

## **Christ in Prophecy**

### **Conference 61: Ron Rhodes Defending Jesus' Promise to Return**

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#### **Opening**

**Tim Moore:** Did you know that the promise of the Lord's return is under attack today, both from without and within Christianity? For how a Bible-believing Christian should respond to these attacks, stay tuned.

#### **Part 1**

**Tim Moore:** Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. I'm Tim Moore sitting in for Dr. Reagan. I am the Associate Evangelist for Lamb & Lion Ministries, and I am also Dr. Reagan's designated successor.

We are in the process of showing you excerpts from our annual Bible conference; whose theme was Contending for the Faith.

During the past few weeks Dr. Reagan has already shown you portions of the presentations made by our keynote speaker, attorney Kelly Shackelford, and by three other speakers. If you missed those programs, you can find them posted on our website at lamblion.com.

This week I want to share with you a portion of the presentation that was made by Bible prophecy expert, Dr. Ron Rhodes. He has been our most frequent speaker over the years, and we have always been blessed by his spiritual and scriptural insights. His presentation at this year's conference was titled, "Defending Jesus' Promise to Return." Here now, is Dr. Ron Rhodes.

#### **Portion of Ron Rhodes' Conference Presentation**

**Dr. Rhodes:** There is so much confusion today on biblical prophecy. Did you know that the Second Coming is under attack today? It really is. The Jesus Seminar for example was made up of 200 liberal scholars and they tried to determine which of the sayings of Christ are real, and authentic. And they rejected more than 80% of what the New Testament says Jesus said. They rejected virtually all of Christ's words about His Second Coming. And that's amazing. Everything about the Second Coming is tossed out.

There was a survey of Protestant pastors, and that survey found that 90% of them had no expectation that Christ will return again. Now, what does that mean? That means that 90% of them don't believe the Bible, right? New Agers certainly have their view. New Ager Benjamin Crème IDs him as Maitreya. By the way I debated Benjamin Crème on live radio in Southern California KBRT radio. It can be best described as a controlled brawl. But anyway, this Maitreya character is supposed to take leadership in the New Age, and there is a day of declaration coming in which he is going to manifest himself to humanity, and then the New Age is really going to be exciting.

David Spangler is another New Ager and he says, "That just as the cosmic Christ came upon a human Jesus, so today the cosmic Christ is coming upon all of humanity." And so, the word is being made all flesh. That's the Second Coming according to David Spangler.

I'm sure you've encountered Jehovah's Witnesses, right? Some of you have encountered them on the weekends probably. They teach that Jesus spiritually resurrected from the dead. And they teach that the Second Coming was spiritual as well. And by the way it happened back in 1914.

Now, I know what you're thinking. You're thinking that the Bible says that every eye will see Him, right? So, how come we didn't see it back in 1914? They say that the reason why nobody else saw it is it is only if you have eyes of understanding that you can see it. Now who has eyes of understanding? It is the Watchtower Society that leads the Jehovah's Witnesses. That's why you didn't see it. You don't have eyes of understanding, you see.

This one is really wild. The Aetherius Society is a UFO cult and they teach that Jesus, Buddha and Krishna and other religious world leaders are extraterrestrials aboard UFOs. And they are here to help us enter into the New Age. Their leader is George King and in fact all of the references to the Second Coming are references to George King. Right.

And then there is Baha'u'llah the leader of the Baha'i faith which is an offshoot of the Islamic faith. This particular cult teaches that a new prophet comes every so often, and then teaches humankind what they need to know. And the greatest prophet of all is Baha'u'llah and he fulfills all the prophecies of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

And then there is Reverend Moon, the Lord of the Second Advent. You see according to them Jesus failed in His mission, but Moon came to the rescue and fixed what Jesus got wrong. Now of course I suspect he's had a little bit of a change of heart since he has died and passed on.

More recently moderate Preterism is attacking Bible prophecy in general, but hyper-Preterism is attacking the Second Coming. How many of you are familiar with Preterism? Some of you are, good. I'll tell you what I'm being attacked left and right by these guys. I'll talk more about that in just a minute. But in moderate Preterism the idea is that most of the prophecies in Matthew 24 & 25, as well as Revelation were already fulfilled back in AD 70 when Titus and his Roman warriors overran Jerusalem and destroyed the Jewish temple. Moderate Preterism is represented by writers like R.C. Sproul, and Hank Hannegraaff and Gary DeMar. You see Hank Hannegraaff there, well I co-hosted Bible Answer Man with him for eight years. He wasn't a Preterist back then, but as soon as I left everything went haywire at CRI. And then they also teach that the literal resurrection and the Second Coming are yet future, but those are really the only prophecies that are yet future. All of the other prophecies in Revelation and Matthew 24 & 25 took place back in AD 70. And so, that means that most of the book of Revelation is already passed.

Now, this cartoon or this little drawing here, this picture of a shark chasing a Pre-Trib, I'm not kidding I put that there purposefully because that is exactly their character today. They are vicious. They are vicious in coming after Pre-Tribs, and Dispensationalists, and those of us who believe in Bible prophecy in the future.

Preterist don't want people to read books by David Reagan, or Ron Rhodes, or anyone else speaking at this conference. Let me tell you what I mean. This is a book written by two friends of mine, Mark Hitchcock, and Thomas Ice, "The Truth Behind Left Behind." Here's Preterist Gary DeMar and he wrote a scathing one-star review on Amazon. Now, why do people write a one-star review? Well, to dissuade other people from reading the book you see. Here's another book called, "Russia Rising" by Mark Hitchcock, another scathing one-star review. And he is trying to

dissuade people from reading the book. And then yours truly, "Jesus and the End Times," a scathing one-star review by Preterist Gary DeMar. Now, you ask me how I feel about this? Like that.

And like that. And that. But then I forgive him, and recover my sanctification, and move on.

Now, hyper-Preterism is even worse. Hyper-Preterism says that all the prophecies have been fulfilled including the resurrection and the Second Coming. Now, they make a big deal out of Matthew 24:34 which says this, "Jesus said, 'Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.'" And so, they conclude from this that virtually all Bible prophecy had to have been completed before the death of those people living at the time Jesus spoke. And so, they say that all the prophecies were fulfilled by AD 70. No exceptions. All the prophecies. That means that Christ's Second Coming, the resurrection of the dead, and the Great White Throne Judgment are all past events. No prophecy of Scripture remains unfulfilled. There is no future hope of Christ's return. And the universe in which we now live is the new heavens and the new earth.

Now, just think about that. This world where Israel is surrounded by people that want to blow Israel up. Muslim nations that want to utterly wipe Israel off the map. This world where we have human sex trafficking, where young girls are put into sexual servitude. This world where there are wars all the time. This world where even in our own country we've got unbelievable political problems, I think that you'll all agree. And this world where there is just so much wrong, that how could it possibly be the new earth? If this is the new earth, we truly are without hope. And by the way did you know that eight out of every ten martyrdoms on planet earth are against Christians? This is the new earth? Really? I don't think so. I don't think so.

So, how do we respond? Well it's true that Jesus said, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. But look at the context. Jesus had just spoken of the Tribulation period, and all the different signs of the times. Signs like rumors of wars, and wars, and nations rising against nations, and famines, and false prophets, and false christs, and the defiling of the Jewish temple. Jesus said, "This generation that sees all these signs will not pass away until all these things take place." That's what's going on in context. So, the verse really does not support Preterism. Furthermore, what if the book of Revelation was written far after 70 AD? We know that Revelation is prophetic speaking of the future, but what if Revelation was written in the 90's? Wouldn't that kind of argue against Preterism? Well, indeed that's what the evidence indicts. Revelation was probably written around AD 96.

Irenaeus who lived from 130 to 202 said Revelation was written at the close of Domitian's reign about AD 96. And then Victorinus and Eusebius confirmed the date in the third century. Now given that that's the case I hardly think the book of Revelation was prophesying about something 26 years ago. That does not make good sense. So, Preterism really doesn't work.

Furthermore, many events in the book of Revelation simply never happened in AD 70. A third of mankind was not killed. Nor has every living thing died that was in the sea. I just listed two but I can guarantee you this if you were to go through Revelation 4-18 and make a list of all the stuff that happens during the Tribulation period, you will have a mile long list of stuff that didn't happen in AD 70. Now what Preterists have to do is they have to allegorize. They have to allegorize all of these plain statements of Scripture so that nothing in prophecy means what it says. The thing of it is that prophetic statements are crystal clear. Would you agree? When you look at some of these prophetic statement about the Second Coming it's hard to confuse. Let me give you some examples. Jesus' coming will be preceded by signs of the times. You know signs like wars, and rumors of wars, and nations rising against nations and all these kinds of things. It's hard to misread that. That seems pretty clear to me. That's a straightforward

statement of prophetic truth. There is no allegory that is necessary there. And also, Jesus's coming will be preceded by mocking. How can you confuse that? It says in the last time there will be scoffers, where is the promise of His Coming? You see that's a straightforward statement of prophetic truth. Also, Scripture's real clear that the Second Coming happens after the Tribulation. In fact, Matthew 24:29 says immediately after the Tribulation of those days the Son of Man will come in His glory. How can you confuse that? It is a very straightforward statement of prophetic fact.

It will be a personal coming. Acts 1:11 says, "This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come again." This Jesus. Not some kind of a spiritual thing where Jerusalem gets destroyed. But the very same Jesus that ascended into heaven is coming again. The rest of Acts 1:11 says this, "Jesus will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven." And He went into heaven physically, and visibly. This passage does not say, "Jesus will come in a different way by overrunning Jerusalem." Doesn't say that. It says, "Jesus will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven, physically and visually." To me this destroys the Preterist position.

And gloriously Christ will come to rescue the Jewish remnant. I wish I could preach on this thing alone. You see Paul in Romans 9-11 said that God wasn't finished with the Jewish people yet. He promised that. And what we read in the Old Testament prophets, and the New Testament prophets in the book of Revelation is that right at the end of the Tribulation the Jewish remnant recognizes their Messiah as Jesus Christ. And it is at that time that the Antichrist and his forces are attacking the Jewish remnant. And this newly saved Jewish remnant calls to their newfound Savior, Yeshua, the Messiah, Jesus Christ to come and rescue them. And at that point Jesus Christ comes and He slays the forces of Antichrist, and the remnant is saved.

He slays the forces of Antichrist by the sword of His mouth. You know what I think that means? I think that when Jesus Christ instantly comes down to the earth He will simply say, "Drop dead," and they're all gone. Just like that. Jesus speaks the word and they're dead. This remnant will be saved, they will enter into the Millennial Kingdom where Christ will rule for 1,000 years. And then all the covenant promises that are crystal clear from the Old Testament will be fulfilled to the Jewish people, including the throne promises in the Davidic Covenant, 2 Samuel 7, and the land promises in the Abrahamic Covenant, Genesis 12 & 15. Now, if I had the time, I'd go into this in detail because it is so exciting. But the reality is that each of these statements is a straightforward statement of prophetic truth and cannot be confused. But what Preterist do is that they force a meaning into the text by allegory. They are putting an unbiblical spin on the Second Coming.

Now, I would like to give you an illustration if I may. I want each of you in this room to imagine me as a New Age health guru. Can you do that?

Can you imagine an aura around me? Just imagine me with lights shining out from within. I am a New Age health guru and I'm being interviewed on the Oprah Winfrey show. So, Oprah asks me, "Well, Dr. Rhodes what about cardiovascular exercise? Is it true that will prolong life?" And then I say as a New Age health guru, "You know Oprah, a lot of people are confused about this. Our latest findings are that each one of us has a predetermined number of heartbeats, and we can't go beyond that number of heartbeats. It's a predetermined number and you can't have any more heartbeats than that. Why would you want to use them up real quick through cardiovascular exercise?"

"And listen Oprah, if you want to live long take a nap and live a sedentary lifestyle.

And then she says, "Well, that sounds great! That's awesome! What about fried chicken? Can I eat fried chicken?" And then as a New Age health guru I say to her, "You know a lot of people are confused about this too. Listen Oprah what is chicken fried in? Vegetable oil. By eating fried chicken you're ingesting massive amounts of vegetables into your body. So, the more fried chicken you eat, the better." I see some of the men taking notes out there.

And then she says, "I'm liking this interview. You know what about red meats? Do I need to cut down on red meats like steaks and stuff like that?" And then as a New Age health guru I say again, "You know a lot of people are confused about this. Oprah just think about it, what is it that cows eat? Grass. Whenever you eat those big, juicy steaks you're ingesting all the tremendously healthful nutrients that come from grass. So, the more steak you eat the better, you see."

It's the first time I've gotten amens on this illustration. That's good. Now, what have I done? I've used the same words that you do. I've given you a whole new interpretation. I've given you a different spin on things. And I've provided reasons why I must be right. The problem is folks, I'm sorry men, I'm wrong. I've distorted the truth. And it is the same type of thing that we see happening with the Second Coming today. You see a lot of people are using the same words we do to describe the Second Coming. But you know they're distorting the truth. They are putting a different spin on it. And I always insist to people that we must be absolutely biblical in our approach, and I will not back down. We must be biblical when we approach prophecy.

I often talk about the little second grade girl who came home from Sunday school one day and she was so excited about what she had learned. And she just kept talking about it and talking about it. So finally, Dad said to her, "Well, what is it that you learned in Sunday school that you are so excited about?" And she said, "Oh, Dad it's just so amazing because you see God created Adam first. And then God saw that it was not good for Adam to be alone, so, God took out his brain and made a woman out of it."

And all the women said.

**Women in Audience:** Amen.

**Dr. Rhodes:** And all the men said.

**Men in Audience:** Boo.

**Dr. Rhodes:** That's not biblical. That's in 2 Illusions 3.

Now listen. The Second Coming is under siege today. And I am being personally attacked left and right. But like I said my friends I'm not going to back down. It's not going to slow me down. I'm going to keep on going. That's me on the right by the way. The Pre-Trib Energizer Bunny. I will keep on teaching the truth from the Bible. Did you know that the Old Testament has over 23,200 verses, and out of those over 6,600 are prophetic? That means that 28.5% of the Old Testament is prophetic in nature. The New Testament has over 7,900 verses, and out of these 1,700 are prophetic. That means that 21.5% of the New Testament is prophecy. You put all of that all together in a big salad bowl and mix it up and what you come out with is 27% of the Bible is prophecy. That is too much to ignore.

Who would study American History and leave out 27% of the textbook? Somebody said the schools. You may have a point. Who would go to medical school and call himself, or herself a doctor yet fail to understand how 27% of the body functions? Well, who would study the Bible and leave out 27%? Can you imagine reading in Psalm 119, "I have stored up your Word, except 27% of it, in my heart that I might not sin against you?" You're never going to read that

because God wants you to understand all of His Word, including prophecy. Too many Christians are leaving it out of the equation today. They really are.

Did you know that 1 out of every 30 verses in the New Testament refers to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? Twenty-three of the twenty-seven New Testament books specifically mention the Lords' coming. And Jesus Himself refers to His Second Coming at least 21 times. Are you starting to pick up on what I am talking about here, friends? The Second Coming is a big deal in Scripture, a very, very big deal. Do not minimize what Scripture emphasizes. Do not do it.

In what follows I will offer four brief defenses of Jesus' Promise to return again. My original message was 12 brief responses but that timed out to about four hours. And David Reagan won't let me speak for four hours. And besides my voice wouldn't hold up anyway. And so, this is four of the very most meaningful brief defenses on the Second Coming.

Number one, God knows the future, and His book the Bible is true and trustworthy. God knows the future, and His book the Bible is true and trustworthy. You know after I became a Christian, I gravitated towards reading prophecy books. Now back when I was young, back in the days of Moses, no it was right after the Flood actually. Yeah. When I was young a lot of books were kind of sensationalistic in Bible prophecy. We still have those today. There are still some sensationalistic type books out there. I gravitated towards the books written by the Dallas Theological Seminary faculty. Men like John Walvoord, and J. Dwight Pentecost, what a great name, and Charles Ryrie, men like this. And after studying prophecy for about a year I came to this conclusion, actually four conclusions. Number one: Only the One True God knows the future. Number two: Only the Bible contains the words of the One True God, therefore three: Only the Bible is God's Word. You might try to argue the Book of Mormon, or the Hindu Vedas, or the Muslim Qur'an maybe those have some prophecy. Well, they really don't. Not true prophecy. There was one prophecy in the Qur'an that said something like "Mohammad's army of 10,000 men will overcome the neighboring community of 500 people." How is that a prophecy? You know that is kind of a given, right? But the Bible prophecies things hundreds, and even thousands of years in advance. Therefore, only the Bible is God's Word.

And because prophecy is such a large part of God's Word it must be a central focus of study. Now, little did I know when I was reading those books that I would end up attending Dallas Seminary studying under the very professors whose books I had already read. At the top of the screen you see John Walvoord who was my primary mentor in prophecy. And off to the side you see J. Dwight Pentecost who was my Exposition teacher, taught me all about Daniel and Revelation and all the prophetic books. And then Charles Ryrie taught Theology. And so, I count it joy to receive my education from these men because they stood for the truth, and they wouldn't back down even though they were being attacked regularly.

For the purposes of my presentation here's what I want you to remember about this first point: Bible prophecy has a powerful apologetics value.

## **Closing**

**Tim Moore:** Dr. Ron Rhodes' entire presentation is included in our conference video album along with the presentations of the other five conference speakers. In a moment, our announcer will tell you how you can get a copy of that album.

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You can also use our website to do in-depth research on any topic related to Bible prophecy. We have a high-speed search engine and you can use to find articles and videos. And our Internet Evangelist, Nathan Jones, is available to answer your questions. Check it out. I think you will be blessed.

Next week, we will be featuring excerpts from the presentations of two more of our conference speakers.

Well, folks, that's our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you. Until next week, the Lord willing, this is Tim Moore speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries, saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our Redemption is drawing near."

**End of Program**