

Christ in Prophecy

Apologetics 19: Allen Parr on Defense of the Bible

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Opening

Tim Moore: Critics love to discredit the Bible. Like Satan in the Garden of Eden they ask, “Did God really say?” They assert that it represents Man’s search for God, and therefore is full of myth, legend, and superstition. Is the Word of God trustworthy? Stay tuned.

Part 1

Tim Moore: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I am Tim Moore sitting in today for Dr. Reagan, and with me is my co-host, Nathan Jones our Internet Evangelist. Also, with us in the studio is a very dynamic teacher and preacher of God’s Word, his name is Allen Parr, and he has a ministry located here in McKinney, Texas. Allen, welcome to Christ in Prophecy.

Allen Parr: Thank you, Tim.

Tim Moore: Tell us a little bit about your ministry.

Allen Parr: Well, thank you so much, super excited to be here with you all once again. Good to see you again, Nathan.

Nathan Jones: Yeah, good to see you.

Allen Parr: Yeah, I have a ministry that’s largely an on-line ministry, it is a YouTube channel called The BEAT, which stands for Biblical Encouragement, And Truth. And essentially I publish faith based videos every Tuesday and Friday answering frequently asked questions that people have about the faith. Questions about relationships from a Christian perspective. And all sorts of other exciting topics that we do on The BEAT.

Nathan Jones: And you don’t just have a YouTube Channel, you have one of the biggest, most subscribed to YouTube Channels out there for Christians, so you are very humble.

Allen Parr: Well, I appreciate it. It’s an honor. And God has truly blessed it. Just looking forward to being here with you all today, and excited about what God is doing here at the ministry.

Tim Moore: Well, we have been looking forward to having you here. We have been trying to put this together for sometime, so we are glad that it worked out. And obviously, I appreciate your focus on biblical truths that you share online. And so today that’s really what we want to focus on, because of late there has been more and more criticism of the Bible, and some who are beginning to stray from the Word of God as being the truth of God. So, for example earlier this year a pastor in Nashville said this, he said, “The Bible isn’t the Word of God, self-

interpreting, inerrant or infallible it is a human response to God, living and dynamic." Denying the truth of the Word of God. How do we contrast that with what we know of as the truth?

Allen Parr: Yeah, well, I think one of the things that, if I'm not mistaken, he may have mentioned that it's like filled with myth, or legend, and different things like that. And I think that when people make those statements they don't really understand the gravity of the statement that they are making. In other words, if we are saying that largely, probably thinking more so the Old Testament some of the stories of Jonah, and the fish and different things, and they say, okay well this myth or legend. Then what we are really saying without saying that is that Jesus was a liar. Because we know that when Jesus was on the earth He put his stamp of approval largely on the Old Testament because He preached from that, He quoted from that, He taught that in the synagogues.

So, I think we have to be careful when we say, okay, well, the Bible is full of myth and legend, because with that we are also making the statement that we believe that Jesus was a liar as well. Not only that I don't think there is any real proof that we can say that these events that happened in the Old Testament were legends or myth. That's just somebody saying, "Well, I don't believe that Jonah was really in the belly of the whale, in a fish for three days." So, I don't think there is much proof there for that.

Nathan Jones: Interesting. Well, what about people then they look at the Old Testament and they look at the stories, and then they look at the New even and well, that is 2,000 years ago. Those are primitive cultures. They didn't have cellphones, and they didn't have the problems that we have today, therefore the Bible can't be relevant. How is it supposed to help us today? Do you believe that the Bible is just as relevant then as it is today.

Allen Parr: Yeah, you know it's interesting I personally enjoy, I hope I don't get in trouble for this, but I personally enjoy studying the Old Testament a little bit more than the New Testament. I love both of them as a student of the Word of God, but I relate more to the stories and the lives, and the lessons that we can find in the Old Testament.

And I think one of the things that we have to remember is that there is something that we call in Bible study as timeless truths, and these are things that are going to transcend time, culture, geography. These are just truths that we see in the Word of God that are going to be true no matter what.

And when we look at the stories of the Old Testament we see people that are dealing with the same issues that we are dealing with today; whether it is worry, whether it is anxiety, whether it is depression, whether it is feeling like God has abandoned them, all those things. So, I think that when people make the statement that the Bible of the Old Testament largely is not relevant. I just don't think that maybe they understand how to study the Bible to see the relevancy of it and make it practical.

Nathan Jones: One of my favorite lines is from the "Muppets Take Manhattan." Kermit was talking to a restaurant owner and the restaurant owner said to Kermit, "Peoples are peoples," in that New York accent. And it's true that people back then weren't different than people today. Sure, the culture might have been a little different, the clothes and the activities, but the people then were made in God's image just like we are today. They had the same problems, and the same hang ups, so the Bible addressed those issues then. It is definitely relevant to today.

Tim Moore: I love the way you can bring the Muppets into our conversation of Bible inerrancy.

Nathan Jones: Well, Kermit has been cancelled.

Tim Moore: Yeah, he has been cancelled.

A lot of folks will tend to criticize some of the authors of Scripture saying, "Well, they were just ignorant. These were agrarian people that didn't know very much. They were farmers, shepherds." And yet, I love what Paul says writing to the church in Corinth when in 1 Corinthians 1:27 he said, "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and He has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong."

I think that is evident even in the people He calls to this day to serve Him. To where people don't look at our power, or our natural abilities, they say it is obviously God working through this imperfect vessel. And yet, in Scripture He called all sorts of authors to record the revealed word that He proclaimed to and through them, and yet the wisdom and the truth echoes through all the way to us today. And I appreciate what you said because the stories, and the examples are all throughout the Old Testament. And of course, all the apostles referenced the prophecies in the Old Testament to prove who Jesus was as the Messiah promised of God.

Allen Parr: Yeah.

Tim Moore: Well, how about this, Evangelicals themselves argue that the Bible is inerrant, and a lot of people don't understand what that really means. Explain the word inerrant to us.

Allen Parr: Yeah, so, as theologians we believe that the word inerrant refers to the original manuscripts, and so whenever we say the Bible is inerrant we don't mean the King James or the New International Version, or whatever translation that people are reading because we understand that has been translated from manuscripts. And even those manuscripts aren't the original manuscripts where the pen hit the paper, or the papyrus, whatever they were writing on at that time.

So, good news, and bad news, the bad news is that we don't have the actual manuscripts that Paul wrote in our possession, that's the bad news. But the good news is that we have something called textual criticism where we can say with, I don't know the exact number, but I think it is around 99% accuracy that the Bible that we have in our hands today is indeed the Word of God. And so, by cross referencing and doing that type of science we can be sure that, once again, that what we have is indeed the Word of God and we can trust it.

Now, once again this idea of inerrancy doesn't mean that if we open up our Bible and we see that in 1 Chronicles it may say one thing, and then you look at 1 Samuel, or 1 Kings it might say, you know David had 20 people here, and 200 people there, whatever it is, there are those scribal errors that we have to understand. And those are just very easily explained because whenever they were copying from manuscript to manuscript if they left out some sort of mark, or something like that it could have easily been translated as something different. So, I know sometimes when people say, "Oh, the Bible has errors in it." They will point to some of these small scribal errors which can easily be explained.

Nathan Jones: The jots and tittles, but the doctrine itself is unchangeable throughout history, right?

Allen Parr: Exactly.

Nathan Jones: And we have some documents to prove that the Bibles we have today are the same as they were 2,000 years ago. Right?

Tim Moore: Yeah, you can point to the Dead Sea Scrolls and see that some of the writings that we have proven through various dating methods are 2,000 years old, and older, is what we are still using today, the only exceptions being, just as he said, jots and tittles. And the Word of God will not be changed down to the jot and the tittle.

Nathan Jones: Yeah, the Bible promises that.

Tim Moore: And we can trust that what God has revealed to His prophets, to the authors of Scripture has been passed down to us. Now, it takes the heart of a Berean to examine even a various translation and make sure we are getting the actual intent and meaning of what God wants us to understand today.

Nathan Jones: What about when you have, there was this pastor in Georgia, and I was really shocked, he started teaching that we should divorce the Old Testament from the New, or unhitch it I believe he said, and that the Old Testament has nothing to do with the New Testament. But is that true? Can we be New Testament Christians, or even red letter Christians and just cut the Old Testament loose?

Allen Parr: Yeah, I think that is pretty dangerous. People tend to, and I even think of that type of mentality has crept into the church because a lot of people just find it easier to read the New Testament. Because you don't have to necessarily understand the book of Acts in order to understand the book of Romans. And you can read Romans without understanding James, and you have all these different books that are not necessarily connected. Whereas when people try to read the Old Testament it is a lot more difficult for them because it is long stories.

Nathan Jones: Especially Numbers.

Allen Parr: Oh, Leviticus.

Tim Moore: I love Leviticus.

Allen Parr: I call Leviticus the read through the Bible in one year killer, right? Because people get to there and they kind of get stuck. But I think that we have to understand that in order to really properly understand the New Testament we have to be able to understand the Old Testament because so much of what God has done in the New Testament. For instance, Jesus being the ultimate sacrifice for our sins, if we don't understand that that is really a fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrificial system, then we won't really appreciate the fact that whether it is Old Testament or New Testament one thing is true, is that God has a history of always substituting the innocent for those of us who are guilty.

Tim Moore: So, if it is true that you have to really have an appreciation of, and an understanding of the Old Testament to really illuminate the New Testament. What would you say is some of the other keys to understanding the Bible in general?

Allen Parr: Well, I think one of the main ones is context. And I think that so many times you see people just grabbing one verse of scripture ripping it out of its context and then building an entire theology on that. Right? And so, I think that just a simple thing for those who are watching is just to make sure that whenever we are looking at a verse and we are starting to assess what that verse means that we say, "Okay, what did this mean in that context?"

Another one would be really trying to go back and figure out what the author's original intent was. And I think that too often people read the Bible and they are thinking, okay, well, this is what it means to me, instead of saying, "Okay, well, what did Paul mean when he wrote that to the original audience."

So, I think that is another thing, as well as really just trying to get to the cultural differences because we can read it with a western type of culture and think, okay, well, in our culture today this is what it means. But we have to remember that the Bible was written in a different culture, in a different time. So, those are just a few things that I would say really help us better understand the Bible.

Tim Moore: I think another key is we have to believe it first and foremost. And just as you go to Revelation and there is a promise for those who read and heed the book of Revelation, the only book that has twice mentioned a promise just for reading it. And people say, "Well, I can't understand it." Well, if you believe it, you will begin to understand it. So, really the challenge is believing first, and then I think the Holy Spirit illuminates with greater and greater understanding. Now, of course it requires that we actually do read, and that we actually do study in order to gain that level of understanding. But belief is critical.

Part 2

Nathan Jones: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and our discussion with Allen Parr about the integrity of the Bible as God's Word.

Tim Moore: Well, Allen let's pick up where we left off before the announcement. What would you say are some of the most convincing evidences that the Bible is actually the Word of God?

Allen Parr: Well, I think for me the most convincing evidence is fulfilled prophecy, which I know you all can appreciate around here.

Tim Moore: We certainly can.

Allen Parr: Whenever I look at different things that have happened throughout history and how God has fulfilled those prophecies, it necessitates in my mind a Divine Author. When you think about, I think about sometimes if I were to sit down right now and try to think about writing what might happen next week, or two weeks from now, I would have no idea how to even start that.

But to think about writing something down that is going to happen 700 years from now, or 500 years from now, is just unthinkable for us. But when you look at Daniel predicting the world powers that were going to be in play. And you look at how Isaiah prophesied how the Messiah was going to be crucified, and different things in Isaiah 53. You can't read those things and then say, well a human brain up with those things. It just necessitates that a Divine Author was involved.

Tim Moore: Well, that's actually why some of the critics like to say, "Well, that couldn't possibly have been written in advance. That must have been written after the fact." And we know, and trust, and believe that that is not the case. God did reveal it. And He even scoffs at the so-called false gods. He said, "Let them prophesy, let them predict because they cannot, and have not."

Nathan Jones: Peter Stoner in his book, "Science Speaks" took the Messianic prophecies 108 distinct Messianic prophecies and Jesus fulfilling just 8 is 1 in 10 to the 17th power. That is 1 followed by 17 zeroes. And that is just 8 of the 108. So, fulfilled Bible prophecy you are absolutely right it could not possibly have been thought of by man ahead of time, it had to come from the mind of God. What substantiates then, because Tim brought up I think a great point, is they say, "Well, those books were actually written later." How do we know that the books were written when they were written?

Allen Parr: Yeah, once again, just looking at the history of the manuscripts.

Nathan Jones: The archaeology then you are saying.

Allen Parr: And looking at the early archaeology as well, right, looking at that and how things were dated. As well as just really trusting the testimony of the early church and understanding that this is the way that we have always seen that these letters were dated, different things like that, really give us confidence that the Bible is the Word of God. But also, I think there is some level, as you mentioned earlier, you have to believe the Bible, there is some level of just faith, we have to just have faith that God would not be having us live by a book that is not His. I mean that's like we get to Heaven and God is like, "Gotcha, that Bible really wasn't real." We have to have faith that the Bible that we have today is indeed the Word of God.

Nathan Jones: Well, we think we see that too through transformed lives. I mean think of the billions of people over the last thousands of years who have come to faith in God and through His Son Jesus Christ because of the Word of God. I mean that to me is the biggest evidence that the Bible is indeed God's Word.

Allen Parr: And I'll add one more to that is also we know that the Bible is one coherent thought with no contradictory ideas, and so we look at 40 different authors, if you put 40 different people in a room and tell them to have a conversation.

Nathan Jones: Across 1,500 years!

Allen Parr: 1,500 years. Different continents. And you put them in a room, and you say, "Okay, I want you all to agree on these very controversial subjects, marriage, family all of this and that." We would get a lot of different discussions and things, but the fact that it is one unified voice where people are in agreement with, these authors are in agreement seems to suggest or prove that they are all inspired by the same Holy Spirit.

Tim Moore: I love the example of lives that are changed. And you can look at the apostles themselves, this group of ragtag men from a back water part of Israel, back in the day, up in Galilee most of them, and they were not very courageous. As a matter of fact, shortly after Jesus' crucifixion they were cowering in fear, and yet, when He was resurrected and when they were filled with the Holy Spirit their lives were changed, they were emboldened, they were empowered, they proclaimed the Word of God. They used Old Testament scripture repeatedly throughout all of their presentations, all of their sermons. You can go to Acts chapter 2 with Peter in his very first sermon and it is just prophecy, after prophecy, fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ, and their lives were changed.

I'm reminded of how Chuck Colson wrote about his own conversion experience in his book "Born Again" and he said, "Here were these high powered men working in the White House around Richard Nixon, and they couldn't keep a conspiracy together for a handful of weeks."

And he said, "Yet, these men back who served and learned under Jesus Christ the rest of their lives held true to that faith because they knew it to be true. And they knew the Bible to have been fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ." And yet, there are some people today who say, "Well, okay we will grant you Jesus had a special kind of relationship, and He was something special. But let's just look at the red words in the Bible." In other words, only the words of Jesus are really special, and the rest well that is all just mythological. So, you've already touched on that but what would be your answer to someone who just wants to read the red portion?

Allen Parr: Well, a lot of times when I hear people say that what they are normally referring to is the writings of Paul and how because Paul has certain perspectives, whether it is the perspective of women in ministry and things like that and they'll say, "Well, you know I believe what Jesus says. I see the writing and it is red letter, okay I accept that, but Paul I'm not so sure." And I think we have to once again be careful there because if we say that only the words that are in red are the ones that we should listen to, then that wipes out the Old Testament as well.

Tim Moore: Yes it does.

Allen Parr: Which once again suggests that Jesus was a liar because Jesus put His stamp of approval on the Old Testament which we know doesn't have any red words or letters or anything like that. So, if Jesus put His stamp of approval on a set of writings that were written by men, inspired by the Holy Spirit, then why would we not also assume that the New Testament writers were under that same inspiration as the Old Testament writers?

Tim Moore: Yeah, over and over again even as Jesus was tested He countered Satan's temptations by quoting scripture. And when He was sometimes sparing, if you will, with the Pharisees, the Sadducees, He repeatedly, I counted multiple times Matthew 12:3 & 5; 19:4; 21:16, on and on where He said, "Have you not read what so and so wrote, or what so and so said?" Referring back to the Old Testament and challenging them for their lack of faith because He pointed to what was prophesied, what was recorded in the Old Testament, and He validated all those words.

Nathan Jones: I had to look that up too because I was curious how many times did Jesus quote the Old Testament. He had 24 direct quotes, 78 indirect quotes, and 26 just from the Pentateuch alone. And He most quoted Exodus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and the Psalms. So, if Jesus who was the Angel of the Lord, was the preincarnate Christ, there is the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus was in the beginning as John 1 says. So, obviously it was Jesus Himself through the Holy Spirit inspiring the writers then. So how can you get rid of the Old Testament or get rid of the New Testament? Is it because they are picking and choosing what they want to believe?

Allen Parr: And that seems to be what it is. Right? It is like okay, well, if I say that I'm only going to go with the red letters then I'll accept that. But then I have liberty to choose everything else in the Bible that fits my worldview and my life.

Nathan Jones: Especially homosexuality, because Paul was so on women, he was a misogynous, he is a homophobe and all.

Allen Parr: Exactly.

Nathan Jones: I even encountered a guy just recently who said we can only take the book of Matthew. You couldn't take all the other 65 books. He was a Matthew only Christian.

Tim Moore: A Matthew only Christian.

Allen Parr: I've heard of the King James only, not Matthew.

Nathan Jones: He was a Matthew only. Well, if there is a new Christian and they are coming to the Bible and they want to start where would you recommend they start? Should they start in Genesis? Or should they start in Matthew? Some say John? Where would you start?

Allen Parr: Well, I always point people to the Gospel of John personally, because I think it is the clearest picture of who Christ is. And if you are a new believer the first thing that is really necessary for you is to fall in love with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who died on the cross for your sins. And I think the way John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, set up his gospel, first of all there are no parables in John, so you don't have to worry about getting tripped up and confused how to figure out, what does this parable mean? What's the meaning? So, you strip all that away.

But also, it's really centered around the seven "I Am" statements, and then eight miracles. So, seven times Jesus said, "I am this." "I am the way." "I am the door." "I'm the resurrection." "I'm the good shepherd." So, you get a good picture of who this Jesus is. But not only the person of Christ but the work of Christ, so it is centered around eight miracles in the Gospel of John. So, that is where I would point someone's attention to first.

Tim Moore: People also ask what translation should we use? But even before I go to letting you answer that, I will build on what Nathan said because Jesus in referring to the Old Testament did refer even to things like Jonah and the whale, or the fish, as pointing to His own death, burial, and resurrection. So, it had tremendous significance. It wasn't just a mythological story He referred to it as a historical event that had prophetic significance. And I think when we begin to read the Old Testament looking for the prophetic significance as fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ, or to yet be fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ, and in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ the Old Testament comes alive.

Which is why I love Leviticus it proves that God wanted to dwell with His people. And yet, because He was so holy there was still this separation, they could not even ascend unto the mountain of the Lord. So, this desire of His to dwell with His people is why Jesus came down to dwell among us, and to breach that veil, to cross that divide so that we really can enter into a relationship into the very presence of God. So, when you get both the Old and New in perspective, as you said, in context, it brings to life. But that goes back to the question, okay, Tim, and Allen, and Nathan, I get it but what translation should I use? Should I go with that King James only, or some other translation? What do you recommend?

Allen Parr: Once again for me personally, or just really anyone I would say if you are studying the Bible, you are really trying to study getting serious about it, I would probably go with a more of a word for word, and this gets into translations. You have thought for thought, word for word, and paraphrase. But for the sake of time, I would try to go for more of a word for word translation, something like the New American Standard, the ESV, or even the New King James. Something that you can understand that is comfortable but is very close to the original manuscripts. But if I'm just reading the Bible and I'm doing my daily devotional then I might use

something more like the New Living Translation, which is, what I believe is still a very accurate if you want to call it a translation or a paraphrase, but it is a lot easier to read, specifically for a new Christian.

Nathan Jones: Well, you're a seminarian shouldn't you be reading it in Hebrew and Greek?

Allen Parr: Yeah, I do that every morning and every evening, but in the middle of the day.

Tim Moore: So, for a person who is just getting introduced what encapsulates the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed throughout the Scripture?

Allen Parr: Yeah, I think that the Gospel is simple. That Christ died, was buried for our sins, and if we place our faith in Christ and believe that I am a sinful person deserving of death, but God loved us enough to send His Son to die on the cross for our sins. If we place our faith in Christ and confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe that He is raised from the dead they will be saved.

Closing

Nathan Jones: Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy. Allen, so good to have you on again, sir. Can you tell folks how they can reach your ministry?

Allen Parr: Sure, my website allenparr.com, or on YouTube which is entitled The BEAT with Allen Parr.

Tim Moore: Well, Allen I'm also glad you were able to join us today. I hope you will come back. And I hope the Lord will continue to bless your ministry for many years to come, or until His coming. Well, folks, that is our program for today. I hope it's been a blessing to you, and I hope the Lord willing you will be back with us next week. Until then this is Tim Moore speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries saying, "Godspeed."