach.

After three weeks of prayer, I received a call from a man in Houston who said he would like to see us get on an additional national TV network. He asked what it would cost. I told him we were hoping to get on the Inspiration Network and the cost would be \$150,000 a year. He said he would send a check immediately!

After I hung up the phone, it occurred to me that the network might not have an opening. So I called and asked to speak to the Vice President for Programming. When I identified myself to him, he said, “I know who you are. I mailed you a letter yesterday telling you that we have an opening for your program.” I was stunned. He proceeded to tell me that his wife had been using our ministry's materials for three years to teach Bible prophecy and that she had been nagging him to get our program on his network. That, my friends, is the definition of a “God-incidence.”

A Large Response

Another miracle occurred when one of the largest churches in America called and asked me to speak four Wednesdays in a row to their congregation. They explained that these were to be teaching lessons about Bible prophecy and that there would be no invitations or offerings.

Before the last Wednesday evening, I suggested to the pastor that I thought we should offer an invitation and also give people an opportunity to give to the Lord. He agreed, but he said I

shouldn't expect much of an offering because they never took one on Wednesdays, and people would not be prepared.

Well, the Lord really moved that evening. We had more than 200 people come forward either to accept the Lord or to request prayer. And the offering came to \$28,000!

The next Monday morning my staff and I met with the contractor who was building our TV studio. He presented us with a long list of costs for the next phase of the construction. When we turned the page to see the total, it came to exactly \$28,000!

Preparation for Transition

In the Fall of 2020, we began preparing for my retirement from the ministry's leadership which was scheduled for June 1, 2021. And even though the ministry was in excellent financial condition, I began to pray for the Lord to supply and abundance of funds for my successor, Col. Tim Moore.

On the last day of 2020, we received a check for \$400,000. There was no letter with it. The name on the check was unknown to us. It was a man in Georgia. I called his phone number to thank him, and got a message saying the phone had been disconnected. The check also had an email address on it, so I sent a message to that address. I received a notice that the address was no longer valid. The same proved to be true of the mailing address on the check.

At that point I concluded that the check was simply a joke. But it proved to be valid, even though we were never able to contact the individual.

I think I should add at this point that I believe the most important reason the Lord so richly blessed the ministry over the years is because the staff and I met every morning and spent the first 45 minutes of each day in a devotional time that included a lot of praying for the ministry.

Conclusion

Let me conclude by presenting just a few of the reasons why I daily praise God for introducing me to His Prophetic Word and leading me to an understanding of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture and Premillennial viewpoints.

First, my study of Bible prophecy introduced me to the Hebrew Scriptures. The churches I grew up in emphasized that they were "New Testament Churches," and the New Testament was all we ever studied. We were told that the Old Testament had been "nailed to the Cross" and was no longer relevant. I quickly discovered that the prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures were the key to understanding New Testament prophecies.

Second, my study of Bible prophecy emphasized to me the sovereignty of God. Thus, every time I see the world's political leaders shaking their fist at God, I am reminded of Psalm 2 that says God sits in the heavens and laughs at them because He has the wisdom and power to orchestrate all the evil of Satan and Man to the triumph of His Son.

Third, my study of Bible prophecy helped me to better understand the unfathomable grace of God. The key here is what the Scriptures have to say about God's relationship with the Jewish people. Despite their persistent unfaithfulness to God and their rejection of His Son, God has

continued to love them, pursue them and is determined to bring a great remnant of them to salvation through faith in Yeshua as their Messiah. That's grace!

Fourth, my study of Bible prophecy greatly increased my hope for the future. This came as I discovered promise after glorious promise that God has made concerning the future for His believers. As Paul summed it up in Romans 8:18 – “The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is yet to be revealed to us.”

Fifth, my study of Bible prophecy delivered me from any fear of death to the point that I have just finished writing a book titled, “How to Die with a Smile on Your Face.”

Sixth, my study of Bible prophecy convinced me beyond a shadow of doubt that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God.

Seventh, my study of Bible prophecy proved to me that Jesus really was who He said He was — namely, God in the flesh.

Eighth, my study of Bible prophecy provided me with a great tool of spiritual warfare. For example, every time Satan tries to discourage me by reminding me of my past, I remind him of his future, and he flees!

Prophetic Ignorance

When I consider these marvelous benefits of Bible prophecy, I am saddened by the fact that the great majority of churches in America today do not include the subject in their teaching and preaching programs.

And when I have confronted pastors about this over the past 45 years, the most common excuse I have been given for their ignoring God's Prophetic Word is a declaration that “Bible prophecy is pie-in-the-sky that has no relevance to the here-and-now.” This is, of course, a tragic misconception.

First of all, Bible prophecy can be a very valuable tool of evangelism. This was proved on the Day of Pentecost when Peter preached the very first Gospel sermon. That sermon, in Acts chapter 2, consists of Bible prophecy from beginning to end.

Second, Bible prophecy can radically change a congregation here-and-now when they are convinced of two prophetic truths:

- 1) Jesus is returning. Many believe that in their heads but not in their hearts and the belief has no impact on behavior until it moves to the heart.
- 2) Jesus' return could occur any moment in the Rapture of the Church. There is not one prophecy that must be fulfilled before the Rapture can occur.

When a congregation becomes convinced of those two truths, people are motivated to holy living and evangelism. What more relevance to the here-and-now could a pastor desire?

Finally, my study of Bible prophecy has led me to live with an eternal perspective, and because of that, when I get up each morning, I cry out in my heart:

“Maranatha! Maranatha! Maranatha! Come quickly, Lord Jesus!