

Do You Have a "One Day Nearer" Mindset? Part 2

Saturday, December 09, 2023 0:800 AM CT• 54:00

Host: David Wheaton 00:08

Do You Have a One Day Nearer Mindset? Today is Part Two of that topic, right here 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 listener supported radio ministry. You can connect with us by visiting our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, calling toll free 1-888-646-2233 or by writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Last week in Part One of our two part series on biblical prophecy, Steve Miller joined us to discuss his 365 Day devotional book *One Day Nearer: Daily Devotions in Anticipation of Jesus' Glorious Return*. He pointed out that the motivation to understand biblical prophecy goes beyond knowing the what and when about the future, but that it should impel believers to a deeper love for God and His awesome plan and victory when his Son returns in glory to judge and reign. Steve bolstered our faith by pointing to several Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in the New Testament, such as Christ being born of a virgin woman in the town of Bethlehem.

He also explained the three main end times views: premillennialism, amillennialism, and post-millennialism. This weekend in part two, Steve will answer some of the intriguing questions that believers have pondered over the years, such as, when does the prophesied war of Gog and Magog take place and who is involved (i.e. Ezekiel 38 and 39)? Or who is "Babylon the Great" in Revelation 17? Where does America fit in to end times prophecy? Steve's devotional, *One Day Nearer*, is our new featured resource available for a donation of any amount to the Christian Worldview. Just in case you didn't hear part one, Steve has been deaf for most of his life, but he is a man who listens very closely to what God has revealed in Scripture. He mentioned last week that about 25% of the Bible is prophecy, describing what will take place in the future. So why is it important to understand prophecy?

I think the answer to that is because God so prominently included prophecy in Scripture

1. To inform us and give us peace and comfort in difficult times.
2. To compel us to love Christ and to live in light of His return, which gives us purpose and striving for holiness.
3. To give us motivation for evangelism and to disciple other believers.
4. To be involved in our churches.
5. To redeem the time for eternal purposes.

That's why it's important to understand biblical prophecy. That is the right response to biblical prophecy. But there's also some wrong responses to it as well. Some Christians obsess over it where the majority of their Christian life is all about prophecy to the ignoring of other key doctrines such as justification by faith, or the

Great Commission, to evangelize, to disciple younger believers in the faith or being a part of a local church. Another wrong response though is this. That Christians can often be lazy about biblical prophecy. Well, it's too difficult to understand. It's hard to pinpoint the what and the when, or they conclude that prophecy is divisive, so they just don't try, they back off. They say, I'm not pre-mil, or amil, or post-mil. I'm pan-mil, because it will all pan out in the end. I know they're trying to be humorous, but I think the pan mill position is a lazy position and not a good one or a right one. This will affect how you live your life. You won't be living in light of Christ's imminent return. Now speaking of the church, does your pastor ever preach passages on biblical prophecy? Do you know what he believes with regard to the end times? Does he ever talk about Israel or the Jews? It's missing the mark if a pastor doesn't preach or take a position on 25% of the Bible. He should be able to articulate and defend a position from Scripture. As we mentioned last week, The Christian Worldview takes a pre millennial view of the end times. Could we be misinterpreting scripture with regard to the end times? After all, there is some shrouding and mysteries with regard to prophecy. It's possible. I don't think we are, but it's certainly possible. That's why I don't put eschatology in the list of first tier doctrines of the faith, like the doctrine of justification by God's grace, through faith.

If you're wrong on that, the gospel is corrupted. You're teaching "another gospel", or another doctrine of God as a Trinitarian God, or the virgin birth of Christ, the divinity and sinlessness of Christ, penal substitutionary atonement of Christ and His resurrection. These are first tier doctrines which, if you don't get those right, you are clearly corrupting who God is and how he saved sinners. Even the return of Christ I think is a first tier doctrine. All the various end times positions believe in the return of Christ. The inspiration of Scripture is another first tier doctrine. You must believe that scripture is as it claims to be, God breathed, inerrant, and infallible. First tier doctrine.

So prophecy is very important, and it will impact how you think and live. But it's not a doctrine to separate from another Christian who holds a different position, as long as they have their first tiered doctrines correct. So for example, you've probably watched John MacArthur over the years and his friendship with RC Sproul. They were completely united on justification by grace, through faith, although had very different views of prophecy. What were those different views of prophecy?

To review briefly from last week, the pre millennial position holds that Christ will return to judge non believers, save Israel, and rule with believers for a literal 1000 years. Now, premillennialists differ on the timing of the rapture when Christ comes in the air and snatches up believers off the Earth. Some believe that takes place at the beginning of the seven year tribulation, some during the middle and some at the end, that's called post trib.

Here are some notable Christians of history who are pre millennial in their eschatology. Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Charles Spurgeon, James Montgomery Boice, John Piper, Albert Mohler, Francis Schaeffer, Carl Henry, D.A. Carson, John MacArthur, David Jeremiah, Chuck Swindoll, Ray Comfort, Tim LaHaye, Charles Ryrie, Erwin Lutzer, and Charles Stanley. Here's Greg Laurie, explaining in about 60 seconds, what the premillennial position is.

Audio Sound Bite: Greg Laurie 08:00

Sometimes people get confused about the rapture and the second coming. Let me simplify.

- In the rapture of the church, well, He's coming for the church.
- In the second coming, He's returning with the church.
- In the rapture, He comes as a thief in the night.
- In the second coming, every eye will see Him.
- In the rapture, He comes before judgment.
- In the second coming, He returns with judgment.
- The second coming will happen at the end of the Great Tribulation period.
- The rapture, that can happen at any moment.
- The Bible says that in a moment and the twinkling of an eye we will be caught up to meet the Lord and will be changed. That can happen today or tomorrow. So be ready for the Lord's return. The Bible says, When you see these things begin to happen, look up, for your redemption is drawing near.

Host: David Wheaton 08:51

Now the amillennial position could be described this way. We're in a spiritual millennium and actually tribulation right now that's called the church age and Christ will return at some point, at which point that will be the end and the new heavens and new earth will be created by God. Israel and the Jews are not significant because the church is made up of Jews and Gentiles. Some notable amillennialists, and by the way, I tried to collect this list. I hope it's accurate. Please correct me if I'm wrong in any of these people I'm naming in the various categories.

The list of amillennialists is Agustin, Origin, Eusebius, most of the Reformers including Luther, Calvin and Knox, the Lutheran denomination, Presbyterians are typically amillennial, RC Sproul was amillennial. He was called a partial preterist, believing that some prophecy was fulfilled in A.D. 70 at the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, but that more will be fulfilled in the future. Alistair Begg I believe is an amillennialist as is Martyn Lloyd Jones. Here's a short clip of a pastor from Pleasant Ridge Church of Christ explaining what amillennialism is.

Audio Sound Bite: A pastor from Pleasant Ridge Church of Christ 10:01

Jesus is reigning over the messianic kingdom right now, in the church age. The 1000 year reign of revelation 20 is a symbolic representation of the full duration of the church age.

The Tribulation is also going on right now. It's an apocalyptic name for all the trials and hardships that the church must live through and triumph over until Jesus comes again. We can safely conclude that the second coming of Christ marks the end of Christ's Messianic reign, not the beginning of it. It marks the end of the natural creation and the beginning of the new heaven and the new earth.

Host: David Wheaton 10:44

And finally, post millennialism. Post millenniums believe that we're in a spiritual millennium right now, the church age, and the church will eventually take dominion over the world and then Christ will return. Israel and

the Jews are not significant, again, like amillennialists. This is sometimes called Theonomy or reconstructionism. Rousas Rushdoony was a well known post-millennialist. Iain Murray, the great Scottish writer, John Owen, the Puritan, Jonathan Edwards (the Puritans in general were postmillennial), Charles Hodge, James White of Alpha and Omega Ministries, and Doug Wilson is a popular post millennialist. Here's RC Sproul, who's an amillennialist explaining what a post millennialist is, because he's so good at explaining most everything.

Audio Sound Bite: RC Sproul 11:35

The post millennial position believes that the church again is Israel, they share that idea with the a-mil position. The post-mil position of all of the positions is the one most optimistic with respect for the church's influence on society, that the influence of the church on society will be transforming. The 1000 year reign of Christ has not yet begun. But it will be ushered in and be manifesting a major victory of the influence of Christianity on the world.

Host: David Wheaton 12:15

So that's a summary of the three major views with particular Christian leaders who adhere to the particular views. Again, The Christian Worldview is pre millennial, as is our guest today, Steve Miller. Let's get to part two with him. Steve, thanks again for coming on the program. I'm going to read the three major passages that refer to this event, the rapture in First Thessalonians 4. You've already mentioned this, but I'll read the fuller passage. *But we do not want you to be uninformed brothers, about those who are asleep, [That's what you were saying. They were worried about what happens to their family and friends who have died] so that you will not grieve as to the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, [In other words, if you're a believer in Christ, a true authentic believer, you've been born again] even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 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 proceed 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 in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. [So we shall always be with the Lord].* Then he finishes that paragraph by saying, *Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

Boy, is that of immense comfort if you're a believer or have a family member or friend who who dies as a believer. You can be comforted in knowing where they're going to end up. They're going to be raptured up when Christ returns. That specific passage, Steve, has nothing about Christ returning all the way to earth as at the second coming, but he's in the air. *We're going to be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.* So that's one primary passage about the rapture. The second one comes from First Corinthians 15. I'll just read a couple verses here. This is a an amazing chapter, but just two verses of First Corinthians 15: 51-52. *Behold! [Paul writes to the Corinthian church] I tell you a mystery. [So here's something that hasn't been revealed previously]. We will not all sleep, [or that means we'll not all die, physically die] but we will all be changed, [This is for believers] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*

Another reference to the raptured. Distinct from the return of Christ to judge and to reign at the end of the tribulation. One more, John 14. *Do not let your heart be troubled. [Christ writes] Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you, for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, in where I am, there you may be also.*

Again, there's a distinction to be made here that Christ isn't in this passage coming to judge the world, to save the nation of Israel, to end the tribulation then to reign. He's coming to save his own. So another reference to the rapture. And finally, there's a reference to a rapture by the absence of the church after Revelation chapter three. The message of the church is in Revelation 2 and 3. All of a sudden, we don't hear from the church again for the rest of the book of Revelation. Where did the church go? Well, those who believe in a pre tribulation rapture believe that Christ came to rapture up dead and alive believers from the church age.

That was a lot of context there, but I just wanted to state what Scripture says about that. But even within that view of the rapture, there's a couple views of the rapture, Steve. So why do you understand the Bible to teach that the rapture takes place at the beginning of this seven year time of tribulation on the earth, and not like other Christians who believe that the rapture takes place partway through at some point during the tribulation, before the most wrathful part of the tribulation? It is sometimes called the pre wrath rapture view.

Guest: Steve Miller 16:45

I'll start by saying that every one of the passages read, what's so wonderful about them, David, is that they are so infused with hope. What's interesting is that every single one of them talks about what will happen to a believer. We don't see unbelievers enter the picture at all in those scripture passages. Where as in passages about the second coming, we do see unbelievers enter the picture, such as in Revelation 19, where Christ returns and it says that He will destroy His enemy. In all the passages that you just quoted, nowhere do we see unbelievers in the picture, which is one very powerful clue that the rapture is a different event than the second coming. That the rapture is an event in which we are taken up to heaven, where as Christ's return is an event where He comes down to earth. But some passages that are very helpful for us as we consider when the rapture takes place, first, I'll start by saying, it's helpful to remember what the purpose of the Tribulation is.

The purpose of the Tribulation is to punish the earth, to chastise people, and for God to pour out His wrath on sinful people who have rejected Him. That's the purpose of the Tribulation. Another purpose of the Tribulation is to purge and purify Israel. Jeremiah 30:7 specifically calls the Tribulation a time of Jacob's trouble. Jacob was the father of the 12 tribes of Israel. So for the Tribulation to be the time of Jacob's trouble means it will be a time of trouble for Israel, but it's a time of trouble that will lead many Jewish people eventually becoming saved. Going back to passages that help to affirm that the rapture is before the tribulation, we can look at First Thessalonians 1:10 where Jesus says, *I will deliver you from the wrath to come.* In First Thessalonians 5:9-10 we read that God did not appoint us to wrath. We're not appointed to wrath, why? Because of what Christ did at the cross. Christ took God's wrath upon Himself on the cross. So there is no reason for Christians to have to be exposed to God's wrath. In Romans 8:1 it says that *there is no*

condemnation for those who are in Christ. If the purpose of the Tribulation is for God to pour out His wrath on the wicked, there's no reason for the church to be there.

As you pointed out, in the book of Revelation, when we read about the Tribulation, nowhere do we see any mention of the church, so we're not appointed to wrath. Then in Revelation 3:10, which is clearly a passage about the Tribulation He said, *I will keep you from the hour of trial, which shall come upon the whole world.* When will there be an hour trial that affects the entire world? Well, that's the Tribulation. And what does this passage say? I will keep you from that hour. Now in order to be cut from the tribulation, it makes sense that we have to be removed before the tribulation. We do see examples of scripture of God protecting His people from His wrath. For example, in Egypt in ancient Egypt, when God poured out the 10 plagues, the Israelites were protected from those plagues. They didn't suffer the consequences of those plagues, those plagues were distinctly met for the Egyptians. Then when God sent the worldwide flood, He protected Noah and his family in the ark. The Ark protected them from the wrath of God. If God has a past history of protecting His children from His wrath, it makes sense that we would be raptured before the tribulation. Now, why before the tribulation and not during the tribulation? I think a key answer to that would be that we get every indication that the Tribulation will begin at the beginning of the seven year time period in which it's supposed to happen.

We see Christ take the scroll that has seven seals on it. When the first seal is opened, the Antichrist comes and establishes a false peace on earth. But as soon as the second seal is broken, war breaks out all over the earth. That's supposed to happen near the beginning of the tribulation. So as soon as the second seal, we already see war taking place, we already see God pouring out His wrath on the earth. If we're not supposed to suffer His wrath, then it makes the most sense that we will be removed before the tribulation begins, rather than partway through it.

Host: David Wheaton 21:05

That was very thoughtfully answered, Steve, with plenty of scripture references as well. Steve Miller is our guest today here on the program. He is the author of *One Day Nearer*, a 365 page devotional that will be great to supplement your Bible reading in this coming year. It's softcover, 384 pages, retails for \$19.99, and for a limited time, you can get it for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. You can get in contact with us the usual ways, which will be given during this break. You are listening to The Christian Worldview Radio Program, I'm David Wheaton.

Featured Resource: The War on Men 21:43

We've largely lost the honor and the nobility and the glory of biblical manhood. And so many young men are not trained to be a leader, a protector and a provider in a Christ like way. That then, creates the actual end product of young men who don't know how to be a man. So we've largely lost the script for what being a biblical man is.

That was Owen Strachan, author of the excellent book, *The War on Men*. This is a book for the entire family to read, understand, and then pursue what biblical manhood is. *The War on Men* is hardcover, 256 pages and

retails for \$29.99. For a limited time, you can get a copy for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. To order, go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Featured Children's Resources 22:48

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Host: David Wheaton 23:52

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children, and support the ministry. We are discussing biblical prophecy today. Our guest is Steve Miller, author of the book, *One Day Nearer*. I'd like to ask you just a few more questions on various issues that you hear brought up, whether from those who focus on prophecy and so forth. One of them is this invasion that we read about in Ezekiel 38 and 39. About this invasion of Gog, who's a ruler of Magog. That invasion of Israel. What is that? When does it occur and who is involved in that?

Guest: Steve Miller 24:49

What's key about figuring out the timing of this invasion is what we read at the very beginning of Ezekiel 38. Looking at verses 2 through 6 we see the names of the country that are supposed to be involved in this invasion. As we look at the names, we have to keep in mind that these are the ancient place names. But with careful research, we can pretty well figure out what the modern equivalents of the invasions are. That includes Russia, Iran, Turkey, Sudan, some of the former republics of the Soviet Union, northern Afghanistan, and a few other places. If we look back in history, we see that the nations that are listed in Ezekiel 38, have never formed a military coalition before to attack Israel, which means that this prophecy has not been fulfilled yet. It means that it's still in the future.

As we look at what's happening now, between these countries, what's very interesting is that we see them forming relationships with one another. For the first time in history, these countries are working together over the past couple of decades. Some of them have already been working together for the last 20, 25, 30 years. Others are just initiating their relationships with one another.

We'll start with Russia. Russia has a very strong relationship with Iran. The two of them have strong trade relations. The two of them have strong military ties. They do military exercises together. Iran has been helping Russia with his war against Ukraine. Russia has been helping to sell weapons to Iran. In fact, Russia is now selling fighter jets to Iran. Another relationship that we see developing that's still in its very early stages, is the relationship between Iran and Turkey. Iran and Turkey historically have not been very friendly to each other. In fact, they were on opposite sides of the civil war in Syria, which meant in a sense that they were enemies. They were fighting against each other, on the ground there in Syria. But last summer, the foreign ministers of Iran and Turkey said, We need to set aside our differences.

The Syrian civil war has gone on for too long. We need to help resolve this. So the foreign ministers of Iran and Turkey began to meet to talk about how they could set aside their differences. Now we're at the point where, right at this very time, the President of Iran is supposed to visit Turkey, and talk about how they can build their relations with one another. In Ezekiel 38, we see that Turkey and Iran are both supposed to be part of this coalition. And they're slowly forming relationships with one another. What's especially interesting about this is that Iran is becoming a nuclear power in the Middle East and Turkey had the largest military of all the nations in the Middle East. We're seeing two very powerful militaries that could potentially come together to become part of this coalition for the war against Israel, but backing up to what we were saying about the timing, we'll see the nations form relationships together.

This is very prophetically significant as we see things happening, discussions, meetings, military exercises between Russia and Iran, and we see Iran building a relationship with Turkey and we see Russia now working to build a naval port in Sudan, because Russia wants its ships to be able to have access to the Red Sea. All of this is coming to life before us right now, so we know that somewhere in the future, that invasion will happen. We see these countries coming together, we see an important prophecy that has to be fulfilled someday and the end times being fulfilled now as we see these nations building relationships with one another.

Host: David Wheaton 28:34

Do you see that as toward the end of the tribulation, and this is the invasion that Christ comes back to stop and defeat as they come against Israel? Or do you see it before the tribulation?

Guest: Steve Miller 28:46

Well, there's a lot of discussion about that. There are different people who hold to different views on that. I think what makes the most sense, is for it to happen near the beginning of the tribulation. Here are a couple of reasons. We know from Daniel 9:27, from Matthew 24:15, and from 2 Thessalonians: 2, that someday there is going to be a temple again on the temple mount in Israel. At the midpoint of the tribulation, the Antichrist will desecrate that temple. He will enter it, he will desecrate it, and he will declare himself to be God.

That temple can't be built on the temple mount right now, because the Dome of the Rock is in place. And there are several other important Muslim structures on the Temple Mount. If the war of Ezekial 38 takes place near the beginning of the tribulation and we go deep into Ezekiel 38, we find out how that war ends. It's not Israel that conquered his enemies. It's not people who come to Israel's side to conquer the enemy, it is God

Himself who will destroy the enemy. He will do a miracle. He will save Israel. And God says I will do this so that people will know I am God. And if God wipes out all those nations militaries, the community invasion, He will have wiped out a lot of Muslim military powers at the time. And it's very possible that what could happen is that the Muslim world could suffer such a huge setback, that either the Antichrist is able to stand in and say, look, I can give the temple mount to you now, let's sign a peace treaty for seven years, where I will watch over you and take care of you and make sure that an invasion like this never happens again. That would give Israel motivation to sign a peace treaty. The fact that there was a major invasion, and we know that the peace treaty is supposed to be signed at the beginning of the tribulation, those puzzle pieces fit together pretty well.

Israel will need to have a motivation for signing the peace treaty and the motivation would most likely come after there's been that invasion from the north. So for those reasons, I think it makes sense that it would be at the beginning of the tribulation. It would help free up the Temple Mount. Muslim powers will have been diminished greatly, which will help the Antichrist in turn to become more powerful on a global scale, and offer a peace treaty to Israel that Israel is motivated to sign. Israel is able to rebuild their temple, which will then prepare the temple to be in place for the Antichrist desecration.

Host: David Wheaton 31:15

Just a quick follow up on that with the rebuilding of the temple, Steve. Is it possible that the temple could be built side by side to the Al-Aqsa Mosque that's there right now? And that there wouldn't be a replacement of the mosque, but the Jewish temple will be just built right next door?

Guest: Steve Miller 31:33

There is a lot of speculation about that. There are people who propose that as a possible solution, but I would say, no. Here are a couple of reasons why. All we have to do is go back to this last spring and last summer when there was a lot of controversy on the Temple Mount and the Palestinians and the Muslim world became very upset, merely because Israelis were walking on the Temple Mount. They accused Israelis of desecrating Muslim holy territory, simply because Israelis were walking on the Temple Mount.

The Temple Mount now is currently in the hands of Jordanian authorities who watch over it. Tourists are allowed to visit it. Israelis can go on it, but there are severe restrictions on where they're able to go, what they're able to do on the Temple Mount because the Temple Mount is viewed as a shrine, a major Muslim shrine. It's the third holiest shrine to the Muslim world. There has been so much controversy about Israelis even being on the Temple Mount.

Clashes, not wars, but clashes have been started where Palestinians throw stones at the Israelis simply for wanting to set foot on the Temple Mount. Being that the Temple Mount is considered the third holiest location in Islam, I can't see a scenario where Islam would be willing to share the temple mount with a Jewish temple. When we look at what's happening now in Gaza with Hamas, and we see how the Palestinians are dedicated to eradicating Israel, there is a fierce hatred for Israel. So again, we're just seeing in real time right now, what Hamas did on October 7. Actions speak louder than words. The actions that Hamas committed on

October 7, are the actions that Palestinians would carry out against Israel if they had the opportunity. This gives us a very clear sense of No, the Muslim world is not going to be interested in a compromise and having a temple next to the Dome of the Rock.

Host: David Wheaton 33:36

Steve Miller is our guest today on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. We are talking about biblical prophecy in light of his 365 Day devotional entitled, *One Day Nearer* is softcover. 384 pages, and retails for \$19.99. You can order it for a limited time for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. This would be an excellent resource, not as a substitute for Bible reading, but as a supplement to it. You can get in contact with us the usual ways, and all of our contact information is given during this upcoming break. You are listening to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. What is The Christian Worldview Radio Program really about?

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Featured Resource: Knowing the Spirit 35:17

When Jesus is laying out the Holy Spirit's job description in John 16, and He says, "it's to your advantage that I go," think about that for just a second. Jesus, the Christ, tells His disciples, it's actually advantageous that I go. They are thinking, What? We don't want you to go. Who could be better for us? What does He then explain?

That was Pastor Costi Hinn who was raised in and then saved from the distortions of the Holy Spirit that are so prevalent today. Costi's new book, *Knowing the Spirit: Who He Is, What He Does, and How He Can Transform Your Christian Life*, graciously clarifies truth from error and is available for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. To order this 261 page, softcover book that retails for \$19.99, go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233, or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Host: David Wheaton 36:24

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry. We are discussing biblical prophecy today. Our guest is Steve Miller, author of the book, *One Day Nearer*.

A couple more questions for you, Steve, that I've been curious about as I read scripture. This one comes from the book of Revelation with regards to who is Babylon the Great that is destroyed? Revelation 17. *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me saying, "Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with a wine of her immorality. And he carried me away in the 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: "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, I wondered greatly. And the angel 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.*

Steve, explain this mystery of this woman of Babylon the Great. Is that a particular city like ancient Babylon, or does that represent a nation or nations? And then, in light of that, how do you surmise that America, who has been the most or one of the most dominant empires economically, militarily, culturally in history, how do you surmise that America may be involved in the end times? Because I don't see America mentioned specifically in Scripture.

Guest: Steve Miller 38:50

There's a lot of debate about what Babylon actually refers to. Is it a city? Is it a nation? Is it a multiple nation? There are people who say that, well it referred to the Antichrist's political and economic system. Then there are other people who say it refers to the Antichrist's religious and economic system. The reason they say that is because Revelation Chapter 17, focuses so much on the spiritual aspect of the Antichrist's future empire, whereas Revelation 18 focuses so much on the economic aspect of the Antichrist's future empire. Then there are people who say Babylon can encompass both a literal city and a system. Among those who teach that would be Dr. Charles Ryrie or Mark Hitchcock, and that's the direction I myself lean. This will be a literal city where the Antichrist reigns from and yet, when we look at how pervasive the Antichrist's future rule will be, that is, Kingdom will encompass the entire Earth, there has to be some kind of system set in place where there will be multiple entities involved.

We see for example that the false prophet is going to set up an image of the Antichrist in the temple in Jerusalem and give it breath so that it can speak. So there's going to be a sense in which the Antichrist is worshipped in Jerusalem. Then also, we can see from scripture that the Antichrist will ride from Western Europe and so most likely his rule will be based somewhere in Western Europe, yet we have the ancient city of Babylon, which was destroyed long ago. But is this a literal city that's going to be built someday? There are prophecy teachers who say, yes, it's going to be a literal city, it will be the literal city of Babylon, and there are others who say, No. I do lean toward it being a literal city. How much it relates to the actual city of Babylon itself is hard to say. I've studied that. I think that the greater inferences need to be placed on the system, it

needs to be placed on the religious and economic and political system that the Antichrist will develop, which will form like tentacles all across the earth.

Yes, there will be a literal city in which he will be based, but his kingdom will be pervasive all through the Earth. He'll have his power administered everywhere through other more local regional powers. As far as America and Bible prophecy, we don't see America mentioned specifically in Bible prophecy, and this seems to indicate that in the end times, America won't be the powerful and influential nation that it is right now. Right now we have a very dominant presence in the world. But as we read Bible prophecy, we notice a considerable absence of anything that might hint that America is involved in some way.

I think some of the things that are helpful to keep in mind are this:

1.) America has a large Christian population. Imagine what will happen to America when the rapture happens. All these Christians will be taken away, a significant part of our population. This includes people who will be in positions of leadership. This will include people who run businesses, so America will be crippled very significantly after the rapture takes place.

2.) Then we look at the moral condition of America today. America is falling apart. It's very depraved. The country has lost its moral compass. Morally and spiritually we are collapsing. We are collapsing into immorality that is very difficult to imagine, but as we look at Jesus' description in Matthew 24, of how the end times will be like the days of Noah, and we see this country so engrossed in self pleasure, so engrossed in immorality, so engrossed in the denial of God and so engrossed in the denial of truth, we are seeing a nation that's in collapse. We're also on the path to financial collapse. We see a country that has very enormous debt that cannot be repaid. So it's very likely that at some point in the future, all of this is going to have a domino effect, where we see America become weaker. America will become a pale ghost of its former self. It will not have any real relevance on the world stage, and if anything, because we've become a weak nation, that's going to give whoever happens to be leading America at the time an incentive to sign up with the Antichrist and be dependent on what the Antichrist is able to provide through his empire to keep America going.

I think that's what seems to make the most sense. And we also noticed that in the Ezekiel 38 war, no one will come to Israel's aid when Israel is attacked. America has long been a historical ally of Israel, and for no one to come to Israel's protection when it is attacked, seems to speak of an absence of America. I would say that the chances are that the American military will be vastly weakened by that time. This includes again, many Christians being removed from the military. All of that to say, America doesn't seem to have a place Bible prophecy. We are seeing ourselves become a much weaker country. It's very tragic, very unfortunate, which, again, is why it is so important for us as Christians to be salt and light to the people around us. We have no idea how much time we have before all of this takes place.

Host: David Wheaton 44:26

Steve, that was a very interesting answer. I have to say, I agree from what I read in the Scripture that sounds very plausible, what you just described for Babylon the Great, and how America will be involved. We are really not involved. We are just part of the Antichrist's kingdom during the tribulation period.

Steve Miller is our guest today here on the Christian Worldview talking about his devotional, One Day Nearer. Final question for you, Steve. You've talked a lot in our conversation about prophecy and the end times and I really hope listeners get a copy of your book. It will keep your focus in the right place in the midst of all the distractions and conflicts going on in the world around us.

Let's set our minds on the things above and the Christ to come. You say this on page 23. You quote from a translation of Ephesians 5:15-16 by a man named Kenneth Wuest. West, I believe, is how you pronounce his name. He translates that verse this way. He says, "Be constantly taking heed therefore how accurately you are conducting yourselves, not as unwise ones but as wise ones, buying up for yourselves the opportune time, because the days are pernicious. Oftentimes, we hear that translated as make the most of your time because the days are evil." You write in this particular page of the devotional, Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest provides us with great insight for what it means to redeem the time. He defines us as "making a wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good."

Skipping down you quote another person, Puritan Thomas Brook as saying, we "have much work to do in a short time: your souls to save, a God to honor, a Christ to exalt, a hell to escape, a race to run, a crown to win, temptations to withstand, corruptions to conquer, afflictions to bear, mercies to improve, and a generation to serve."

As we close today, Steve, give us an exhortation of all you've said about the end times. Biblical prophecy, the rapture, the tribulation, the return of Christ, the millennium. You talked about other views of eschatology. You talked about the war of Gog, the ruler of Magog, and the invasion of Israel and Babylon the Great and America. There's been a lot of things you've discussed that people have questions about. So what do we do now? How do we better redeem our time for those living today? We don't know when things are going to happen, we see what's going on around us. So How then shall we live?

Guest: Steve Miller 47:12

The question we can ask ourselves when we do things is, is what I am about to do merely something that's temporary and worthwhile, or is what I am about to do something that is eternal and will last. We can ask ourselves, are the activities that I'm engaged in something that is building me up, building others up, strengthening them spiritually, or is it something that's going to go towards something temporary that when this world ends, it's gone? Are we pursuing worldly trophies? Or are we pursuing heavenly trophies? Is what I'm doing going to count only for myself and for this world? Or is what I'm going to do count for God?

This doesn't mean that we have to go out and be missionaries, be preachers, and sell our homes and go all out for the gospel, that kind of thing. It just simply means, living our lives to the fullest for God, for His glory, for spreading His kingdom in whatever place that God happens to have put us. For parents who have young children, it may be as simple as reading Bible stories to them at night, letting scripture be a part of your everyday language with your children, and letting them know that you love God and infusing in them a love for God as well. It can be as simple as whatever my job is, no matter how secular my job, I may work at a job

that has nothing to do with the church, nothing to do with God, nothing to do with eternity, but within the context of that job, I am salt and light. I am showing God through the way I live. It means when I go to church, do I go with the intent of taking care of myself or do I go with the intent of helping watch for ways that I can take care of others?

It is a question that we ask about how we use our spare time, so to speak. Am I using my spare time frivolously? In ways that won't mean anything? Now this doesn't mean we can't rest. But I think it does mean that we have to have a mindset of how we use our time. A mindset of does this have value? Is this constructive for God's purposes? Or is this something that doesn't have value, or isn't constructive for God's purposes? When we go to church, looking for opportunities to build up others, encourage them in the faith, even just as simple as conversing with them, praying with them. Even the littlest activities can be activities that are ways that we redeem the time. As we ask ourselves, How can I use my time wisely? God has entrusted this time me. We have to view our time as something that God has entrusted to us. And we have to ask ourselves, what is the motive for doing this? What is my goal? As we examine our goal, and as we study how we use our time, our desire would be that we have a Godward focus in all that we do. And when we do, then we know we're using our time well, redeeming it well, we're making it count, and we're bringing honor and glory to God.

Host: David Wheaton 50:29

That is such a good exhortation and good reminder for us, Steve. We so appreciate your saying that. That's been the title of our program, Do You Have A One Day Nearer Mindset? Are we living just for temporal things, or do we have an eternal perspective that we're doing all for God's glory and redeeming the time because the days are evil? Steve, thank you so much for your excellent books. That one we discussed today, the devotional One Day Nearer, the one we discussed previously, Foreshadows: 12 Mega Clues Jesus' Return is Nearer Than Ever. Thank you for lifting our eyes up to look forward to our great hope, the return of the King of kings and Lord of Lord, Jesus Christ. We thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program today. All of God's best and grace to you and Becky and your family.

Guest: Steve Miller 51:21

Well, thank you, David. Thank you for this opportunity to be with you and your audience.

Host: David Wheaton 51:24

I want to close today with one of my favorite passages in Titus chapter 2 starting in verse 11. I referenced it last week, but I want to read it again. *For the grace of God has appeared, [That's Jesus Christ] bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, [looking for His return]*

This is what we as Christians need to have. If you have never put your faith in the person and work of Christ, repent and believe in the gospel, believe in Christ's sinless life, His substitutionary death on the cross for your

sin, and his supernatural resurrection. Call us or go to TheChristianWorldview.org and click on the page, "What must I do to be saved?"

Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview. Just a reminder, you can order Steve Miller's book, *One Day Nearer* for a donation of any amount. You can get in contact with us the usual ways given right after today's program. 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?"

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