

Understanding Current Events in the Middle East through the Lens of Biblical Prophecy

With Guest: Todd Hampson

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Host: David Wheaton 0:08

Understanding current events in the Middle East through the lens of biblical prophecy. That is the topic we'll discuss today on The Christian Worldview Radio program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a nonprofit, listener-supported radio ministry. Our website is TheChristianWorldview.org, and the rest of our contact information will be given throughout today's program. As always, thank you for your notes of encouragement, financial support, and lifting us up in prayer.

We would like to greet and welcome the listeners of 98.3 FM The Word, KDAR, in Southern California. This radio station is now airing The Christian Worldview at 8 a.m. on Saturdays and broadcasts just up the coast from Los Angeles in Ventura County, including the towns of Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Barbara, Thousand Oaks, Ojai, and more. The Christian Worldview has been airing in Los Angeles on 99.5 FM KKLA for the last several years at 8 a.m. on Saturdays, and so now launching on 98.3 FM KDAR at the same time will provide continuous listening between Los Angeles and Ventura County. So if you are new to the program, whether in Southern California or elsewhere, there are several ways you can take full advantage of the audio and written content and events from The Christian Worldview Radio Ministry. Of course, listening each week to the program on your local station or visiting our website, The Christian Worldview.org, and signing up for the free Christian Worldview Weekly Email, or becoming a Christian Worldview Partner who are the core supporters of this ministry and receive *The Christian Worldview Journal* print and digital publication every other month.

Now speaking of *The Christian Worldview Journal*, the July-August issue is now released, so Christian Worldview Partners should check their email for the digital version. The print version will be arriving soon for those who receive it through the mail. The July-August issue is the America 250 commemorative issue with four articles addressing aspects of America's past and present and the call for Christians going forward. This was quite an issue to put together, and we hope you gain from reading it.

And finally, I mentioned last week that we are hosting back-to-back events in mid-September near where we are based in Minnesota. The first event is The Christian Worldview Speaker Series listener event on Saturday, September twelfth at Stone House Farm in Jordan, Minnesota, just outside the Southwest Metro of the Twin Cities. That is now open for registration at the TheChristianWorldview.org or by calling us. I'll give the number in a second. Pastor Travis Allen, a longtime favorite guest on this program, who is the current pastor of Grace Church in Greeley, Colorado, and the former managing director of Grace To You and a member of the U.S. Navy SEAL teams, he will be our featured guest that late afternoon and evening. The format will be a live recording of the radio program, with Travis covering a wide range of issues relating to the faith, the church,

and current events, both at home and abroad. We'll also take audience questions and dinner will be served on site as well.

Then, just two days later, on Monday, September 14th, is our annual Overcomer Foundation Cup Golf and Dinner event at White Bear Yacht Club near St. Paul, Minnesota. The Overcomer Foundation is the official name of the nonprofit organization that directs The Christian Worldview Radio program. White Bear Yacht Club is one of the top courses in the state, and golfers come from many states across the country to participate in this event, which is why we are hosting back-to-back events. So non-golfers have an event to attend with the Speaker Series Listener event on Saturday, September 12. And so golfers traveling from out of state can make a weekend of it, attending both the Speaker Series Listener event and also the golf event on Monday, September 14th. So we would love to see you at one or both. You can find out more and register by visiting our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, or just calling our listener liaison Rosie at 888 -646- 2233. All right, now to the preview for today's program.

Host: David Wheaton 4:43

Consider this. Nearly 30% of the Bible deals with prophetic events or issues relating to the future. A majority of the prophecies in Scripture have already come to pass, but there is plenty of prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled. And fulfilled prophecy is one of the greatest evidences that God is trustworthy and His word is true. Consider just some of the Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. That He would be born of a virgin woman in Bethlehem, He would make an escape to Egypt, He would be rejected by His own people, betrayed by a friend, crucified with sinners, no bones broken on the cross, have His side pierced, and then rise from the dead, to name just a few that were precisely fulfilled.

Realizing this should strengthen the believer's faith in the sovereign God who controls the past, present, and future according to His perfect plan. And yet with the high number and perfect accuracy of fulfilled biblical prophecies, it is odd that many churches tend to avoid the subject of prophecy. It is said that addressing prophecy is complicated and not concrete, that there are many different interpretations, that prophecy is a secondary and potentially divisive issue, or that people have more relevant needs in the here and now. But God intentionally filled His Word with prophecy so that believers would know what is coming, yes, but even more so that we would praise and worship God for His power and His plan.

Now, while God's Word doesn't include every detail we may want about the future, it reveals plenty for the one who diligently studies the Bible and learns under a pastor who, quote, accurately handles the word of truth. We are living in a time when some of the yet to be fulfilled prophecies are taking shape. The nation of Israel, after being scattered from their promised homeland for two thousand years, is now living there again. That in itself is a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Check out Isaiah chapter 11:11, or Ezekiel 11:17. But there is much more to come. A seven-year period of world tribulation, the rise of a world leader called the Antichrist, the rapture or snatching away of church age believers by Christ, and then the return of Jesus Christ Himself to judge and reign on earth for one thousand years.

Now, some believers would dispute what I just said about this premillennial view of biblical prophecy. They don't see ethnic Israel as significant in the future. They don't see a 1,000-year literal reign of Christ on earth,

but rather a spiritual reign right now or in the future. So how can we know what is to come? Well, this weekend in part one of our two-week series, Todd Hampson, co-host of the Prophecy Pros podcast, and author of many books on prophecy, will join us to lay the groundwork on understanding biblical prophecy. We'll discuss the three main views amillennialism, postmillennialism, and premillennialism, and a number of future events that Scripture details. Then, next weekend in part two, we'll look at current events in the Middle East, the intractable war with Iran, the rise of the nation of Turkey, and the turning against Israel, all of which are nations with immense prophetic significance in the lead up to the great hope of believers, the return of Jesus Christ. So we hope you join us for two weeks of understanding current events in the Middle East through the lens of biblical prophecy.

Let's get straight to the interview with Todd Hampson. Todd, thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio program today. Let's start out with you telling us about your background, how you became a follower of Christ, and what you do now.

Guest: Todd Hampson 9:13

David it is great to join you. I have been looking forward to this. I grew up completely unchurched. I was as far from God as you can imagine as a teenager. I thought the Bible was a book of fairy tales. I didn't think Jesus was a historical person. I believed in evolution. I wasn't militant about any of that, but it's really just all that I had absorbed growing up, and that was kind of my mindset. Well, as the Lord would have it, I wound up as a young teenager in a Christian school for three months. I have an art background. I love illustrating and drawing characters, as people can see from my books and that sort of thing. That's always been part of who I am. Well, at that school, my art teacher was also my Bible teacher, and he had a heart for unchurched kids. So I really got all of his attention in our Bible class in terms of asking questions and you know, trying to figure things out. Most things I could explain away in my mind, or I could say, yeah, that could be true, but not really. But the one thing that really got my attention and broke down some barriers to belief was fulfilled Bible prophecy.

The Bible's made up of 28% prophecy when it was originally given. 80% of that has already been fulfilled, 20% is yet future. And that 80%, some of it is not just minute things, but giant sweeping prophecies about world empires, about key figures in history, and stuff that in my teenage mind I could no longer explain away. So that broke down those barriers and eventually led to my salvation several months later after I left the school. And then from that point forward gave me a love for apologetics, Bible prophecy, and eschatology, which is just yet unfulfilled future prophecy about the end times. So God had His hand on me at a young age, and looking back now, I can see that at the time I didn't, but that's a pretty quick overview of my story.

Host: David Wheaton 10:55

Well, thank you for sharing how God saved you. It's always just inspiring to hear how God works in a life that is going the wrong way or doesn't know Him, and then He draws and embraces and gives you the faith to believe. So thank you again for sharing that. Let's get into our topic for the day, which is we're going to talk a lot about biblical prophecy and the views of the future. I will consider that within those who are professing believers who are sound theologically, with regards to the fundamentals of the faith, primary issues like the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of Scripture, who Jesus Christ is, what is the gospel, issues like this that

believers are sound on. There are three main views or interpretations you could say of what's going to happen in the future. There's amillennialism, there's post-millennialism, and there's premillennialism. And there's variants, many variants within those three main views. Could you just give us a brief overview of those three views and why you believe premillennialism is the most accurate biblical interpretation?

Guest: Todd Hampson 12:08

That's a great question. And I love how you framed it because it's a very important issue, but it is secondary to salvation. So, in other words, we can disagree with brothers in Christ and sisters in Christ who hold a different view and are still wrestling with theology. We don't have to divide over these issues. But they are very important. And like you said, there's three primary views. Post-millennialism means that they believe Jesus is going to return post or after the church age and he's going to come and usher in his kingdom.

One view, which we'll talk about last, holds that there's a literal future kingdom age, but post-millennialism means Jesus has kind of returned and turned us into His kingdom. We're going to evangelize the world, we're going to make it good enough for Him to come back. I'm kind of paraphrasing there and playing with that a little bit, but that He's going to return post or after we've brought in the kingdom and then He'll return. A millennialism, the "ah", the a there, really means no millennial kingdom. There's no millennium, that it's really just allegory or symbolism of the church age itself. So in Revelation 20, when it says six times that it's a thousand-year period, the future kingdom, they would say, well, that's just a number that represents the entire church age. So they allegorized that a bit.

And then lastly, there's premillennialism, which is what I hold, and that's that Jesus is going to physically literally return pre or before a literal future kingdom age. And the reason I believe that is because I come at scripture with the idea that it is inspired and inerrant and authoritative, and that we can take it at face value. As I mentioned earlier, the prophecies that have been fulfilled were all fulfilled literally down to the very detail. They weren't allegorized. So there's really no reason for us to essentially switch hermeneutics and say, but all the future stuff is allegory. He didn't really mean what He said, even though all the past stuff was fulfilled literally, now it's all allegory. I'm simplifying it a little bit, but that's the general idea. And with that view, you look at scripture, there's literally hundreds of verses, dozens of passages in the Old Testament about a literal future kingdom age with a descendant of David ruling from Jerusalem. It's just way too much and way too specific to allegorize.

Then you get to the New Testament and you have similar statements. You know, Jesus, when He was at the Last Supper, He said, I will not drink this wine with you again until we are in the kingdom together. And He says, in another place, talking to his 12 disciples, you will judge the 12 tribes in the future kingdom. Then even in Acts 2, when He was about to ascend back to heaven, after 40 days of the resurrected Christ walking, talking, and teaching his disciples, the thing that was on their mind was the coming kingdom. They said, Is it at this time that You're going to institute the kingdom? And then Jesus said, It's not for you to know the times or the seasons, and then kind of gave them the Great Commission. In other words, the church age has to happen first. You worry about the Great Commission, I'll worry about the timing of the future kingdom. But at no point did He say, no, it's just an allegory. It's not really a kingdom. Now, one other caveat I want to mention is that, of course, there is the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. There's a grand

overarching kingdom for sure. Every believer is part of God's sovereign kingdom. But as I mentioned, there's just way too many specific verses and passages and large chunks of the Old Testament prophets, particularly and the Psalms that talk about a specific future kingdom run by Jesus in Jerusalem and that governs the whole world.

And we learn in the last three chapters of the book of Revelation that the kingdom comes before eternity. So they're two different things. So the kingdom's kind of the, I call it the front porch or the kickoff party for eternity. It's kind of a foretaste of what eternity is going to be like. And it is admittedly hard to believe when you read some of those details, you're tempted to allegorize it because it's so strange. A new Jerusalem coming down, all kinds of weird stuff. But again, if 80% of the prophecies of the Bible that make up 28% of the Bible were all fulfilled literally and exact, there's no reason for us to switch hermeneutics or Bible study methods and then suddenly say just because this future stuff is strange and out there and weird and hard to imagine, that it's all allegory. So that's a little bit of a lengthy explanation, but hopefully that covers those three.

Host: David Wheaton 16:32

That was good. And it's key to make the distinction that each of the three views have the word millennial in them. And the view of what the millennium is for the premillennial interpretation of scripture is that it's a literal 1,000-year reign by Jesus Christ on earth. Whereas the other two views, the amillennial view and the postmillennial view, is that that is a spiritual reign of Christ. It's not literal. I think for a millennial view, it's actually taking place right now, potentially.

Guest: Todd Hampson 17:03

We're in the kingdom now. Right.

Host: David Wheaton 17:05

So that's a very big distinction between those two views and the premillennial view as far as the literal 1,000-year reign by Christ. Well, thank you for explaining that.

Now there's another word I want you to define, and it's dispensationalism. I'm just going to read an online definition of dispensationalism. Quote, "God deals with humanity through distinct historical dispensations or eras, each with different responsibilities and tests for man. This framework, dispensationalism, divides biblical history and prophecy into periods, with the current church age seen as a parenthesis between God's dealings with Israel." Maybe you could clarify what is dispensationalism and does one have to be dispensational to be premillennial? Because I would definitely understand the Bible to teach premillennialism, but I don't go around calling myself a dispensationalist.

Todd Hampson will answer that question after this break to tell you about some ministry resources and updates. We have links to Todd, his books on prophecy, and the Prophecy Pros podcast that he co-hosts. You can find all that at TheChristianWorldview.org. Back in two minutes, I'm David Wheaton, and you are listening to The Christian Worldview Radio Program.

Host: David Wheaton 20:36

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit The Christian Worldview.org where you can sign up for our weekly email and The Christian Worldview Journal print publication, order resources for adults and children, and support the ministry. Our topic today is part one of understanding current events in the Middle East through the lens of biblical prophecy. Our guest is Todd Hampson of the Prophecy Pros Podcast and author of the Nonprofits Guide Series.

Todd I read a definition of dispensationalism at the end of the last segment that God deals with humanity through distinct historical dispensations or eras, each with different responsibilities and tests. Could you define what dispensationalism is? And does one have to be dispensational to hold the premillennial understanding of biblical prophecy?

Guest: Todd Hampson 21:30

First of all, that definition was a great definition. And actually, within dispensationalism, there's differences of opinion on how many dispensations there are and that kind of thing. The reason I love dispensationalism, it's not something you would go evangelize with or talk to a brand new believer about. But as you study scripture, it's a way to understand how God works in different economies, so to speak, or different administrations. And the key thing is the attack that dispensationalism gets sometimes is that people say it's forced on the text. But it's really not. Paul actually uses the word. It's *oikonomia*. It means economy. And that's where the word dispensation comes from. And Paul references the current dispensation or economy, which is the church age.

So that is technically in dispensational thinking, one of the dispensations is the church age, even though it was concealed in the Old Testament, revealed in the New. Then he references the previous dispensation of the law, and he doesn't call it that a dispensation, but a different time period, the way God worked differently. Then he references a future era where God works, referencing the millennial kingdom or the future kingdom age. So right there you have three. And then if you say, well, okay, well, obviously before the fall, that was a different era. There was no sin, there was no curse. Then after the fall was an era, there you have at least five. And then again, if you had the future kingdom and then the eternal state, the eternal state's really not a dispensation, but that's the final eternal state.

But all that to say, even just with a plain reading of Scripture, without forcing a grid on it or without trying to explain it through using technical terms like dispensationalism, you have to agree that there's different eras that God worked in different ways. So for example, Adam after the fall, all they knew was Genesis 3.15 that a future descendant of the woman was going to crush the head of the serpent. That's the first prophecy in scripture, Genesis 3.15. But he didn't know about the law. And also keep in mind Abraham and the promise came before the law. So that's another economy or dispensation or *oikonomia*. So in other words, just a plain sense reading of Scripture, reading it like we do any other good story from cover to cover or from eternity to eternity, we all have to admit God has worked different ways in different eras of biblical history.

So that's really the simple way that I look at dispensationalism. And then how it's been formalized just helps us grapple with what that means. And as it turns out, each of those eras does end with a failure and a

judgment. Whether it's the curse, the flood, the law, even the church age ends in apostasy, and even the future millennial kingdom ends with a rebellion when Satan is loosed for a small season. So it's there, it's in the text. It's not forced on it.

I would argue that some other systems are forced on the text. Covenant theology, for example, that kind of ignores in large part the specific covenants, the Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, even the Noahic covenant, and simplifies it into the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. And they kind of lump everything in there. And with that, often is that Israel's replaced by the church, that all the specific prophecies and promises to Israel are now conferred on the church. And we're going to talk about that a little bit as well. So again, these are two big debates within Christendom, within Bible-believing Christians who love the Lord and love His word. And it's really, we're all wrestling to do what the word says and understand what it says using its plain sense. And that's what every believer should try to do.

Host: David Wheaton 24:59

And I think what you brought up there at the end between those who interpret Scripture from a more dispensational viewpoint versus covenant viewpoint, that really does affect so many different things, as we're going to talk about in a bit. Those who interpret Scripture according to covenant theology don't see that there is future significance for the Nation of Israel. So you'll see lots of different Christians, many of whom you might respect in their other doctrinal beliefs, won't have that particular viewpoint. It's because of the way they come at Scripture. So this is important, even though it's might be a little complicated to understand, doing this in a radio interview for a three to four minute answer, but it's important to understand the terms and and where they lead. Again, our guest is Todd Hampson. He is the co-host of the Prophecy Pros podcast with Jeff Kinley, also the author of many books, including the Nonprofits Guide Series.

Host: David Wheaton 25:52

The name John Nelson Darby. He lived from the year 1800 to 1882. And again, another online quote about John Nelson Darby. He is widely credited with clearly articulating and helping spread the doctrine of a quote "secret rapture of the church before a future seven-year period of tribulation. In this view, Christ returns for His saints in the rapture before the tribulation, and then later returns with His saints to establish the thousand-year millennial kingdom. This pre-tribulational view, in other words, that Christ comes to rapture living and dead believers from the church age pre-tribulation, before that seven-year period, was largely unknown or uncommon before the nineteenth century," unquote.

Now again, this is an online definition, and this is something that's repeated a lot. That the critique of premillennialism or the even the rapture, that it was John Nelson Darby who influenced C.I. Scofield with the Scofield Bible, or Christian Zionists, or another group who are implicated that they just made up this premillennialism and this rapture, and this wasn't the view of the early church fathers. This wasn't even the view of the reformers at in the time of the Reformation in the 1500s, that this only came about in the last, let's say, couple hundred years. How would you respond to that?

Guest: Todd Hampson 27:30

And I've heard it even worse than that that John Nelson Darby got the idea for the preacher rapture from a demon-possessed girl and all kinds of crazy stuff, and that it was literally invented in 1830, and they call it a rapture doctrine that was invented.

Honestly, nothing could be further from the truth. First of all, it's shown he developed it and formulated it, making it academic so you could teach it around that time, many years before he had the idea for it, before this demonically possessed girl came on the picture. So that argument has been blown out of the water. But the most important thing is when is the doctrine first introduced? Actually, what we find is the early church were known as Kileists (or Chiliasts), which was the Greek word for a thousand. So they believed in a coming thousand-year kingdom, and they also believed in the imminent return of the Lord, that He could come at any moment, which is only possible with a pre-trib rapture. Now, they didn't have it all formalized, and that's where he gets the heat is that it wasn't formalized as a cohesive, well-thought-out doctrine until around that time period.

But what people forget is two things. One, really nothing was until around that time frame, until the Enlightenment period, when we had colleges and seminaries, which were all first biblically based, until the Enlightenment period, nothing was formalized for training. It was all taught through the church. And then also for over a thousand years, the Catholic Church controlled what views got out there. And they did not hold that view. And they tried to, you know, Bibles were chained to pulpits and only in Latin and all kinds of stuff during that thousand years of the medieval period or the Dark Ages. But more and more we're finding early church documents from the first, second, third, and fourth century of people who held a pre-trib view. Now, again, it wasn't super formalized with charts and everything like we have now, but it was there in church. And lastly, I would just say if the truthfulness of a doctrine is predicated on when it became popularized versus if it's in Scripture to begin with, then the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith is an invented doctrine after the Reformation. Because for a thousand years it was all by works, only through the church. And obviously, there were Christians during that time. Doctrine should not be penalized if it was formalized in a certain era, because in church history we see that happen. But what's important is what does Scripture say? And that's a whole nother topic.

It's crystal clear, in my opinion, in Scripture. And then one last thing, we do have some specific comments from early church period fathers like Irenaeus and Polycarp. Irenaeus was discipled by Polycarp, who was discipled by John, who wrote Revelation. And there's some statements from Irenaeus that is clear pre-tribulational and pre-pre millennial. So it's there in early church history, it got sidelined for about a thousand years, and then it was formalized in the time of Darby and following.

Host: David Wheaton 30:28

Let's discuss some of the main tenets of premillennialism that are coming up, as far as biblical prophesy, that the current Jews and the nation of Israel are still God's chosen people, that He chose through whom He would give the law, the prophets, and Christ, and there's future significance for the Jews, even though they are now in unbelief, and even though Scripture calls them enemies of the gospel for your sake, and that one third of them in the future will be saved at some point in the tribulation, and two-thirds will be judged. So not all of them are going to be saved. Another tenet of premillennialism is the seven-year tribulation period

divided into two halves, where a world leader rises called the beast or the antichrist. He makes a treaty with Israel early in that seven years, and then breaks the treaty midway, and then he leads an invasion of Israel, which Christ, when He returns, He returns to defeat the Antichrist and his armies.

Then there's a return of Christ to judge and reign, and then the literal thousand-year reign of Christ, as we've been talking about. One other tenet is the issue of the rapture of church age believers. This would be believers who are either dead or living, who have lived since the time of Pentecost when the church started, fifty days after Christ rose from the dead. I believe that was the beginning of the church age up until whenever Christ comes in the rapture. This would be considered the church age. There are some Scriptures that I believe indicate a rapture of the church, but there aren't many, and they're not, let's say, super explicit. I'm going to read one of them that maybe is the most explicit in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, "For this we say to you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them, the ones who are dead, who are now raised, with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words." That's 1 Thessalonians 4.

And you also have some references in John 14 and 1 Corinthians 15. And then another non-reference, which is, I think, indicative, is actually the church is mentioned early in Revelation, the first chapters 2 and 3, the letters to the messages to the churches from Christ, but then the church disappears for the rest of Revelation. So that's how I would think of it in terms of that's evidence for the rapture, those Scriptures I mentioned in early in Revelation there. This passage I read in 1 Thessalonians 4, that those who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, some might interpret that as being the coming of the Lord. That's the actual return of Christ to the earth to rule and judge and reign. So how would you persuade someone, Todd, that the rapture of church age believers is coming up in God's prophetic timetable?

Guest: Todd Hampson 33:51

When I'm asked a question similar to that, I try to preface it with look at other areas of doctrine to get a cue to how we are to assimilate this or look at the breadth of Scripture to come to a conclusion. Take the Trinity, for example. They had councils over the Trinity, wrestling with Father, Son, Holy Spirit, what their roles were, what their nature was. Was it just one God who puts on different masks, or are they three distinct persons? All of those details that we now kind of take for granted as an essential to the Christian faith were hashed out and fleshed out through little details in Scripture.

If we start with the premise, 2 Timothy 3: 16 and 17, that all Scripture is God breathed and is therefore, I believe, inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient, then we can take His word at face value. We can look at every little detail and they kind of fit together like gears. And as we piece together theology, if we find the gears aren't fitting, then we've got something wrong, not scripture. So we have to keep working our theology until all the gears fit. And with that said, when you look at specific comments about, like the passage you just read in 1 Thessalonians 4. If you look at the details there, that's a return for a rescue. It uses the word *harpazo* or snatching away. We see that He's coming to whisk the bride away. And we're told even there to comfort one

another with this. Then you compare that with the details of His return, and He's coming with the church. If you look at the symbolism, the church is behind Him coming from heaven. And as you mentioned, the church is mentioned, I think it's 21 times in the first three chapters of the book of Revelation. And then as soon as John's called up to heaven and he's in the throne room, we see the 24 elders who represent the church there. And that the word church is never used again, and we don't see them until the return when the church with the wedding garments is behind Christ returning.

So really it comes to just logically looking at the details and making sure all those gears fit together. It is an area of theology that takes some work to put together. But I encourage people to put that work in for themselves and not just accept what they've been taught, especially when you come across some scripture and you're like, well, wait, that gear doesn't fit with the system that I've been taught. Well, then you got to rethink the system and make sure those gears all fit. So I think it's really a broad overview of all the details of scripture that support that view.

But then also there are some concrete things like everywhere in the New Testament where the Lord's return is mentioned, it's mentioned in a term that it is imminent or it can happen at any moment. There's no signs we're told to look for. We're told to be ready always. Well, that can't be true with the return of Christ at the end of the tribulation period. If we believe a literal interpretation of scripture, there has to be an Antichrist who comes on the scene, a global government, 21 judgments, the mid-trib events that you mentioned where he breaks the covenant. I mean, all kinds of things that we can see as signs leading up to His return. And God definitely wouldn't say, or Paul in that case, definitely wouldn't say, encourage one another with these things. You have to go through the entire tribulation, encourage one another with this. It really comes down to logic and what makes most sense when we resist putting our own preference on the text and letting the text speak for itself and then us doing our best, and none of us do it perfectly, but to be honest with the text and make sure that we consider all the details and they all support a particular view.

Host: David Wheaton 37:19

So when we read in the Scripture about the return of Christ, looking forward to the return of Christ, and it's imminent, it means it's near, we don't know when it's going to happen. Those passages would refer to the rapture of the of church age believers and not to actually the return of Christ to judge, to defeat the Antichrist and his enemies, to save Israel, and then to reign in the millennium. Would that be accurate to say that?

Guest: Todd Hampson 37:44

For the most part, there are a couple passages where Jesus, Matthew 24, for example, where He's talking to His Jewish disciples about the end of the tribulation period, and He uses some similar language that with the rapture and the second coming, in some senses, they won't know because the time in the tribulation period where we learn that the time pieces, the sun, the moon, and the stars, will be darkened. People will at the end not even know what day it is. So there's some similar language that you know He's coming soon, but you don't know the day or the hour is the term He uses. And I think that's because the time pieces at that point will be all messed up.

Host: David Wheaton 38:18

Todd Hampson of the Prophecy Pros Podcast and the author of the Non-prophet's Guide Series is our guest. We have links to him at [The Christian Worldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org). More coming up after this two-minute break to tell you about some ministry resources and updates. I'm David Wheaton. You're listening to The Christian Worldview Radio program.

Host: David Wheaton 41:26

Thanks for joining us on The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Today's program and past programs, along with transcripts and short takes, are available at TheChristianWorldview.org. While there, you can also sign up for our weekly email and *The Christian Worldview Journal* print publication, order resources, and support the ministry. Our topic today is part one of understanding current events in the Middle East through the lens of biblical prophecy. And our guest is Todd Hampson of the Prophecy Pros Podcast and author of the Nonprofits Guide Series. As the Lord's timing would have it, Todd, I just happened to be reading in the latter chapters of the Old Testament book of Ezekiel before leading up to our interview this week and you know, about the war of the invasion of Gog and Magog and Ezekiel chapter 38 and 39, and then also Ezekiel's temple that he describes, he's given a vision of uh that's to be the millennial temple and so forth.

So it was just a perfect timing for me to ask you a few questions here. Can you clarify when we read in Ezekiel 38 and 39 about this ruler Gog of Magog? I believe it's a ruler and peoples. You can explain that. Is Gog and Magog referring to the same leader and armies that the beast or antichrist is going to lead into Israel to invade Israel in the latter part of Revelation?

Guest: Todd Hampson 42:20

I believe they're two different battles and two different groups of people. Again, if you compare the details carefully, it's different. In Ezekiel 38 and 39, it says it's in the last days, so it puts it around the time frame of the tribulation period or the day of the Lord, but it's the outer ring, like kind of separated away from Israel. It would be modern day, the three primary nations are Turkey, Iran, and Russia, oddly enough. And then there's some other nations mentioned as well that all of them currently today are Islamic nations of one flavor or the other, except for Russia. 2600 years ago, who would have thought anybody could predict that Russia would team up with these Muslim nations to come against Israel from the north, which would be in Syria, which is kind of everyone's playground at the moment, and that they would be coming to steal something valuable from Israel.

So those are some of the details. They're not coming to attack Jerusalem specifically, they're coming to steal something valuable. And also, we see some additional indicators that this is probably around the time frame of the beginning of the seven-year tribulation period, because it states that Israel, after God defeats the armies of the enemies, will burn their weapons for seven years. Twice it says it's in the last days. And also it says it's at a time when Israel has no bars or gates. It's like they've let their guard completely down, which lines up with when they believe there's this, we know it to be a false Christ, but they believe there's this final ruler that will finally bring them peace. What Trump and many other presidents have tried to do, bring peace to the Middle East. Finally, the future antichrist will be able to do that. And we'll do it so convincingly that Israel just lets her guard down and it's at that time when they're attacked. So it sounds like it's at the very

beginning of the tribulation period. Maybe some people even put it in the second seal judgment of war. It could be in there when they're attacked.

So, but it doesn't say specifically, and there are a few different views, but that's kind of my take based on the time clues that we get there in Ezekiel 38 and 39. And by the way, those chapters follow 36 and 37, which depict Israel coming together as a nation again in unbelief first. you really can't make this stuff up. If you really believe God is the author of the Bible and that prophecy is true, those details should get our attention because that's exactly the setup for Ezekiel 38 and 39 is happening right before our eyes today, I believe.

Host: David Wheaton 44:46

Yeah, I think you're right about that. And I think also another point to the distinction between the Gog and Magog invasion and then the beast or the Antichrist war at Armageddon is that the Gog and Magog invasion are defeated supernaturally, it seems like, almost without Christ coming to literally defeat them. Or that I think that seems to be indicated with when Christ returns, he actually defeats the armies of the Antichrist. So there's another slight distinction there. So anyway, thank you for clarifying that because I know there's some different views on those two particular wars or invasions of Israel. Todd, I want to ask you one more question about biblical prophecy before we get into some current events taking place. In other words, we're trying to flip it today. Instead of getting to the events first and try to fit into prophecy, we're gonna talk about just understanding some prophetic things first and then get into the current events.

I'm gonna read just a couple verses from Revelation chapter 17, starting in verse 3. This is the Apostle John, the vision he's getting in Revelation, and it says, "And he, the angel, carried me [John] away in the Spirit [the Holy Spirit] into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, quote, 'Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth'. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, John writes, I wondered greatly. And the angels said to me, Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns." So, Todd, Scripture tells us this, but I'd like you to clarify this mystery. Who is the woman? Who is Babylon the Great? And let me just add a part C, I guess, to the question is that Israel is largely in unbelief right now, Christ's rejection right now. Could Israel itself in unbelief be part of the beast empire, this mystery Babylon? And then the beast turns against Israel. Could you clarify some of these things that we see in Revelation?

Guest: Todd Hampson 47:24

That is a very complex passage, and obviously there's a lot of different views on that. If we use the reference of scripture for what those symbols mean, we can find for the most part the meanings of those things. So just to unpack a few things, we know from Revelation 13 that the beast is the Antichrist who comes up out of the sea, the symbolism's there, the ten horns are the ten rulers that he oversees, overseeing this global government. And the woman that rides the beast seems to be the false prophet, or more specifically, the religious system that will be there.

So Babylon, I believe it will be a literal rebuilt Babylon because it mentions a city that's destroyed and that kind of thing. And every other instance in Scripture where Babylon is mentioned, it's literally talking about Babylon. And by the way, Satan and the demons are very territorial. They would like nothing better than to reclaim that real estate, so to speak, and to bring it back to life as the headquarters. But it won't be the only headquarters, but they would do that for spiritual reasons, I believe. Also, with that, what complicates it and makes it even more confusing is that the entire world will be a global government with a global political Babylonian system and a religious Babylonian system. It'll be everything evil that Babylonian religions from since the Tower of Babel have stood for will culminate in the end times, in those seven years of tribulation.

The first three and a half years will be kind of like a global anything goes religion, not so much worshipping the Antichrist, but at the midpoint when he breaks the covenant, he even overthrows the religious systems and says, Worship me, worship me as God. That's the attitude of the Antichrist at the midpoint. And there's even a scripture that indicates he'll be empowered by Satan himself. Only two people in scripture have been possessed by Satan Judas and the future Antichrist at the midpoint. So it's a time when the gloves come off, almost like Hitler did when he would use whatever means necessary propaganda guise, the religious system, until he gained all power and then he just did whatever he wanted to do. That's kind of the same connotation here, but on a global scale and on steroids. That is, of all the passages in Revelation, that is a very complex one, and it uses a lot of symbolism. And one thing I remind people is that the symbols in Revelation always point to a concrete reality, even if it takes some work to figure out what that is. Half of the symbols in Revelation were given the meaning in the context of the book of Revelation. The other half are direct allusions to the Old Testament, particularly the prophets.

Revelation 12 is another complex one that takes a little bit of work to figure it out. But I believe we can get those answers from the text. And that's kind of my best take on Mystery Babylon is that it's not just a capital city, but it's a global religious system and a global economic and political system as well.

Host: David Wheaton 50:21

And what about the nation of Israel in unbelief being a part of the beast system that's going on, contributing to it until it turns on them?

Guest: Todd Hampson 50:30

Basically, in Revelation, when you look carefully, you see two groups of people. You see people who turn to the Lord and most are martyred for their faith. Then you have what's known as the earth dwellers or the people of the world, is the term that's used. And if you watch carefully, every time judgments fall, instead of responding to the Lord in repentance, their heart gets harder and harder and harder. Now, those people will all take the mark of the beast, and they will be probably Jews and Gentiles. But I don't think it'll be Jewish people in any large number or in any major way that contribute to that beast system. I think it'll be sporadic, you know, and kind of random.

Because right from the beginning of the tribulation period, you have the two Jewish witnesses and then the 144,000 who are witnessing trying to save the Jewish people, and of course, anybody else who would hear about the gospel as well. Then we even have a gospel angel that literally flies around the entire world telling

every person from every nation, tribe, and tongue. But to answer your question directly, I don't think there'll be any large component or noticeable people in scripture as a Jewish component who are part of this beast system, other than some sporadic people just based on people's personal choice and either accepting God's grace or turning from it as the earth dwellers.

Host: David Wheaton 51:48

Well, we hope today's program gave you a clearer view of biblical prophecy. Todd Hampson will join us again next weekend for part two as we look into current events in the Middle East through the lens of Scripture. In the meantime, visit our website, thelchristianworldview.org, to find links to the Prophecy Prose podcast that Todd co-hosts and resources that Todd has authored. They also have a prophecy prose academy for those wanting to go deeper in their understanding, along with youth events. Let's close with Second Peter chapter one, verse 19 through 21. So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

So until next time, think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm. The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript, or find out what must I do to be saved, go to the ChristianWorldview.org or call toll-free 888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener-supported, nonprofit radio ministry furnished by the Overcomer Foundation. To make a donation, order resources, become a Christian Worldview partner, sign up for our weekly email, or The Christian Worldview Journal print publication, or to contact us, go to TheChristianWorldview.org, call 888 646 2233, or write to box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview.

Recommended Resource: University of Destruction by David Wheaton

The classroom and the dorm room students encounter at secular and yes, Christian colleges lead to as many as 50% of students who profess upon entering college to be born-again Christians not saying the same four years later. So, how can students avoid spiritual shipwreck? In my book, *University of Destruction*, your game plan for spiritual victory on campus, I give a scouting report on the three pillars of peril in college and provide a game plan to be an overcomer. This would be a meaningful gift for the high school or college students in your life. And there's a free study guide available as well. *University of Destruction* is soft cover, 176 pages, and retails for \$17. For a limited time, you can order signed copies for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Bulk discounts also available. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 888-646-2233.

Bi-monthly Print Publication: *The Christian Worldview Journal*

The July-August issue of *The Christian Worldview Journal* commemorates 250 years of America. Ed Vitagliano of American Family Association writes how foundations of our past provide a blueprint for future political and cultural renewal. My column is about the consequences of a nation rebelling against God and the blessings for repentance as described in Psalm chapter 2. There is lots of additional content, including the insert with resources for adults and children. *The Christian Worldview Journal* is a bi-monthly print and digital publication

designed to sharpen your biblical worldview on current events and issues of the faith. The journal is sent to Christian Worldview Partners as a thank you for their support of this radio ministry. To become a Christian Worldview partner or to order an individual issue of the journal, go to The Christian Worldview.org or call 888-646-2233 or write to box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Upcoming Events:

Speaker Series - Sept 12, 2026

You are invited to two events in September. The first is The Christian Worldview Speaker Series event on Saturday, September 12th at Stonehouse Farm in Jordan, Minnesota, with Pastor Travis Allen of Grace Church in Greeley, Colorado, who is a longtime favorite guest on the program and former managing director of Grace To You and a U.S. Navy SEAL. We will discuss a wide range of current events and issues of the faith, along with audience questions. Dinner will be served.

Overcomer Foundation Cup Golf Event - Sept 14, 2026

Two days later, on Monday, September 14th, is the annual Overcomer Foundation Cup golf and dinner event at White Bear Yacht Club near St. Paul, Minnesota. Golfers from near and far experience an enjoyable day of golf, meals, and fellowship, all in support of the Overcomer Foundation, which is the nonprofit organization that directs The Christian Worldview. More details and registration for both events is at The Christian Worldview.org or call us at 888-646-2233.