

Christ in Prophecy
Interview 30: “Alvin Price on the Book of James”

© 2012 Lamb & Lion Ministries. All Rights Reserved.
For a video of this show, please visit <http://www.lamblion.com>.

Opening

Dr. Reagan: A short epistle in the New Testament called the book of James has been historically one of the most controversial books in the Bible. Many have lauded it as a down to earth guide to practical Christian living. Others like Martin Luther have denounced it and have questioned whether or not it should even be included in the Bible. What is the book of James all about? Why is it so controversial? And should it really be considered a part of our God inspired Scriptures? Stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus our blessed hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I am delighted to have as my special guest this week a dear friend from Louisville, Kentucky named Alvin Price. Welcome to Christ in Prophecy Alvin.

Alvin Price: Well it is good to be here. It is good to be in Texas. It is better to be at Lamb and Lion Ministries.

Dr. Reagan: Well thank you I appreciate that. Alvin is a systems analysis and software developer and a lifelong student and teacher of the Bible. He is actively involved in Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky one of the nation’s largest churches. And don’t you sing in a special group there?

Alvin Price: Yes, I sing in the Master’s Men. It is a group a male chorus of over a hundred men.

Dr. Reagan: Wow. I would assume by the way you talk you must sing bass.

Alvin Price: Yes I sing bass.

Dr. Reagan: Way down there.

Alvin Price: Yes, way down there.

Dr. Reagan: Okay. Well I have heard that group and it is outstanding. Tell us about your family.

Alvin Price: Well, in August this year I will be married 50 years to the same wonderful lady. We have four children, 11 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. We have one son who is a missionary with his wife. And we have two grandsons one in the ministry, and one training for the ministry.

Dr. Reagan: Well I tell you what that is enough to make your buttons pop off. That is wonderful how God has blessed you and your family. That is really... and congratulations on that 50 years. My wife and I celebrated our 50th anniversary last year. So we beat you by one year.

Alvin Price: Well we'll catch up with you.

Dr. Reagan: Ok, Ok. Folks, several years ago Alvin decided to memorize the entire book of James and start presenting it as a dramatic dialogue. His presentation of the book is mesmerizing from beginning to end and in a few minutes we are going to show you a segment of his presentation. In fact Alvin before I ask you why in the world you ever did this, why you memorized the book of James. Why don't you just look into that camera right in front of you and give us the first four of the verses of that book.

Alvin Price: "James a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad. Greetings. Consider it all joy, my brethren when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

Dr. Reagan: Oh, thank you very much. Wow, I just get goose-bumps when I hear you doing that. You know folks in a few moments we are going to give you a part of his presentation, the introduction that he does to the book of James. And he is going to be in full costume so hang on now. Let's go back to the question I wanted to ask you. Why in the world did you decide to do the book of James?

Alvin Price: Well I was teaching an adult Bible class on the book of James. And my practice is to read through whatever book I am teaching every day, if it's not Isaiah. And at two or three days I realized this is a timeless book. And it is dealing with issues that have not changed. So I challenged the whole class to memorize the book of James. I am the only one who memorized

it. And then after I was cast as Nicodemus in the Southeast Easter Pageant I realized that God had given me the ability to act. So I went to the Lord in prayer and said, “If you will help me turn this into a drama, I will take it wherever you open the doors.” And I have done that.

Dr. Reagan: How many times have you performed it?

Alvin Price: Well over 120 times.

Dr. Reagan: 120 times, and we are talking about five chapters here aren't we?

Alvin Price: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: Plus the introduction.

Alvin Price: Yes, the prologue.

Dr. Reagan: And all in full costume.

Alvin Price: Yes and first person.

Dr. Reagan: And probably in a great variety of settings.

Alvin Price: Yes in prisons, in schools.

Dr. Reagan: Is that right?

Alvin Price: Yes in fact some of the greatest response the Holy Spirit has moved more powerfully in prisons than anywhere else.

Dr. Reagan: Is that right? Wow. Which parts of the book of James do you like the best? Is there a certain segment of it that stands out?

Alvin Price: Well over the years it changes. But probably the one that I wouldn't even thought of being important but has turned out to be very important is where he says, “If the Lord wills, we shall live, and also do this or that.” And I realize that the greatest blessing is the life that He gives us.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, yes. Well praise the Lord. We are going to take a pause here for just a moment and come back and talk about this a little bit more.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Welcome back to my interview of Alvin Price concerning the book of James. At the beginning of this program I said that the book of James has historically been one of the most controversial books in the Bible, if not the most controversial. Right up there with the book of Revelation. Alvin why is that? Why is this seemingly simple book about how to live a Christian life so controversial?

Alvin Price: Well I think many people have misread it and think that it says that we can work our way into salvation. It does not make that claim. If you will read it carefully in every place it talks about works, it is talking about works as a demonstration of faith, real faith.

Dr. Reagan: This is the problem I guess Martin Luther had with it. Now he rediscovered the whole concept of salvation by grace through faith and that was his fundamental message, and then he got very upset with the book of James.

Alvin Price: Well if you know his biography and have read it you realize that he really did try by his own effort to meet all of God's requirements, and he was depressed.

Dr. Reagan: Ended up miserable.

Alvin Price: Ended up terribly miserable, and so when he thought that this book was saying that God was requiring us to work our way to Heaven he couldn't handle it.

Dr. Reagan: But the point is that really not only this book but several places in the New Testament for example book of Titus point out that we don't work to be saved, but we work because we are saved. In fact we are saved for good works and to do good works for the Lord.

Alvin Price: Yes, and it is amazing in the last chapter of 2 Corinthians Paul even challenges them when they were challenging him about his Christianity he said, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith." So evidently he knew that there was a way of looking at your own life and determining whether or not you truly were a follower.

Dr. Reagan: Sure. What would you say is the overall fundamental message of the book of James if you had to summarize it?

Alvin Price: Well I think it is probably the most practical, corrective for Christians who are still dragging the old man along with them instead of allowing God to truly work through their lives as He would.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, down to earth practical information about how to live a Christian life.

Alvin Price: It certainly is.

Dr. Reagan: One of the...

Alvin Price: If it doesn't step on your toes you are either comatose or you are lying to yourself.

Dr. Reagan: One of those two, well I would agree with that. You know the book of James is one that I just have a lot of favorite passages in this book. In fact you get over to chapter 4 and there is a whole series of them, "You do not have because you do not ask." How many times in our Christian life do we not pause to ask the Lord for something that we need or want and we decide we are going to pursue it ourselves.

Alvin Price: Well I think that is our tendency. We have grown up in a nation where it is what you do on your own. Anything that you can decide to do, you can do, which isn't Scriptural.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah.

Alvin Price: In fact it's not even true.

Dr. Reagan: Well I remember when I discovered this passage it really convicted me right to my heart about all the times that I tried to do it instead of asking the Lord. I remember early in the history of this ministry, probably in the first or second year I had an old broken down car that would hardly run. We had a board meeting and I said, "Folks I've got to have a car, I mean this thing won't even run." And they said, "Yes, you need a car. So you get a new car." And I said, "Okay." And one of the board members said, "How are you going to do that?" I said, "Well you know I am going to go down and trade in the car and set up some payments and so forth." And he said, "Well that is how the world does it." He said, "This is a ministry." He said, "Why don't you ask the Lord for it." He said, "Let's just join hands around the table here and let's pray that the Lord will supply us with a vehicle." I said, "Well okay." So we joined hands and we prayed that the Lord would supply it. And so the next newsletter I put out I just put in there we need a vehicle for this ministry. A lady from Oklahoma City called me that I had met one time in my life. And she said, "How much would a van cost for the ministry?" I said, this is back in 1981, I said, "Well probably about \$15,000." And she said, "Is that all?" And I said, "Yeah." "What would the license plates and all that cost?" And I said, "I don't know." She said, "Well I'll make the check out for \$18,000 and you will have it tomorrow." Now we could have gone to the bank and set it up and do all of that. But we asked the Lord.

Alvin Price: You went to God's bank.

Dr. Reagan: Yes, and He supplied it. And then another one in that same chapter that just has always been so important to me, "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."

Alvin Price: And that's true. And I think too many people feel so distant from God and not realize they aren't really drawing near to God.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah, and then this one: "Humble yourself in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you." Boy I tell you to me that is so important, just humble yourself in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you. And all those are just in one chapter, chapter four. I've got so many favorites. And you know one that became one of my favorites not long ago is where he talks about, he says in verse 17, he is talking here in chapter five about praying and praying for those who are ill, anointing them with oil and so forth. And then he comes down to verse 17 and he says, "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, it didn't rain on the earth for these three years and six months and he prayed again and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit." And one day I was reading that and it just, I had read that a hundred times but that day it spoke to my heart. And I thought, you know what that is saying we take people like Elijah and Isaiah and people like that and we put them up on a big pedestal and we say to ourselves, "They had a special 800 number to God. They had a special relationship with God. I can never have a relationship like that." He says here Elijah was a man with a nature like ours. He was like you and me, but he relied on the Lord. Now that says a lot.

Alvin Price: Yes. Yes, and I am afraid that many of us think that somehow we are excepted from that and we are not.

Dr. Reagan: No we are not excepted at all. But there are just so many, many wonderful things in here. I have a whole list of them here that just mean so much to me. And over the time, I haven't memorized the book of James, I have to admit that, but I sure love to read it and look at all the wonderful portions in it that apply to us now and then. Like this one, "If anybody thinks himself to be religious and yet does not bridle his tongue he deceives his own heart and his religion is worthless." Now that steps on my toes, and a lot of toes. "This is pure and undefiled religion in the site of our God and Father to visit orphans and widows." Well I thought pure and undefiled religion was going to church every Sunday and saying hallelujah and doing all this. I have to visit widows and orphans?

Alvin Price: He wants us to show His love to the least. He did and we are supposed to too.

Dr. Reagan: Well we are certainly the least that's for true. Well it just a wonderful book. And I tell you I have been so blessed at seeing you present this book. God has given you a very, very special anointing. And I pray that you will be able to continue delivering this presentation until the very day of the Rapture.

Alvin Price: I would like that in fact it means more to me every time I prepare it to deliver it.

Dr. Reagan: It never gets old to you?

Alvin Price: No, it never gets old.

Dr. Reagan: How can the Word of God get old?

Alvin Price: Well it can't for me. It is alive, it's real, and it is a blessing to be allowed to do it.

Dr. Reagan: You know that is the way I do sometimes when I get up to preach a sermon I have preached 100 times, I will say, "Lord please make this as fresh as the first time I ever tried to preach it." I just want it to be that spontaneous, that fresh. "And move with your Spirit," because without the anointing of the Spirit we don't get anything done. Well what I'd like to do Alvin is have you present, we are going to let people see you present the introduction to this book. And do you want to say anything before we do that to introduce this piece?

Alvin Price: Well not really.

Dr. Reagan: It's an introduction you wrote right?

Alvin Price: Yes, it is. And I found out that so many people do not realize that James was the brother of Jesus Christ. And so to prepare them for the book they needed to know his background and that's the prologue.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, so folks here it is Alvin Price presenting the prologue to the book of James.

Alvin Price James Prologue

Alvin Price: Hello, my name is James. I believe you know my brother. My father's name is Joseph. My mother's name is Mary. I grew up in Galilee in a little village called Nazareth and Jesus Christ is my brother. Many people think of Jesus as an only child, but Jesus had both brothers and sisters. And two of the Gospel writers give you the names of his brothers; there

was James, that's me I am the eldest after Jesus. And then there was Joseph, you would have called him Joseph Jr. And then Simon and the last son was Judas whom you know as Jude because that is the name given to the letter he wrote to the churches. People always want to know what was it like to grow up with Jesus. Well let me ask you a question; how many of you have ever been compared to an older sibling? Well the oldest child is often considered the perfect child. But in my family the oldest child was Jesus Christ and He truly was a perfect child, and I suffered from every comparison. Luke tells you that when Jesus was 12 years old we as a family went up to Jerusalem for the Passover. Now the Passover is a seven day feast. We went up with our neighbors, and our friends, and our relatives. After all we were all going to the same place for the same reason, at the same time and it was safer to travel in groups. We went up to Jerusalem. We stayed for the entire Passover and then we were returning from Jerusalem back to Galilee. We were a day's journey down from Jerusalem when my father discovered that Jesus was nowhere in the group. Well we trudged back up to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is on top of a mountain, it was three days before we found Jesus and we found Him in the Temple discussing law, and ethics, with the Pharisees and the Scribes. It is the only time I can remember my mother scolding Jesus. And Luke tells you what she said, "Jesus why have you treated your father and me in this way?" Well Jesus just looked at her rather quizzically and He said, "Did you not know that I had to be about my Father's things?" Well I could tell by mother's expression she had no idea what He was talking about, and of course I didn't. But think about it, when Jesus was 12 years old, He knew who He was. And Luke goes on to say that Jesus returned to Galilee with his parents and was in subjection to them. Perfect Jesus, the incarnate Son being in subjection to imperfect parents? That's what it was like to grow up with Jesus. No wonder Luke tells us He grew up in favor with God and man. Everyone loved Jesus because Jesus loved everybody.

The next question that is always asked is, "How soon was it that you realized He was the Messiah?" Well again the Gospel writers give you the answers to that question. For it says, "His brothers were not believing in Him." And that's true, we did not believe. We understood what His claims were, but we did not believe Him. It was not until after He was crucified and arose from that dead that we accepted Jesus as the promised Messiah. People ask me, "How in the world could you grow up with perfection and not realize it was God? Well it just irritated me. After Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven a group of His followers met in Jerusalem, we were at a prayer meeting. At the end of the list that Luke gives you of the attendees he includes Mary the

Mother of Jesus, and his brothers. We were at the end of the list because I think we were the last to believe in Him. But we did believe in Him.

And I did not know that day what God had in store for me, for I was to become the presiding elder in the church of Jerusalem. I also was ignorant of the great distress the Church would undergo. Luke tells you in the book of Acts that Herod Agrippa the first was mistreating the Christians and he arrested James the brother of John the son of Zebedee and put him to death with the sword. He saw that this pleased the Jewish leadership so he threw Peter in prison. Now this is the spring time in Jerusalem. It is near the Passover the time we consider as Easter. He threw him in prison expecting to bring him out for a public trial after the days of Unleavened Bread. The night before the trial an angel came into the cell. Well let me describe it to you: Peter was asleep between two soldiers and he was chained to both of the soldiers. There were soldiers outside of his cell. And the angel comes in, he wakes him up he says, "Bind on your shoes, put on your cloak, follow me we are getting out of here." The chains feel off of his wrists, he followed the angel, they passed by both of the guards, they got to the door to the city. The door opened of itself and he followed the angel into the city. They were a block into the city when the angel disappeared. And then Peter realized it was not a dream; that this was real. So he went to John Mark's mother's house where he knew that prayers were being offered for his release. And he knocks on the door, and Rhoda the servant girl comes to the door, hears his voice runs back inside and said, "Peter is here." And they all thought she was crazy. But when they let him in he told them how God had released him from prison and then he said, "Report these things to James." That's me. By that time I was the leading elder.

The persecutions continued. Those who could sold everything they had and moved out into Judea, then into Samaria, but the persecutions followed them. So we ended up with small little groups of Christians; fledgling new Christians all over the Roman Empire. We were a cross-section of the culture at large. We had the rich and the poor. We had educated and uneducated. We had Jews and Gentiles and they never got along. And then we had some who were truly transformed, and many who thought they were transformed just like it is today. So we were experiencing persecution from without and dissention from within. We could not get along. I heard from many different small groups, we can't get along what are we to do? And I prayed, oh I prayed. I prayed night, and I prayed day, "Oh, God what should I say? What would you say if you were here? What should I do?" And God answered those prayers. And the answers to those prayers has become a letter that the Holy Spirit anointed me to write, which has become a

New Testament letter in your New Testament. It bears my name. I would like to tell you the message that is in that letter.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Alvin, I think you missed your calling you should have been a professional actor. I tell you. That was a blessing brother.

Alvin Price: Well I enjoy doing it. In fact I enjoy watching the crowds when I am doing it because I find out that many of them are really pulled into it. You know you just can't beat good material.

Dr. Reagan: Well, hey that is good. You did have a good writer there is no doubt about that. Now Alvin one of my favorite parts of the book of James is to be found in James 5:7 where it says, "Be patient brethren until the coming of the Lord, like a farmer waiting on his crops," he says, "you too be patient, strengthen your heart for the coming of the Lord is at hand." That was written almost 2,000 years ago. Was James mistaken there when he said the coming of the Lord is at hand?

Alvin Price: No, he certainly was not. The passage there is using a case that we don't even have in English; it is in the present perfect active indicative. And it means it is talking about a state that occurs right now that is based upon a finished action in the past. When Jesus Christ was crucified, arose from the dead and ascended into Heaven He had completed His work to save us. That is the completed action. So his nearness, His immediacy in coming it is just a matter of His Father saying, "It's time."

Dr. Reagan: It's time.

Alvin Price: Jesus has to do nothing more, all of it has been done.

Dr. Reagan: So you are saying than that this warning to be ready for the coming of the Lord at any moment is as relevant to us today as it was 2,000 years ago.

Alvin Price: It is still the same tense. It is still the present perfect active indicative and it means that the state now is based upon an action that is fully completed.

Dr. Reagan: Do you believe we are living in the season of the Lord's return?

Alvin Price: I certainly do.

Dr. Reagan: What convinces you of that?

Alvin Price: Well, there are too many prophecies that I see that are being fulfilled on a regular basis. All we have to do is look at our weather patterns. People say, "Well there really is not change from what they have been." I am not sure that is true.

Dr. Reagan: Yeah. What about Israel?

Alvin Price: Well they are back in the land. And they are hated by almost everybody. Again I think that it is fulfillment of prophecy.

Dr. Reagan: What we are seeing is just everything coming into place.

Alvin Price: That's right.

Dr. Reagan: Like it has never been before it is all just coming together, and it is an exciting time to live. It's a scary time in many ways when you turn on TV and you see all the things that are going on in this world. But when you know God's Word you know that God is in control.

Alvin Price: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: He is in control.

Alvin Price: Yes He certainly is.

Dr. Reagan: Because we are seeing things that were prophesized 2,000 years ago, or even further back than that.

Alvin Price: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: What an exciting time to live in. I just don't think there is any time in history more exciting than this except for the First Coming of Jesus Christ. Alvin I am sure there are people out there wondering how in the world we can get in touch with this fellow. How can we invite him to our church? How can I invite him to my television program or whatever? So why don't you look into that camera and tell people how to get in touch with you.

Alvin Price: Well they are going to show on the screen the website that you can contact to get in touch with our...

Dr. Reagan: Ministry.

Alvin Price: Ministry.

Dr. Reagan: Amen, because what you do brother is a ministry.

Alvin Price: Ok.

Dr. Reagan: So folks what you need to do there is you need to contact him through that website and he will respond to you and let you know whether or not he can come and speak at your church or your organization or whatever. But this is a message that needs to get out to as many people as possible as quickly as possible. Well Alvin I want to thank you so much for being with us. You have blessed my socks off as we say here in Texas. And brother anytime you are in this area you just come back by to visit us, ok?

Alvin Price: I would love to.

Dr. Reagan: Ok. Well I send my blessings with you and with your wife Rachel as you travel back to Louisville. And I pray that many, many people will be contacting you. And that this would just open up new doors for you to present the book of James to many other people. Anything else you want to say to us from the book of James?

Alvin Price: Well no, but I am just so thankful that God has enabled me to present James in a way that is getting through to many, many people.

Dr. Reagan: Even to young people I would hope.

Alvin Price: Oh, yes. Children as young as 6 years old just sit there as if they are mesmerized.

Dr. Reagan: I would imagine they are mesmerized, just like those prisoners that you were talking about in the prison there. I would imagine that they are. Well let's conclude by you quoting James 1:26-27, if anyone thinks himself to be religious.

Alvin Price: "If anyone thinks himself to be religious and yet does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his own heart his religion is worthless. This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father to visit orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world."

Dr. Reagan: Thank you so much. Folks as we bring our program to a close this week our announcer is going to share with you about how you can get a video of Alvin's entire presentation of the book of James including that wonderful introduction that he has written. So you get a pen and paper ready because you are going to want to get a copy of this. I hope you will be back with us next week until then the Lord willing this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our redemption is drawing near."

End of Program