

Christ in Prophecy
Q&A 10: “Tough Bible Questions with Ron Rhodes: Part 3”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Do you believe we are living in the season of the Lord's return? What do you believe about the timing of the Rapture? Do you even believe in a Rapture? Do you believe the Antichrist could be a Muslim? And according to prophecy, what roles will the United States and Russia play in end time events? For answers to these questions stay tuned.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus our blessed hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy and I am delighted to have back with me again for the third week our special guest Dr. Ron Rhodes. We're about to work you to death here, brother!

Dr. Rhodes: Oh I love it.

Dr. Reagan: Well we are really enjoying it too.

Dr. Rhodes: Well thank you.

Dr. Reagan: And really appreciate you being with us.

Dr. Rhodes: Well thank you.

Dr. Reagan: Also this week once again I have with me Nathan Jones who is our Web Minister and that is much more than a Web Master as I explained last week because Nathan is responsible for responding to questions from people literally all over the world eight hours a day. So he knows what it's like to get tough questions and to be on the hot

seat. Well, that's what we're going to do with you. We're going to hit you with some tough questions now.

Dr. Rhodes: More bombs.

Dr. Reagan: Okay, yes.

Dr. Rhodes: Except this program we're really going to focus in on Bible prophecy. Yes. So Nathan, lead on.

Nathan Jones: Alright, Dr. Rhodes, do you believe we are in the season of the Lord's return and if so why?

Dr. Rhodes: Well I think we are, I think to begin with let's recognize the really key foundational prophecy of Israel becoming a nation and Jews streaming back to the Holy Land ever since then. It's kind of interesting because back in the 1800's I've looked at a couple of prophecy experts who were writing about this eventual rebirth of the nation Israel. And everybody was saying no it will never happen that's just an impossibility but then in 1948 it did happen.

Dr. Reagan: They were saying that up to the very day it happened.

Dr. Rhodes: Well that's right and it's an amazing unfolding of events. But I think that that kind of sets the stage for everything else. If that one thing had not happened I have a problem in all other prophecies because that's really the foundation to build from.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Dr. Rhodes: But beyond that you've all kinds of stuff for example you've got movement towards the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple today. You've got money being raised, blueprints drawn, people gathering the paraphernalia you've got people working on interacting with the Jewish people over there, giving them the dream and the vision and so forth. Beyond that you've also got the alignment of nations that will one day form a coalition against Israel. We'll talk about that a little bit later today but that would include

Russia and Iran and Sudan and Libya and Turkey. All those nations are even now forming alliances with each other. You've got the European Union which I believe sort of sets the stage for the Roman Empire. And the way I like to look at it Dave is this. If you can imagine a bunch of lines intersecting each other at some point in the near future, you know, one of these lines is the Jewish Temple, another of these lines is the rebirth of Israel, another line is, you know all these different prophecies are coming true, apparently intersecting at some point in the near future. And so it's the accumulative weight of all of that that leads me to believe that indeed we are living in the very end times.

Dr. Reagan: It seems to be like you'd have to be either Biblically ignorant or spiritually in a comatose state not to realize that God is really shouting from the heavens today Jesus is coming soon.

Dr. Rhodes: Well that's right and you might remember Dave that Jesus chastised the Jews of His own day for not being accurate observers of the times. Now today you've got a lot of people who are nay-sayers about Bible prophecy. There are people out there who have basically down played prophecy and they say that the Church replaces Israel and all kinds of stuff out there. But the fact is, is that we have fulfillment on our side.

Dr. Reagan: That's right.

Dr. Rhodes: When you start to look at what's going on in the world today we can always point and say hey well look apparently we're right.

Dr. Reagan: What gets me is even major Christian leaders who are deep into Replacement Theology who will say that well just the founding of Israel was just a political accident of history. And you wonder how anyone can look at that and write it off as a political accident of history.

Nathan Jones: 1,897 years later? It's not like the Hittites are rebuilding their country again.

Dr. Rhodes: Well that's right and one of the things in the New Testament is Israel continues to be distinct from the Church. If you look in the book of Acts I believe that the word Israel occurs twenty times and the word Church occurs nineteen times. Even in the book of Acts they are very distinct from each other. Of course you've got other verses in the Epistles that Paul wrote where he distinguishes between the Jews and the Church. And so the Church does not replace Israel or God's promises and prophecies toward Israel.

Dr. Reagan: Well it's amazing how the Church wants to replace Israel and wants all of its blessing but none of its curses.

Dr. Rhodes: Yes.

Dr. Reagan: Well lets shift gears here for a moment to what is probably the most controversial and perhaps the thorniest issue in Bible prophecy today and that is when is the Rapture going to occur what will be the timing? Is it going to be the middle of the tribulation, near the end, at the end, before, at the beginning? What?

Dr. Rhodes: Boy you could get me preaching on that one. I'm a firm believer that it's gonna happen before the tribulation and there's a number of reasons why I say that.

Dr. Reagan: What's the most important reason you'd throw out?

Dr. Rhodes: Well, first of all, I'd say the most important reason is that the Church has no purpose in being in the Tribulation. The Scriptures clearly define the purpose of the Tribulation and I believe it's two fold there's going to be a judgment on nations, unbelieving nations and there's also going to be a purging of Israel. The church has no business even being there, now that's aside from the fact that there's not a single verse dealing with the Tribulation in the Old Testament that mentions the Church. There's not a single verse in the New Testament dealing with the Tribulation that mentions the Church. We are told in First Thessalonians 1:9-10 as well as first Thessalonians 5:9 that the Church is not appointed to wrath. That leads me to believe that God is going to take the Church out of the world prior to the time of wrath which is coming upon the world. I also think this is related to Revelation 3:10 where the Church has promised deliverance

from the actual time period of testing that is gonna come upon the earth. One of my favorite verses Dave is John 14 verse 1 to 3 which I don't think fits a Post-Tribulational scenario at all. Jesus says I am going to prepare a place for you and if I go to prepare a place for you I will come back for you and take you so that you can be where I am. In other words, Jesus is going to take Christians and take them back to Heaven. That doesn't fit the Post- Tribulational scenario which says that they all stay on the earth.

Dr. Reagan: You didn't mention the argument that usually comes first and that is imminence.

Dr. Rhodes: Oh imminence is absolute. That's an assumption that is always there.

Dr. Reagan: Explain what that means.

Dr. Rhodes: There's nothing that needs to take place before the Rapture of the Church.

Dr. Reagan: Yes.

Dr. Rhodes: It could happen any moment.

Dr. Reagan: There are many events that must take place before the Second Coming.

Dr. Rhodes: That's right in fact if

Dr. Reagan:so if you only believe in the Second Coming, Jesus can't come today.

Dr. Rhodes: That's right and if you had a nice little calendar you could pretty much tell when Christ was gonna come again. You could watch for example when the Antichrist signs the peace pact with Israel you know Daniel 9:27....

Dr. Reagan: And do a countdown.

Dr. Rhodes: And do a countdown, seven years. It's the 70th week. And the thing is that when you're talking about the Rapture you don't see signs that are prophesied prior to that event. You see, so it's an imminent event. It's something that could happen any moment.

Dr. Reagan: And not one prophecy has to be fulfilled for it to occur.

Dr. Rhodes: Not one, not a one. Now it's a very important factor also in terms of my book that I've written on *Northern Storm Rising*. There are some people who will suggest that the invasion into Israel might take place prior to the Rapture. But they are very careful to say Dave that they don't believe that that has to happen as a sign before the Rapture. It's incidental. And so those who hold to that position would still believe in the imminence of the Rapture.

Dr. Reagan: What would you say to a person who says that the whole idea of a Rapture, separate and apart from the Second Coming, is too new an idea to be true.

Dr. Rhodes: Well of course that's a common complaint. There are people out there who even say that the idea of a Rapture is so recent in church history that it came from, some even argue it even came from Margaret MacDonald.

Nathan Jones: A teenager, right?

Dr. Rhodes: A teenager. And you know what's interesting if you actually look at her writings she comes out to be a cross between Post-Trib and Partial-Trib in viewpoints.

Dr. Reagan: I read her vision I couldn't even find a Pre-Trib Rapture in it.

Dr. Rhodes: Well you know you can't but you know there's still a lot of Post-Tribs going around talking about this as if it's a gospel truth.

Nathan Jones: Conspiracy theory.

Dr. Rhodes: The fact is, is that Pre-Tribs are Pre-Tribs because they believe the Bible. And they take the Bible literally.

Dr. Reagan: And the fact is too that many, many Christian groups who took the Bible literally were suppressed throughout Christian history and their writings destroyed and so forth. We don't know what they believed about this if they had a position on it.

Dr. Rhodes: Well you know one of the things that you also have to keep in mind is that especially during the early centuries of Christianity you know Roman Catholicism was predominate. And if you didn't agree with what they taught, I mean, your life was in danger, basically. And so I certainly believe you know if you want to talk about early stuff, I certainly believe that the apostle Paul and John and some of these others were Pre-Tribs, if you look at their writings.

Dr. Reagan: That's what they wrote.

Dr. Rhodes: Right, and if words mean anything. And if you're gonna, you know, let Scripture speak for itself and words mean anything, then the Pre-Trib position is correct. You've got to do a lot of spiritualizing in my opinion to get to the other positions.

Part 2

Dr. Reagan: Dr. Rhodes I would like to get into the discussion of a very faddish thing that has suddenly developed in the last six to eight months in Bible prophecy. And that is the idea that the empire that will be revived in the end time will not be the Roman Empire but the Ottoman Empire. And that the Antichrist will come out of that Ottoman Empire and he will be the one who will rule over. In fact, I don't know how much you've done reading on this, but the thing that really bothers me is not only do they say its going to be the Ottoman Empire and its going to be a Muslim but they argued that its hyperbole when the Bible says that he's going to rule over all the nations of the earth that he's really just going to rule over the Middle East.

Dr. Rhodes: Well where do I begin? There's just all kinds of problems.

Dr. Reagan: It's kind of like that flood, over the whole world, that's hyperbole, it was just a little local flood.

Dr. Rhodes: Yeah, yeah, you know, Jesus being the God man, oh come on.

Dr. Reagan: What about the Ottoman Empire? Well I think that Scriptures very clear that it's a Roman Empire. You know when you look at Daniel in his writings he talks very specifically about how the Antichrist would come from the people who overran Jerusalem and destroyed the Jewish Temple. That wasn't the Muslims, it wasn't the Muslims that overcame Jerusalem.

Dr. Reagan: They didn't even exist at that time.

Dr. Rhodes: They didn't even exist at that time. You know Islam was founded by Muhammad and we're talking centuries later.

Dr. Reagan: 600 years later.

Dr. Rhodes: 600 years later. And so to say that that could possibly apply even metaphorically to Muhammad or to Islam would be just reading something into the text that's not there. And I also think about Daniel chapter seven where it talks about how you've got the little horn that emerges out of the ten horns, you know right there with them. And that indicates to me, that whole context is about the Roman Empire that will reemerge and so he comes out of the Roman Empire and he is said to be of the same people who overcame Jerusalem and destroyed the Jewish Temple. Now as you know that was Titus and his Roman warriors who destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70. If words mean anything, it is a Roman Empire. Furthermore, I think that the idea that this guy is a Muslim, that really kind of runs a miss in terms of what Islam teaches when you think about it. For example, Islam believes in the Islamic creed, there's one god named Allah and Muhammad is his name. They will not tolerate any other claims to deity.

Dr. Reagan: Well that's an excellent point and reminds me of this passage in Second Thessalonians 2 where it's talking about the Antichrist. And it says that he is going to go

into the temple, exalt himself above every god or object of worship, take his seat in the temple and display himself as being god. Can you imagine a Muslim doing that?

Dr. Rhodes: Well for a Muslim to do that, especially in view of the Islam creed which says that there's one god named Allah and in view of the Islamic teaching that Allah can have no partners you know that's a very clear teaching in Islam, it becomes an impossibility. Further Dave just consider how it stretches credulity to say that this individual according to Daniel 9:27 will sign a pact guaranteeing protection for Israel. Why would a Muslim sign a pact guaranteeing protection to Israel? I mean if there's any group of people that want to see the destruction of Israel it is Muslims. So how would that work?

Dr. Reagan: That's right.

Dr. Rhodes: Not only that but tying it to my book a *Northern Storm Rising*. I believe that this invasion of Muslim countries into Israel will probably take place before the Rapture or after the Rapture and before the Tribulation or at the very beginning of the Tribulation, somewhere in there. If the Muslim nations are largely destroyed by judgment as seems to be indicated in Ezekiel 38 and 39. How will an Antichrist emerge from the ashes of what used to be a very strong group of people but now is almost gone?

Dr. Reagan: Right.

Dr. Rhodes: Any way you look at it there's just all kinds of variables that do not fit this idea that the Antichrist could be a Muslim.

Dr. Reagan: Daniel even says that he will have no regard for the gods of his father but he will claim that he is above all gods. How can a Muslim say that?

Dr. Rhodes: No a Muslim couldn't possibly say that. In fact, one of the things that Muslims get mad about in terms of Christians today is claiming that Jesus is the son of God. They say that's absolute blasphemy because that means that God has partners.

Dr. Reagan: What about the argument that this is going to be a local empire not a world wide empire, that that's hyperbole when Revelation says that?

Dr. Rhodes: Well you know if a prophecy as you read it in the past came true literally. If you look at all the prophecies that deal for example with the first coming of Christ and see how absolutely literal they were fulfilled. The indication is that all the other prophecies that deal with the Second Coming and events associated with it will be fulfilled just as literally. So there's no room for spiritualizing in my opinion. Very often in the Old Testament you've got things referring to both the old and Second Coming within the same basic passage and as the first part was literally fulfilled so the second part will be literally fulfilled.

Dr. Reagan: You know what I think we have here? I think we have a classic example of people reading the newspaper into the Bible.

Dr. Rhodes: That's right. The proper policy is to read the Bible first. Let the Bible speak for itself and then as Jesus said in Matthew 16, to be accurate observers of the times.

Dr. Reagan: I remember reading a statement by Scofield that he wrote about Ezekiel 38 and 39. He said I don't understand it I can't explain it but the Bible says it therefore I accept it. It said Russia was gonna invade Israel. At that time Russia was a Christian Orthodox nation and Israel did not exist and there was no possibility, how could you understand it? But he said it says it and he didn't try to read the newspaper into it.

Nathan Jones: Well, what would the one world religion be then if it's not Islam which everyone right now is scared to death Islam will take over and be a one world religion?

Dr. Rhodes: Well that's an interesting question I've done a lot of thinking about the one world religion. And when you think about it there are two very powerful people groups that would stand against it. Christians would stand against it and Muslims would absolutely stand against it.

Dr. Reagan: Absolutely.

Dr. Rhodes: Now just think about it. The Rapture takes place before the Tribulation, that's what I believe. So the Christians are removed. If in fact this invasion into Israel by Russia and the Muslim nations takes place before the Tribulation or maybe at the very beginning of the Tribulation. Muslims are largely taken out of the picture too. To me that opens up the door for the easy emergence of both the Antichrist and the great power as well as a one world religion. And so to me it just fits chronologically very, very well.

Dr. Reagan: Well let's talk about your book for a moment. Nathan?

Nathan Jones: Sure. You mentioned a few times this book called *Northern Storm Rising*.

Dr. Reagan: It's one of your latest books isn't it?

Dr. Rhodes: Yes and it's about a topic I just absolutely love. I might mention again I became a Christian from prophecy.

Dr. Reagan: Well what do you mean by northern storm rising?

Dr. Rhodes: Well you know if you look off into the distance and you see a bunch of dark clouds coming on the scene.

Dr. Reagan: A norther as we call it in Texas.

Dr. Rhodes: That's right that's right. And you see some lightening and you can kind of tell when the rains coming down and the winds blowing, and it's coming toward you, by being an accurate observer of the times you can tell that a storms coming at you. Well according to the Scripture there is a northern storm emerging on the scene. Jesus told us to be accurate observers of the times so as you look off to what's happening in Russia and Iran and Turkey and Sudan and all of these nations over there.

Dr. Reagan: Well tell us first of all what does the Bible say to look for and then relate that to modern times.

Dr. Rhodes: Well what the Bible says is that there's going to be a massive invasion into Israel. We don't like to talk about those kinds of things, I mean we're sick of war. But the Bible is very clear that there's gonna be a massive invasion into Israel. And there's going to be a coalition of nations involved from the north. In fact one of the nations involved is called Rausch, and that's to the uttermost north of Israel. And if you take a ruler and draw a line straight north from Jerusalem, you're gonna hit Russia. And joining Russia will be a variety of Islamic nations including Iran and Sudan and Libya and Turkey. And here's the thing, when Ezekiel wrote back in the 6th century BC, Islam did not exist. He probably had no idea what would make all these nations unify together. And in fact for many years Dave, there have been some more liberal type Christians who have said well these nations are not contiguous or next to each other. Therefore it doesn't make sense to say that they are going to join together in a battle but see recent history reveals Islam. Islam came into being in the 6th and 7th century and that's what unifies them with the exception of Russia. Did you know that Russia is 20% Islamic?

Dr. Reagan: Oh yes they have a huge Islamic area.

Dr. Rhodes: Huge and they've got thousands of Muslim temples over there. And by the way Russia has a long history of aggression against Israel. We see that in 1967, 1973 and 1982 and in each case American Presidents stare down the Russian bear.

Dr. Reagan: In fact Putin recently made the statement that Russia is the greatest friend the Muslim world has.

Dr. Rhodes: Well and you know when you look at some of the alliances that he's building for example with Iran how could you deny it? He signed not only an agreement in which Iran is provided nuclear weaponry but has also signed a 25 year agreement in which Iran gives 500 million dollars a year to Russia in order to build up Iran's military.

Dr. Reagan: Wow.

Dr. Rhodes: And Iran under President Ahmadinejad has said that he would like to see Israel wiped off the map. He has said we're gonna see very soon what it's like to live in a US free and Israel free world.

Dr. Reagan: So what you're saying now is that as you look on the world scene you're beginning to see the things come together to make this prophecy a fulfillment.

Dr. Rhodes: That's right I think that the stage is being set.

Dr. Reagan: Okay.

Dr. Rhodes: I'm not one of those people that likes to set dates that's not a healthy thing in fact Christ told us not to so I don't want to imply any date or anything like that. But I will tell you that Jesus told us to be accurate observers of the times and as I observe what's taking place with Russia and Iran and Turkey and Sudan and Libya. Not only are these nations aligning with each other but every one of them has a motive to hate Israel. These nations stand against Israel they believe that Israel belongs to them. They believe that Allah promised that Holy Land to them. And that our Bible the Old Testament has been changed by Jews and Christians and originally that land was promised to the Muslims.

Dr. Reagan: Also it is my understanding that under the beliefs of Islam that once they conquer a land and it becomes Allah's. If they lose, they have an overwhelming compulsion to go back and retake it for Allah.

Dr. Rhodes: That's right and so Israel was basically stealing something that wasn't theirs back in 1948. Now of course there's been recent overtures in trying to building the Palestinian state and divide Jerusalem and all like that. Let me tell you something Dave, the Muslims don't want a part of Jerusalem they want all of it. They want all of it. And they're going to go to war one day and I see what is taking place right now is setting the stage for this eventual storm that will just come in like a gangbusters. And the fact is that God is gonna stand for Israel you know he who stands for Israel does not sleep or slumber. That's what psalm 121 tells us.

Dr. Reagan: Amos says that once they're regathered they will never be uprooted again. They're there to stay but boy I tell you it takes a lot of faith these days to believe that's going to happen because as you look at Israel today... The last issue of our

magazine had to do with the topic of, "Is There Really any Hope for Israel?" Because one of the greatest enemies of Israel today is their own Jewish leaders who have lost the Zionist vision who have been worn down by war, who are war-weary and are willing to give away anything to have peace.

Dr. Rhodes: You know what's interesting though, Israel is going to be so overwhelmed when this invasion takes place that there's not going to be a chance of Israel's survival. When God actually turns back the invading force, it's like everybody's going to recognize God's hand. And I want you to notice that when God speaks, He says that they may know that I am the Lord thy God.

Dr. Reagan: That's right.

Dr. Rhodes: Now this is the same language you see in the Exodus account when God delivered Israel from the Egyptians, "That they may know that I am the Lord thy God."

Dr. Reagan: In fact Ezekiel says point blank it'll be done in such a way that even the Jews will realize it came from God.

Dr. Rhodes: That's right so I think there's gonna be massive conversions as a result of this.

Dr. Reagan: Oh I can hardly wait for that.

Dr. Rhodes: You know I've heard some people say that when this army gets destroyed that the Antichrist might stand up and try to take credit for it. Well I suppose that's possible I heard some people like Dr. Dwight Pentecost say that. But you know the text indicates that God is going to get the glory for this. God says that they may know that I am the lord thy God. A lot of people are going to become acquainted with Yahweh for the first time.

Nathan Jones: 144,000 Jews that come out to become witnesses during the Tribulation might convert because of that.

Dr. Rhodes: I think those 144,000 witnesses will be kind of like 144,000 Jewish Billy Grahams going all over the world witnessing. I also think there's going to be conversions based upon the two witnesses of Revelation chapter 11. I also think that when Christians vanish off the planet, Dave all our books are going to be left behind. And I think that many people are going to turn to the Lord as the result of that.

Dr. Reagan: That's why I've got my Bible so marked up here. I figure people are not going to have time to read the whole thing so just right at the beginning I said go read this, this and this. That'll keep you on the right track. I want to get them down to the bottom line fast cause they're not gonna have much time. Amen. Well this book *Northern Storm Rising* is one that I would highly like to recommend to our viewers. It is well written, well thought through and one of the things I like about your writing Ron is that God has given you the ability to write in a down to earth easy to understand way. You do not have to have a Ph.D. in hermeneutics in order to understand this book and I compliment you on that.

Dr. Rhodes: Well I thank you for that. That was really my goal in writing the book I believe that one of the ministries God has called me to is to communicate effectively with people. And the truth is that the Bible is one of the most exciting books in existence and if I can help communicate that excitement in what I write then I've succeeded. And if people get anything from this book it's that God is in control of human history and that the Bible can be absolutely trusted in its prophecies.

Dr. Reagan: Well I appreciate you saying that that's one of the things I try to emphasize over and over. I tell people that sometimes when I'm watching the news and I get really upset about how things are going and it seems like the guys in the black hats are gonna win. I think of Psalm 2 which says, "God sits in the Heavens and laughs." Not because he's not concerned but because He has the wisdom and the power to orchestrate all the evil of mankind to the triumph of His will and that's exactly what He's doing.

Dr. Rhodes: Amen.

Dr. Reagan: He is sovereign and we have to remind ourselves of that.

Dr. Rhodes: Well that's right and if I didn't believe in a sovereign God today I'd have a lot to worry about. Our world seems to be spinning out of control in so many different ways. But God is directing human history toward its culmination and one day when you and I have been with Christ for billions of years we're going to look back on all of this and just marvel at the way that God directed the circumstances on earth toward its end.

Dr. Reagan: Well brother you've written over forty books about a great variety of topics and I'm so glad you got around to prophecy and I want to encourage you to write some more books on Bible prophecy.

Dr. Rhodes: I intend to! It is one of my favorite topics.

Dr. Reagan: Well I really want to encourage you to do that. Because the one thing we need in the field of Bible prophecy is people who are nonspeculative, nonsensationalists who are just interested teaching what the Bible really says about prophecy.

Part 3

Nathan Jones: Dr Rhodes I want to thank you for coming. I've learned a lot I'm going to be able to apply a lot of this to the questions that come in and I'm going to be hitting your website all the time do you mind telling our viewers what your website is?

Dr. Rhodes: Yes you can contact us at www.ronrhodes.org and you can get lots of free information that you can download as well as order the books at a great discount. So do stop by sign up for our free newsletter and anything you can do for you we'll do our best.

Dr. Reagan: And Nathan I'm gonna remember what you just said because you always bring those tough questions in to me so from now on you can just email them to him.

Nathan Jones: Hi, Boss.

Dr. Rhodes: Well we all work together.

Dr. Reagan: Okay. Well, folks that is our program for this week we hope that you will be back with us next week. And until then may the Lord bless you and I want to urge you to look up and be watchful because our redemption is drawing near.

End of Program