

## Summary: Pre-Trib Conference 2023

Last week I was not sure I would have sufficient time to put together a lesson for today. The reason was my attendance at this year's Pre-Trib Conference. Well, the conference itself provided some information I will share. I found the conference an uplifting experience. There were experts on a variety of subjects giving presentations related to the topic of the Pre-Tribulation rapture of the Church. The conference room was packed with perhaps 300-400 attendees. If there were any empty chairs, I could have numbered them with the fingers on one hand. This was the 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting of this conference. According to one of the organizers, there was only one other Pre-Trib conferences that had more attendees.

Many (?all?) of the speakers there had published books on Biblical topics.

When I was a new believer in the 1970's, there were many splendid books on the Bible written by Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS) faculty. Today, I don't see such a brilliant theological faculty there. I find the books written by pastors and independent researchers are the books that catch my attention. People like Tim LaHaye (deceased now), Tommy Ice, Robby Dean, and one of my favorites, Randall Price.

Although DTS is still a powerful force in Christianity, I think it has lost its shine. It used to train many young men for the pastorate. The pastor in the pulpit is meant to provide teaching for the body of Christ, the believers on the front lines of the Angelic Conflict. There is now an additional seminary that provides training for young pastors: Chafer Theological Seminary. My understanding is that this school has many courses that can be taken on-line.

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Here is the history of the Chafer Theological Seminary. It is not the same nor related to DTS.

“The idea of Chafer Theological Seminary was born in the minds of several seminary students between 1965 and 1968 as they were finishing their academic requirements and preparing for ordination. They noticed that at the majority of schools, only the most gifted were able to master the languages to the extent that they were able to use them as effective tools for ministry. Yet, they believed it was important for the seminary to prepare all students to exposit God's Word.”

“In 1992, several meetings took place during the National Teaching Pastors' Conference in Huntington Beach, CA. These former students and other like-minded pastors, after considerable discussion and prayer, determined that the time was ripe to start a full-fledged seminary. The Lord's blessing was evident in that gifted teachers, administrative support, access to superb libraries, and an excellent location were immediately available.<sup>1</sup>”

This year, as in previous years, many of the speakers at the Pre-Trib Conference were authors of interesting books.

The conference had several speakers each with a different topic. The papers and presentations can be found at <https://www.pre-trib.org/2023-conference-papers>. The videos will not be available on-line for another month. They have to be reviewed, edited and properly formatted for the internet.

One of my favorites was David Reagan giving his testimony. It is entitled “My Pilgrimage to a Premillennial Viewpoint.” When the videos are finally available, I highly recommend watching it. The presentation was more powerful than the written word.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://deanbible.org/about-chafer-theological-seminary>

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Let me give a brief summary of each of the presentations in the order they were given.

Andy Woods gave the first presentation on “A Critique of the Pre-Wrath View.” Dispensationalists fall into different camps as to when the rapture will happen. The people at the conference overwhelmingly believe that the rapture is imminent, before the Tribulation begins. But there are others who believe it will take place mid-Tribulation (at 3 ½ years into the Tribulation), post-Tribulation (after the Tribulation) and another group that believes it will happen “Pre-Wrath.” According to this view, some point in the last half of the Tribulation, God pours out His wrath on the earth. In this view, the rapture occurs just before this period of God’s Wrath. Andy provided convincing evidence from the Bible that the “Pre-Wrath” view does not fit the Biblical evidence. Yet, there was one attendee who vehemently disagreed and was pro “Pre-Wrath.”

A note on Dr. Andy Woods: “Andy Woods became a Christian at the age of 16. He graduated with High Honors earning two Baccalaureate Degrees in Business Administration and Political Science (University of Redlands, CA.), and obtained a Juris Doctorate (Whittier Law School, CA), practiced law, taught Business and Law and related courses (Citrus Community College, CA) and served as Interim Pastor of Rivera First Baptist Church in Pico Rivera, CA (1996–1998). In 1998, he began taking courses at Chafer and Talbot Theological Seminaries. He earned a Master of Theology degree, with High Honors (2002), and a Doctor of Philosophy in Bible Exposition (2009) at Dallas Theological Seminary. In 2005 and 2009, he received the Donald K. Campbell Award for Excellence in Bible Exposition, at Dallas Theological Seminary. Andy is the senior pastor of Sugar Land Bible Church and is president of Chafer Theological Seminary. In addition, Andy has contributed to many

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theological journals and written a number of Christian books and has spoken on a variety of topics at Christian conferences.<sup>2</sup>”

The second speaker was one of my favorites, Dr. Randall Price. His topic was “how Can Dispensationalists Believe in the Literal Fulfillment of Ezekiel’s Temple?” If you have read the description of the temple in Ezekiel chapters 40-48, then you probably had many questions. These were answered by Dr. Price in his presentation. This is one well worth watching when the video becomes available.

Here is a partial bio for Dr. Price: “He has been involved in archaeological excavation at Tel-Yin’am, Jerusalem, and is currently Director of excavations at the Qumran plateau (since 2002), site of the Dead Sea Scroll community, and Assistant Director of the Hyrcania tunnel excavation, in Israel. He has been a co-curator of the traveling museum exhibition: “From the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Forbidden Book” and is preparing to open the World of the Bible Museum in the future. Dr. Price is founder and President of World of the Bible Ministries, Inc. (since 1993), an organization specializing in research and communication of information about the ancient and modern world of the Bible. He lectures in conferences worldwide and appears on numerous talk shows and television and radio programs as an expert on the Middle East. He has led more than 100 tours to Israel.<sup>3</sup>” Read the full bio from the website. The people giving the presentations were knowledgeable on their topics. Most of them had their doctorate degree.

Dr. Price started his presentation with “Interpreting the Ezekiel’s prophecy has never been an easy task. The Talmudic rabbis struggled with the numerous textual difficulties and discrepancies from the Torah. Most decided that it was best to wait for the Prophet Elijah, at the final Redemption, to explain them (Babylonian Talmud, Menahoth 45a)!”

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.pre-trib.org/images/2023\\_Conference/2023-Pre-Trib-Speaker\\_Bios.pdf](https://www.pre-trib.org/images/2023_Conference/2023-Pre-Trib-Speaker_Bios.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.pre-trib.org/images/2023\\_Conference/2023-Pre-Trib-Speaker\\_Bios.pdf](https://www.pre-trib.org/images/2023_Conference/2023-Pre-Trib-Speaker_Bios.pdf)

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He gave seven reasons why there will be a physical temple in the Millennium as described in Ezekiel:

- 1) The Literary Unity of the Book Requires a Literal Interpretation Be Understood Throughout
- 2) The Context of the Temple's Restoration Requires a Literal Interpretation
- 3) The Description of the Shekinah's Departure and Return Requires a Literal Interpretation
- 4) The Conditions of the Restoration Context Requires a Literal Interpretation
- 5) The Description of the Temple's Construction Design Requires a Literal Interpretation
- 6) The Harmony with other Old Testament Prophetic Passages Requires a Literal Interpretation.
- 7) The Requirement of Sacrifices in Ezekiel's Temple Requires a Literal Interpretation

Although the concept of dispensations was not explained, it was behind all of the presentations. One of the "textbook" definitions is included in Ryre's "Dispensationalism" book. He calls this list of characteristics the "sine qua non" of dispensationalism:

1. "A dispensationalist keeps Israel and the church distinct."
2. This distinction between Israel and the church is born out of a system of hermeneutics that is usually called literal interpretation."
3. A third aspect of the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism is a rather technical matter that will be discussed more fully later (see chapter 5). It

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concerns *the underlying purpose of God in the world*. The covenant theologian, in practice, believes this purpose to be salvation (although covenant theologians strongly emphasize the glory of God in their theology), and the dispensationalist says the purpose is broader than that; namely, *the glory of God*.<sup>4</sup>

The Third presentation was by Dr. Jordan Ballard, “A Case for the Pretribulational Rapture of the Church.” A partial bio: “Jordan Ballard teaches Bible and theology as an online adjunct faculty member at Liberty University, Grace Christian University, Calvary University, and Tyndale Theological Seminary. He earned his MAR, MRE, and MDIV with a concentration in Biblical Studies from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary as well as his STM in Old Testament Studies from Dallas Theological Seminary. He holds a PhD in Theology & Apologetics from Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary and wrote his dissertation defending the Conquest of Canaan in the Old Testament under Dr. Randall Price.”<sup>5</sup>

This presentation was a good tutorial on the Pre-Tribulational rapture, even if it is lengthy and maybe a bit technical for some.

The fourth presentation was by Dr. Mike Vlach, “Hermeneutics of Non-Dispensationalism.” This goes back to Charles Ryrie’s *sine qua non* of dispensationalism: literal interpretation. Non-dispensationalism brings up different methods of interpreting Scripture as non-literal. One of the often pointed to illustrations is the claim that Revelation 20’s reference to 1,000 years just means a long time or perhaps means eternity. David Reagan ran into this problem when growing up that according to some, “The Bible doesn’t mean what it says.” Yea, I know this seems odd. But throughout history various theologians have taken that stand. They would

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4 Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007, pages 46-48.

5 [https://www.pre-trib.org/images/2023\\_Conference/2023-Pre-Trib-Speaker\\_Bios.pdf](https://www.pre-trib.org/images/2023_Conference/2023-Pre-Trib-Speaker_Bios.pdf)

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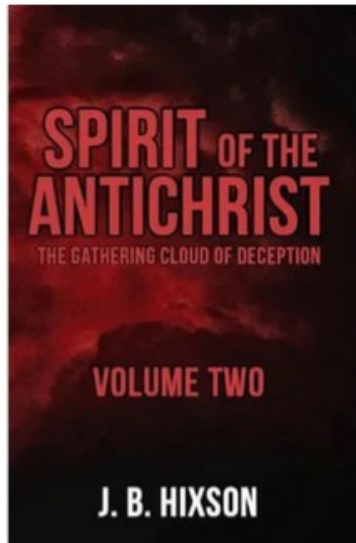
say it is symbolic or it is an allegory. “The Bible doesn’t mean what it says.”

That was the first day of a three day conference!

The first presentation of the second day was by Dr. J. B. Hixson, “Spirit of the False Prophet: Rise of the Global Technocracy.” Essentially, it covered his third book in his series on the Spirit of the False Prophet.



Spirit of the False Prophet



Spirit of the Antichrist Volume Two



Spirit of the Antichrist Volume One

I found this presentation intriguing. There were people mentioned I had never heard of. There were efforts I was unaware of. For an unsaved person, this information might have been scary. But I know the creator of heaven and earth as my savior. I will fear no evil.

The second presentation of the second day was by Les Brainard, “More Pre-Darby Rapture Finds throughout Church History.” The issue is that non-rapture believing believers say that dispensationalism and the rapture in particular are recent developments and not taught by or believed by early Church fathers. But, researchers are uncovering mounting evidence that contests this.

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The third presentation of the second day was by Olivier Melnick, who lives in Rockwall, TX, “The Normalization of Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred Becomes the New Normal.” The slides used in the presentation were not provided on the website. Over and over again, I was reminded of the various Facebook posts and internet articles about the rise of the Nazi’s in Germany which led to Hitler and WWII. People previous to October 7 would have said that this could not happen again. Certainly not in the USA. Yet, we see all around us Neo-Nazi and Anti-Semitic demonstrations. For some reason, the term “Hitler’s Dream” came to mind. It is here.

Again, I know I am saved and I have faith-rest. I have a confident expectation that God will take care of me. Often toward the end of the conference I heard the call “Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus.”

The final presentation of day two was one of my favorites by Jesse Randolph, “Exegetical and Pastoral Insights into the Future-Oriented Prophecies in Hosea.”

His bio: “Jesse Randolph serves as Pastor-Teacher of Indian Hills Community Church, in Lincoln, Nebraska. He holds an M.Div. from The Master’s Seminary and is pursuing his Th.M. from Shepherds Theological Seminary. His writing has been featured on various blogging platforms, including The Master’s Seminary, For the Church, the Center for Biblical Studies, Founders Ministries, the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, and IFCA International. He has also been published academically, in places such as The Master’s Seminary Journal, The Journal of Ministry and Theology, and The Interdisciplinary Journal on Biblical Authority. Jesse and his wife (Jenna) have five children, spanning the toddler to teenage spectrum.”<sup>6</sup>

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6 [https://www.pre-trib.org/images/2023\\_Conference/2023-Pre-Trib-Speaker\\_Bios.pdf](https://www.pre-trib.org/images/2023_Conference/2023-Pre-Trib-Speaker_Bios.pdf)



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In his presentation, he excerpts selected texts from the book of Hosea that point to the Millennial Kingdom.

Bill Koenig, a former White House Correspondent, was no dummy when it came to Scripture. He pointed to various antisemitic events in the political sphere and subsequent wars or disasters that followed which he tied to antisemitism. Some of these had me saying to myself, “I didn’t know that.” It would be worth your time to watch the video when it is posted.

The third day really had only one “presentation” which was Dr. Dave Reagan’s “My Pilgrimage to a Premillennial Viewpoint.” You have to watch this one. Yes, he pretty much follows the text of his presentation which is posted on the website. But he is such a good speaker. And I didn’t know his academic background. I have included his full bio below. I only knew of him from the Lamb and Lion ministries. But he is much more than that.

“Dr. Reagan is a native Texan who resides in a suburb of Dallas. He is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Texas in Austin. His graduate degrees were earned in the field of International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy of Tufts and Harvard Universities. Before entering the ministry, he had an extensive career in higher education which included the following positions: Assistant to the President of Austin College in Sherman, Texas; President of South Texas Jr. College in Houston; Director of Pepperdine University’s Center for International Business in Los Angeles; and Vice President of Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma. In the mid-’60s Dave served as a Fulbright Lecturer at the University of the Philippines and toured all of Southeast Asia lecturing on U.S. foreign policy on behalf of the U.S. Information Agency.”

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“Dave is a life-long Bible student, teacher, and preacher. He entered the full-time ministry in 1976 when he was called to serve as the pulpit minister for a church in Irving, Texas. His ordination as a Christian minister has been formally recognized by three different Christian groups.”

“He is the author of many religious essays which have been published in a wide variety of journals and magazines. He has written 17 books and has contributed to many others. His books have been translated into several languages.”

“Dave’s sermons have been distributed worldwide. He has led 45 pilgrimages to Israel that focus on the prophetic significance of the sites visited. He has also conducted prophecy conferences in Russia, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Austria, Belarus, Israel, South Africa, Mexico, the Philippines, India, England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and China.<sup>7</sup>”

Dave will continue to write for the ministry as the Evangelist Emeritus.

The Pre-Trib Research Center website, [pre-trib.org](http://pre-trib.org), contains files and videos for previous conferences. There is some very helpful information concerning prophecy.

Prophecy is pointing to the future. But that does not mean you do not study it. Christianity looks to the future. Our salvation is completed in the future. We will participate on Jesus’ “staff” aiding in the administration of the Millennial Kingdom.

A Christian life, although lived in the here and now, should be oriented to the future. Our salvation means we will not suffer the pains of “Hell-fire.” More than that, consider our time on earth as preparation for our service in the Millennium and on into eternity. God has yet many things

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.pre-trib.org/images/2023\\_Conference/2023-Pre-Trib-Speaker\\_Bios.pdf](https://www.pre-trib.org/images/2023_Conference/2023-Pre-Trib-Speaker_Bios.pdf)

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He will do. Some, He tells us about in prophecy. Some He expects us to be prepared for. They are so wonderful we could not fathom them even if He explained them now in human language. So buckle up, Dorothy, because Kansas is going bye bye.