Are We Living in the Last Days – Hank Hanegraaff Interviews Gary DeMar

Are we living in the last days? Many people point to the deluge of disorder and division in the world today as evidence that we are living in the last days. However, this is often the result of sacred scripture being taken out of context. Misunderstandings about the end times (eschatology) have been widely propagated by a seemingly endless stream of end-times prophecies and popular books such as the Left Behind series by Tim LaHaye.

TRANSCRIPT BEGINS

GARY DEMAR END TIMES – HANK HANEGRAAFF

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SUMMARY

The transcript covers a discussion between Hank Hanegraaff and Gary DeMar analyzing the biblical basis and implications of dispensational eschatology. Key topics include the distinction between Israel and the church, interpretation of prophetic language, timing of Revelation's writing, expectations around a rebuilt temple, geopolitical impacts, and connections to replacement theology. The discussion examines relevant passages from Daniel, Ezekiel, Matthew, Thessalonians, and Revelation to build a case for an early date for Revelation and judgment rather than rapture interpretations of the Olivet Discourse.

CHAPTERS

Introducing the Topic and Guest – Hank introduces guest Gary DeMar and frames the discussion around examining popular end times teachings on the rapture and great tribulation in light of scripture.

Centrality of Israel-Church Distinction – Gary outlines dispensationalism's core claim of two peoples of God with two redemptive plans, critiquing it scripturally through seed versus seeds in Galatians and first church members in Acts.

Origin and Implications of the Seven Year Tribulation – The seven year tribulation concept is traced to a gap inserted between Daniel's 69th and 70th week. Implications like holocaust expectations for Jews are examined.

Interpreting Prophetic and Apocalyptic Language – Principles are covered for interpreting prophetic books based on genre, Old Testament allusions, and precedent for symbolism.

Analysis of the Olivet Discourse – Key passages on the sign, this generation, days of Noah, and one taken and one left are analyzed in light of the disciples' questions on timing and Jesus' use of judgment language.

Dating the Book of Revelation – Internal and external evidence for an early date prior to Jerusalem's destruction is outlined to connect Revelation's warnings to the seven churches.

TRANSCRIPT BEGINS

Hank Hanegraaff 00:19

Welcome to another edition of the Hank Unplugged podcast. This is going to be really interesting podcast, because we're going to talk about the most popular end times paradigm perhaps in the entire world today. Now, it may not be the most prevalent, but it is the most popular, particularly in America. It's an end time scenario in which God has two distinct people, one of

whom will be raptured and the other is destined for the greatest Holocaust in the history of the human race. If you know anything about Hal Lindsay, this is going back a long, long ways to The Late Great Planet Earth. He was talking about this holocaust, making the Holocaust of the Nazis look like Girl Scouts weaving a daisy chain. So it's going to be a horrendous time for jews in this popular version of end times, which again, is being communicated on television, on radio, you see it, magazines in millions and millions of books, without using any hyperbole whatsoever. Now, the question we're going to discuss today is, yes, it's popular, but is it really biblical? And to discuss this with all of you today, I have a friend I've known for many, many years, Gary DeMar. In fact, just before the podcast, we're talking about the fact that we had spent some time in China together. Gary is the author of countless essays, news articles, more than 35 books, including one of my favorites, end times fiction, appropriately named and well written. Gary lives in Atlanta, Georgia with his wife, Carol. They have two married sons, and he is always involved in debates and communication. Anything he wants to talk about, he is certainly welcome to do it on this podcast. Again, the reason we're doing this podcast is that the future is on everybody's mind, from QAnon end time conspiracy theories to horoscopes, psychics, and prophetic prognosticators. And there are real world consequences to what we're going to be talking about. On today's podcast, I'm thinking about atheist Michael Shermer. I remember spending some time with him a number of years ago. He's the editor of Skeptic magazine, and he was at one point a dispensational devotee until he discovered that what he thinks the Bible teaches about the end times is in conflict with reality. So again, these issues are very significant. People think the Bible says one thing, and then they find out that what the Bible is saying is incorrect in terms of reality. And then they dispense with the Bible, and they don't realize that they have not learned to read the Bible in the sense in which it is intended. And to that end, I have employed a system that I

call exegetical eschatology, and I do that to underscore that above all else, I'm deeply committed to a proper method of biblical interpretation rather than to any particular model of eschatology. I could say much more about that, but I want to get to my friend Gary DeMar. Glad to have you on the podcast, Gary.

Gary DeMar 04:05

Well, it's good to reconnect with you. Like you mentioned, it's been a little while, but I keep up with the work that you've been doing and appreciate your interest in at least this particular topic. It's one of kind of our shared topics, and it's really needed because I think what's going on in the Middle east right now with what President Trump is doing with a number of these nations and with Israel, I'm looking to see how this modern day prophetic system handles what's taking place. And it's going to be an important consideration as we go down the road with this.

Hank Hanegraaff 04:39

So this is not just a theory. It has tremendous geopolitical consequences?

Gary DeMar 04:45

Oh, most definitely. In fact, if you go back just before Hal Lindsay's late great planet Earth came out in 1970s, during World War II and before, prophecy writers were looking at the similar scenario with the Jews being affected by end time events that would lead to their near destruction. I think there are a lot of christians who hold to an end time position that's very popular today. The dispensational premillennial system really don't know what takes place after the so called rapture of the church, where two thirds of the Jews living in Israel are supposed to be slaughtered. And this becomes a prophetic inevitability. And so something happens in the Middle east, and this was propagated during this particular

time during World War II. This was a prophetic inevitability. This was something that was supposed to take place, and many took what was described as a hands off approach because you would essentially be fighting God on this, because this was God's end time program for Israel. And so while it's very popular to talk about the rapture of the church, where the church will be taken off the earth prior to any of these things taking place, it has big consequences, I think, for the Middle east and other aspects of geopolitical issues.

Hank Hanegraaff 06:03

You mentioned the word dispensational, and I want to start there. What is dispensational eschatology? Is this something that the church has known about for thousands of years, or is this rather new?

Gary DeMar 06:17

Well, the dispensational system that we're familiar with, that is outlined in the Scofield Reference Bible, which I believe Scofield published his Bible, I don't know if it was 1907 or 1909, where he divided up biblical history in various dispensations. And God worked with Adam and Eve this way, and then God worked with Abraham this way, and then God worked with Moses this way, and then God worked in this particular period of time. And then the New Testament era, God worked in a different way. But the most significant aspect of the dispensational system is that there is this distinction being made between Israel and the Church and that God had a particular prophetic program for Israel. And then when Israel rejected Jesus as the messiah, the prophetic clock stopped. And then after the prophetic clock stopped, we are now living in what is a parenthesis. We are living in something that was supposedly never prophesied under the old covenant. And the prophecy clock won't start back up again until the rapture of the church, where God then takes the church off the earth. And then there's a seven year period which God deals with Israel

again. And so the so-called church age is one of those dispensational breaks that Scofield and modern day dispensationalists teach, and that God deals with Israel one way, God deals with his church a different way. And the church was something that, again, was not prophesied in the Old Testament. So that, in a nutshell, that's what we're really dealing with today.

Hank Hanegraaff 07:54

Yeah. So it seems like the operative question would be, does God really have two distinct people? Should you make a distinction between Israel and the church? Particularly when you look at Galatians 3, where you find the text saying, in the words of St. Paul, that Abraham only had one seed. And then Paul goes to great pains to point out, not seeds plural, but seeds, singular. And then the double entundre comes at the end of Galatians 3. If you are in Jesus Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and an heir according to the promise. So the notion that God has two distinct people with two distinct plans, necessitating two distinct phases of the second coming seems to be completely extra biblical or unbiblical.

Gary DeMar 08:46

Yeah, I mean, it's obvious when you read the Old Testament. In fact, if you read Luke's gospel, there was always the redemptive program that the Gentiles would be part of God's redemptive work, and that during the time of Jesus it was to the jew first. Jesus comes, he establishes his messianic mission to the jew first. And then we see, though Luke talks about how this was going to be a light to the Gentiles. And so if you look at the book of Acts, and this is why you cannot make this distinction between Israel and the church, and we really need to define what the Bible means by church and the Greek word **ekklesia**. When you read the Book of Acts, you see that that message goes to the Jews. There were Jews living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven. Acts, chapter two,

verse five. The first **ekklesia**, the first church that's mentioned, is in acts, chapter five, and it's made up exclusively of Jews. The theological battle that was taking place through the book of Acts was, were there two peoples of God? Could the Gentiles be one redemptive way that God deals with people? And is Israel the other way? And absolutely not. The Gentiles were brought into an already existing Jewish **ekklesia** based upon to the jew first, and then to the Greek, and then to the Gentiles and then to the nations. So there aren't two peoples of God. Paul makes the same kind of argument in the book of Romans 9. That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. So it is always the issue of the promise of God. The remnant, this idea of two peoples of God, two different redemptive programs, really is not found in scripture.

Hank Hanegraaff 10:32

So kind of interesting. Not only interesting, but maybe that's exactly the wrong word. It is onerous when you think about it. Here you have a very popular end time paradigm embraced by literally hundreds of millions of people. And in that paradigm, you're going to have christians who are raptured and enjoy seven years of heavenly bliss, a great heavenly banquet. And then the Jews that they helped herd into the holy land prior to being raptured are going to be bludgeoned to death in a holocaust that exceeds anything that's ever happened in the history of the world. It's oftentimes called the time of Jacob's trouble. So this is a view in which the Jews are bludgeoned, the Jews suffer a holocaust, and there's no biblical basis for it whatsoever? Is that what you're saying?

Gary DeMar 11:41

Yeah, they get it out of Zechariah 13:7-9, which I believe that particular passage deals with the period of the book of acts. You do have this one third, two thirds distinction being

made. There were those who opposed the things of Christ. They were Jews who opposed the things of Christ. And there were Jews who believed the gospel message. And that was a battle that was going on. It was a battle that was going on in Jesus'day. Jesus'problem with the people was not with Rome. So mean. He made a couple of comments regarding Herod, and he made comments regarding Caesar, render under Caesar and things under caesars. But most of the opposition that came in the gospel narratives are with Jews. I mean, in John 9, when Pilate wants to get out of this conundrum, he is in, he wants to either release Barabbas or release Jesus. And the religious leaders of the day say, we have no king but Caesar. And the book of Acts is the same way. The Book of Acts is a struggle that takes place between believing Jews and unbelieving Jews. And I believe that two thirds that Zechariah 13 seven through nine is dealing with. Here are the Jews who were slaughtered during the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, which Jesus warned for 40 years to get out of the city. He said, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, head to the hills, there's no such warning. Today. By modern day prophecy speculators, they're excited when Jews return to Israel. But according to their system, for every three Jews who's in Israel during this so-called tribulation period, two of them are going to be slaughtered.

Hank Hanegraaff 13:24

I want to get to the Oliver discourse as quickly as I possibly can, but before we do that, I think about Tim Lahay. He's the late Tim Lahay now, but he is the author or co author of one of the most popular fiction series in the history of the world period. I'm just talking about fiction series in general. This left behind series, which he put together with Jenkins, supposes that the pretribulational rapture is taught in one Thessalonians chapter four. And I remember him saying over and over again, all of the details that you want to know about you can find in this passage in first Thessalonians 4. So I'm

going to set the question up this way. Is first Thessalonians 4 about a pretribulational rapture, or is first Thessalonians 4 about the great and glorious hope of resurrection?

Gary DeMar 14:24

Well, first Thessalonians 4 traditionally, has always been about what you and I would talk about the second coming of Jesus, which has nothing to do with this new doctrine called the rapture. And so that's what first Thessalonians 4:13-18 is all about. I have to kind of chuckle a little bit, because last week I was at a conference at Liberty University and I was on a panel discussion in a building that was built by left behind money. It's called the Tim Lahay center. And in fact, there's a picture on my Facebook page, me pointing up to Tim Lahay's name. And the thing of it is, at that particular conference, there wasn't a single discussion about the end times. And it's great to see that a lot of people, I think, are moving away from that particular position and taking a more biblical stance. But the comment that you made of that, Tim Lahay said, is if you go to first Thessalonians 4:13-18, that you will see all the elements related to the pretribulational rapture. I mean, I have to say that's just not the case. In fact, everything that the dispensational system requires is not found in that particular passage. There's nothing about a seven year period. There's nothing about the Antichrist. There's nothing about a tribulation period. There's nothing about the Antichrist making a covenant with the Jews. There's nothing in there about a gap between the 69th and the 70th week of Daniel. There's nothing about a rebuilt temple in there. All the elements that are necessary for a pretribulational rapture, or any of the five rapture positions are found in that particular passage. It's a straightforward passage which deals with the issue of the resurrection and all the elements that you see today in modern day prophetic speculation, those elements just are not found in that particular passage.

Hank Hanegraaff 16:18

Yeah. So give us just a quick overview, Gary, of how this system works out. So you have Jesus Christ coming in, the secret coming, then you have seven years, and then you have a second coming, and then you have a thousand year semi golden age with rebuilt temple, reinstituted sacrifices. And Tim Lahay, to go back to him, he was saying while he was alive that those sacrifices were efficacious to atone for sin. So this is an interesting kind of an end time scenario that supposedly comes from the bible. But where does it really come from? I mean, where do you get the seven year tribulation? So give us just a bit of an overview of that.

Gary DeMar 16:58

Okay. The seven years. It's interesting. When people talk about the seven year tribulation period, they say that that's from Revelation 4, when John was taken up into heaven and showing this vision that that's supposedly where the rapture takes place. That's the rapture of the church. And although it doesn't say that's a rapture of the church, it says John was taken up into heaven. Paul said he was taken up into the third heaven as well. And that's certainly not the rapture because he was still left on earth and so was John. So from Revelation 4 to Revelation 19, that's supposed to be the seven- year tribulation period. But here's an interesting fact. You will never find the phrase seven years in the book of Revelation, and yet it's supposed to be about a seven year tribulation period, or actually a seven year period in which three and a half years is a tribulation. Now, where do they get the seven years? And again, if you ask most christians about where did that seven years come from, most of them don't have any idea. Now, you got to go all the way back to Daniel 9:24-27. And this is a key factor when you deal with this particular concept. Daniel is rehearsing Israel's history in the captivity, and he goes back and he reads Jeremiah's prophecy about the 70 years that they were going to be into captivity.

By this time, I'm going to assume that Daniel is relatively an old man and coming up on the end of the 70 year captivity period. And so that's kind of the paradigm here, 70 years of captivity. And then what we find happening is that Daniel is given an additional revelation of 70 weeks of years coming out to most all of us probably agree, dispensationalists, all millennials, premillennialists, post millennialists, we pretty much all agree that that 70 weeks of years is 490 years divided up into 762 and one. And it is out of that 70 weeks of years that they get the final seven years by removing the final week of seven years from the other 69. So you get 483 years. Prophecy clock stops we live in a parenthesis. There's a gap between the 69th and the 17th week, and then the rapture takes place. And then the final week, the final seven years, comes on the scene, and that's when God starts dealing with Israel again. So that's where the seven years comes from. And all the rapture positions have to put a gap between that 69th year of 483 years and the final year, the seven years, and that's where it comes from. And yet there's nothing in Daniel Nine that says anything about there being a gap between the 69th and the 70th week of years. If there was no gap in time of the 70 years of captivity. Why would we now assume that there's going to be a gap in time between the 69th week and the 70th week? It makes absolutely no sense. And there is no other time in scripture where a specific number of days, weeks or years is given that there is a gap in any of those days, weeks or years.

Hank Hanegraaff 20:06

I want to get back to some of that in a moment. But it occurs to me that we ought to talk a little bit about Russia, because we hear a lot about Russia in the news today from a geopolitical perspective. We hear that we have a president who is an agent of Russia. But there's also these kinds of conspiracy theories that are true with respect to dispensational eschatology, that Russia is a nation from the

north that's poised to invade Israel in the end times. Where does that come from?

Gary DeMar 20:42

It comes from the book of Ezekiel 38 and Ezekiel 39. Chapter 38 begins – And the word of the Lord came to me saying, coming to Ezekiel, son of man, get your face towards Gog, the land of Magog. And some translations have the prince of Roche, Meshach and Tubal, and prophesy against him and say, thus says the Lord God, behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Roche, Mishak and Tubal. And then chapter 39, verse one, pretty much says that same thing again. Now the question is, should it be translated as the prince of Roche or the chief prince of Mishak? So that's where this comes down to. And they take the word Roche, which is used about 600 times in the Old Testament, and it means chief or highest. Or head, in fact. Or head. Yes, exactly. We know of Rosh Hashanah, which is the highest holy day in the Jewish calendar. And if you look at anytime Benjamin Netanyahu is speaking, you will see a podium. And if you can read Hebrew, you will see that the word Rosh is there. And it is because he is the chief guy. He's the head of the government of Israel. So Roche means head or chief. It doesn't mean Russia. And so for the longest time.

Hank Hanegraaff 22:07

But, Gary, it does sound like Russia.

Gary DeMar 22:10

Yeah. The thing of it is, I went and you take the hebrew letters, or Rosh, and then you take the actual hebrew word Russia. And the only letter that's common between the two of them is the hebrew letter resh, the first letter. They don't look anything alike other than that. So this has nothing to do with modern day Russia. And again, I think most scholars today have finally gotten away from this idea and describe it as very fanciful. Exegesis and using the sound of a word to

actually turn the entire prophecy of Ezekiel 38 and Ezekiel 39 on its head.

Hank Hanegraaff 22:53

Yeah. And, of course, Russia is an 11th century viking word, and as such, should not be semantically linked to the hebrew word rosh. Let's move on from that great point, as you just made it. And I think.

Gary DeMar 23:06

Let me bring up one other point. I did a really big study on all this, but there's something very interesting. If you look at Ezekiel 30:8-13, and it says – Sheba and Dadan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all its villages will say to you, have you come to capture spoil? Have you assembled your company to seize plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to capture great spoil? And those who project this into the distant future said, well, this has to do with oil, or it had to do with potash and all that kind of thing. What I found, if you look at Ezra, chapter one, verse four, those four items are mentioned when the Israelites came back from the captivity. Those are the same four items that they brought back with them, almost word for word. And so I believe that Ezekiel 38 and 39 has nothing to do with the end times, but had something to do with the return of the captivity that the Jews were in, and they brought these things back. And if you read the Book of Esther, you will see some of these same types of ideas through it. And I wrote a book a couple of years ago called the Gog and Magog End Time alliance, which goes through Ezekiel 38 and 39 in a very specific way and points out the parallels between Ezekiel 38 and 39 in the Book of Esther.

Hank Hanegraaff 24:29

So really, you have millions and millions of american Christians that are implicating an entire nation in this vast

end times conspiracy theory.

Gary DeMar 24:40

Yeah. Oh, yes. And Hal Lindsay's late great planet earth, there's a chapter in there by Lindsay which says Russia is a gog. And pointing to this. And so here you indict an entire nation that has nothing to do with modern day Israel. And you've got China, too, this 200 million man army that's supposed to come in and march into Israel. And I'm thinking, what do they want in Israel? What does Israel have that they want? Well, according to Ezekiel 30:8-13, they want silver and gold and cattle and goods. And Russia has much more gold than Israel does, and they want cattle. I mean, it just makes absolutely no sense. And this coming from a prophetic system that claims to interpret the Bible literally, where you have. If you, again, you read this section of scripture. You've got horseback riding, bows and arrows, chariots, and it's amazing what they do with that. They turn bows and arrows into missiles and missile launchers, and then you have chariots that end up being tanks, and then horses. Horses. Well, that's really horse power. And so again, from a system that claims to interpret the Bible literally, this is one section of scripture that they completely mangle with an exegetical base not found in anything related to reality or literalism.

Hank Hanegraaff 25:59

Talk about implications. We just mentioned implicating an entire nation based on a spurious reading of Ezekiel, chapter 38 and 39. But if you don't hold to the heart of dispensationalism, there's another implication. Then you're referred to as a replacement theologian, carrying Hitler's anointing and his message. I mean, you cannot think about a stronger implication for those who deny the heart of dispensationalism. So you and I both, although we may have differences when it comes to the end times, you and I, both deny the heart of dispensationalism. And we are then called

replacement theologians. And I find this highly ironic, because the very people who wield it as a weapon believe that Israel will replace a soon to be raptured church during seven horrific years of tribulation. So the real replacement seems to belong in the dispensational system, not in ours.

Gary DeMar 27:06

Yeah, I think Halinzi was involved in some projection theology when he wrote a book, I guess it's close to 30 years ago, called the road to Holocaust. And anybody who didn't go along with the dispensational system, as you mentioned, the replacement theology was leading the Jews down the path of destruction and Holocaust. And again, as you and I have already talked about, it's actually the dispensational system that has a future of Israel that calls for their destruction. And this whole idea of replacement theology, as I mentioned earlier, they come up with this idea that the church replaces Israel. And this is, anybody who says that the church replaces Israel is involved in replacement theology. I don't believe the church replaces Israel. The Greek word ***ekklesia***, if you study the Hebrew Bible, and then there is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, and when you come across the translation of the Hebrew word qahal, which means somewhere in the vicinity of congregation or ***assembly***, it's translated as ***ekklesia***. And so when you get into the New Testament and you read a hebrew translation of the New Testament, when they come across the word **ekklesia**, they translate it as cahal. And so the Greek word **ekklesia** is equivalent to the hebrew word cahal. And so every time you read the New Testament, you have to read the Greek word Church as either *assembly* or congregation. That is what William Tyndale, when his Tyndale translation, when he came across the Greek word **ekklesia**, he translated as *assembly or congregation*. And how do we know that that is the best translation of this? Because all you have to do is go to acts, chapter seven. And this is essentially Stephen's biblical theology in a nutshell, that

whole chapter. And in verse 38, he says, this is the one who was in the Ekklesia in the wilderness, together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers, and he received living oracles to pass on to you. That verse 38, in the King James Version, it reads this way; *this is the one who was in the church in the wilderness.* Now, the new American Standard, which is a translation I use with some modification, based upon looking at the Greek and the Hebrew, it translates it as congregation. The church doesn't replace Israel. The first members of the **ekklesia** in the New Testament were jews. Acts 5:11. Acts 8, Paul persecutes the **ekklesia** in Jerusalem made up exclusively of Jews. What we find in the New Testament is that Gentiles, the nations, were grafted into an already existing Jewish **ekklesia**, Jewish church. And so again, I believe that the dispensational system, it sees a problem with its system, and so it's creating this false narrative of replacement theology.

Hank Hanegraaff 30:12

You alluded to this earlier when you talked about being literalistic, or the fact that Tim Lahey says that you have to interpret the Bible literally. And by that, he doesn't mean interpreting the Bible as literature, but rather interpreting the Bible in a wooden, literalistic fashion. So talk about the language of scripture, particularly that of apocalyptic passages. If you read those passages in a literalistic, in this wooden, literalistic fashion, you end up with sheer nonsense.

Gary DeMar 30:45

Yeah, it's amazing to me. I think Kim Lahay wrote somewhere where the Book of Revelation is the most literal book of the Bible. And again, if you mean by literal, it says dragons, so it has to be dragons. If it has a giant woman out in space somewhere, standing on the moon, and has twelve stars around her head and is clothed with the sun, well, then that's what

you got. That is literal interpretation. But they don't interpret those passages that way. It's obvious that the Book of Revelation, for example, has a lot of what you and I would say literal interpretations of various passages. But there's all kinds of symbolic passages, symbolic words all the way through the book of Revelation that even dispensationalists admit are symbolic. And so context is extremely important. And you mentioned that the word literal means according to the literature. And so you've got to understand what kind of literature that you're dealing with. That's number one. Number two, you got to look at the context of what, say, jesus is saying in the Book of Revelation, or what Jesus is saying on the Mount of Olives. Then the number three is then you've got to look at where is that particular passage found elsewhere in scripture? And how is it understood elsewhere in scripture. And so you use the more clear passages and context to help you determine the less clear passages in context. That's what you have to do to interpret scripture. You just can't look at a passage and just say, oh, it says that. Therefore, it's got to be that because there are too many places in scripture where not even the dispensationalists. I remember how Lindsay even said, no one interprets all of prophecy literally. So we've got to get back to context and audience relevance and seeing how a passage is used elsewhere in scripture to determine what it actually means.

Hank Hanegraaff 32:36

Absolutely. A literalistic method of interpretation often does as much violence to the text as does a spiritualized interpretation that empties the text of all objective being. You mentioned all of the discourse, and I really want to focus on the olive, a discourse. I've oftentimes said that there's an expanded olive, a discourse, and that is the book of revelation. But you can get it all packed into a passage like Matthew 24. And many years ago, I took the time to memorize this passage and then to cogitate on it, to really think about

it deeply. But to set this up, Gary, you have Jesus leaving the temple. He's walking away, and his disciples then call his attention to its buildings. And then Jesus says, do you see all these things? I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another. Everyone will be thrown down. And then later on, Jesus is sitting on the Mount of Olives, and then his disciples come to him, and this is a private meeting they're having, and they say, *when is this going to happen*? And what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age? And then you have the remainder of the olive, a discourse in answer to that, part of which is Jesus is saying, all this is going to happen within a generation. So I want to talk about that? So here you have the disciples coming up to Jesus privately and saying, when will this happen? What will be the sign of your coming in the end of the age? What in the world was the real answer to that question? In other words, what was Jesus telling his disciples? In response to this question, you mentioned.

Gary DeMar 34:24

Briefly the background of this. Unfortunately with our Bible. Fortunately and unfortunately, we have the Bible divided up into chapters and verse numbers. Those weren't there originally. And so Matthew 24 follows immediately after Matthew 23. So if you want to get the context of all this, chapter 23, actually, if you really want to get the full context of this, you go all the way back to Matthew 21, and follow it all the way through and look at the context and Jesus dealing with the religious leaders and so forth. And then this is all coming to a head if you look at Matthew 23:31. Consequently, you bear witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murder the prophets. Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers, the same type of language that Stephen uses in Acts 7:51-52. You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell? Therefore, I behold, I'm sending you prophets and wise men and

scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous bloodshed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Barakiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones, those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. And you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left you desolate. For I say to you, from now on, you shall not see me until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And Jesus came out from the temple. And so what happens in Matthew 24 is based upon what Jesus was saying to the religious leaders and his disciples, listening to all this. And that's why they asked the questions to them, because Jesus basically said, your house is going to be left to you desolate. And as a result of that, they're really mystified by mean. This temple has finally been rebuilt. We're in the process of rebuilding it. If you go back to John chapter two and are you telling me this is going to be destroyed. And so then Jesus tells them what was going to happen. You not see all these things, truly, I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down. And in the dispensational system, what you've got to do here is to maintain that there is a rebuilt temple, that there is going to be another temple in the future that this is going to happen to. And yet there isn't a single verse in the entire New Testament that says anything about a rebuilt temple. And sure enough, in AD 70, when the Romans came in, they tore the temple down, literally. And we're talking about literal here, literally, stone by stone. And if you go to Israel today, you won't find any indication that the temple was still standing, because stone by stone was torn down. And then Jesus lays out what I believe are signs that these things are going to take place. These are signs that are probably typical of all types

of generations. But then he's going to lead up to what is most specific about this, the greatest sign of all. And then he capstones that particular prophecy with Matthew 24:34, where he says, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. And you mentioned Shermer, and I didn't realize that he once was, I guess, an evangelical at a certain point, but so was Bart Ehrman. If you go back to Bart Ehrman's history, he'll tell you that I think he went to Moody, and he believed this, too. And he even mentions Tim Lahay and Hal Lindsay. And a professor says, well, what if Jesus was wrong? And that set Bart Ehrman on the path of skepticism based on prophecy? And, of course, you and I, when we studied this particular passage, Jesus wasn't wrong at all. Jesus was right on the money. He said the temple would be destroyed before that generation passed away. And then, sure enough, the temple was destroyed before that particular generation passed.

Hank Hanegraaff 38:28

You know, and, Gary, this is really the point that I want to get to. So here you have Bart Ehrman saying that Jesus is a false apocalyptic prophet, and no amount of obfuscation on the part of evangelical christians can ever absolve Jesus of being a false apocalyptic prophet, because Jesus is talking about the end of the world. The language that he uses very clearly talks about the end of the world in Bart Ehrman's opinion. And therefore, what Jesus prophesied would happen didn't happen. He's a false prophet and a story. So we have a messiah as christians who is clearly, and you can't get him out of this. He's a false prophet. But this gets back not only to the language used in the olive discourse, which I want to get to later, but it gets back to the very question that's being asked. So you have this scenario, and you painted it very beautifully. You have it coming out of previous chapters, Matthew 23rd, where Jesus pronounces Ichabod upon the temple. And now the disciples are calling Jesus' attention to the temple. He says it's going to be destroyed. And then the

dispensationalists think that when Jesus is talking about this event, he's talking about something that has to do with the second coming immediately. Now, when the word coming is used, they think this has to mean second coming, when in reality, that doesn't fit the context at all. Coming is very clearly delineated in scripture as judgment language. So they're wanting to know, when is this coming in judgment going to take place? Am I right?

Gary DeMar 40:22

Oh, exactly. Again, this is why I say, in order to understand passages in the New Testament, go back to the Old Testament. Find those places in the Old Testament where similar language is used. Example is Isaiah 19:1. The oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud and is about to come to Egypt. The idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence, and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them. So I will incite Egyptians against Egyptians, and they will each fight against his brother, and each against his neighbor, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. That language is almost identical to the language that Jesus uses in the Olivet discourse. And I've looked at a lot of Bible commentaries on Isaiah 19, dispensational commentaries in particular. And they all maintain that Jesus is using prophetic language of judgment. And then what is used here in Isaiah 19 is not something that's going to take place in the distant future of a literal Jehovah riding on a cloud to Egypt. But this is typical apocalyptic or prophetic language describing judgment. And Jesus uses that same type of language when you get to Matthew 24. And anybody familiar with the Old Testament would have known, that's why the disciples asked the question, because they said, you're telling me that the temple is going to be destroyed, it's going to be judged. And Jesus says, absolutely.

Hank Hanegraaff 41:50

And so it seems like in context, coming is judgment language. And then the question goes on, what would be the sign of your coming and the end of the age? Now, when the average person reads this, they think this is the end of the world again. But it seems like clearly in context, they're asking about the end of the age of sacrifice, which, of course, is one of the chief purposes of the temple.

Gary DeMar 42:21

Yeah, part of the problem is if you pick up the King James Version of the Bible, it actually says end of the world in Matthew 24:3. What? You're coming in the end of the world. And there are generally, you've got the *Greek word cosmos*, for God so loved the cosmos of the world. But the word that's used here is aeon, which we get the word eon from as a period of time. But Jesus isn't even describing the end of the physical world. He is describing the end of a period of time. And that period of time is the old covenant age that was in the process of passing away and finalized in its passing away with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. And you find that in Hebrews 8:13, which is, again, if you read the Book of Hebrews, you begin to see how this old covenant was passing away. Hebrews eight, verse seven. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. Then you go down to verse 13 and says, when he said a new covenant, he has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is near to disappear. And so Jesus is talking about the end of the age related to the old Covenant era. And we're in a transition period between AD 30 and AD 70, when that old covenant was passing away.

Hank Hanegraaff 43:49

So let me continue on with the Olivet discourse. Great answer. Agree with you wholeheartedly. So Jesus answered, watch out that no one deceives you, for many will come in my name,

claiming I am the Christ and will deceive many. You'll hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you're not alarmed. Such things must happen. But the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There'll be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. Then you'll be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time, many will turn away from the faith, will betray, hate each other. Many false prophets will appear. They'll deceive many people because of the increase of wickedness. The love of most will grow cold. But he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And then this part of the Olivet discourse and this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations. And then the end will come. So, here you have Jesus in the Olivet discourse. And if it's a Bart Ehrman or a dispensationalist, they'll point to this passage. The gospel will be preached in the whole world. Well, this has to have something to do with the end of the world, because you're talking about the gospel being preached in the whole world. And I think this goes back to your point that you have to be really careful with translations, because oftentimes, the translators have an agenda. They don't come to the scripture with a white lab coat on as though they're completely neutral. They have a bias. And so this whole world, does that really mean the cosmos, or is something else in view?

Gary DeMar 45:53

That is the $64,000 dollar question, because going back to Matthew 24:3, again, the end of the age. And so the word end is used here at least two more times. And so the end that Jesus is describing here is still talking about the end of the age. This isn't a new end that he's dealing with here. And so the issue of translation comes down to, what does this passage mean? And so this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in

the whole world. And it's interesting. Again, I'm using new American Standard Bible. And if you go to Luke 2:1, and if you look at the king James, and it'll say in those days that a tree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census be taken of the whole world. Now, everybody knows Rome would have loved to have taxed the whole world, but it's obvious that they couldn't tax the whole world. And so Luke doesn't use the word cosmos. He uses the word *oikumene*. And the Greek word *oikumene* is often translated as inhabited earth. I translate it as political boundary. And that's the word that's used here. So, the new American Standard in Luke two one says, now, it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. And then there's a little note to the side, and it says, that is the roman empire. So, in Luke two one, the new American Standard version of the Bible gets it right. But then you go to Matthew 24, where the same word is used. It's not *cosmos*. It's *oikumene*, the same word that's used in Luke 21. And it's the only time Matthew uses oikumene. And so the more literal translation is, in this gospel, the kingdom shall be preached in the *oikumene*, the inhabited earth or the Roman Empire, for a witness to all the nations and in the end shall come. Which means that the census and taxing power of Rome could extend it only as far as the roman empire, because the Greek word oikumene is used. And you get to Matthew 24:14, where the same word is used, which means that the gospel only had to go as far as the inhabited earth or the roman empire, the same as the tax. *Oikumene* means limited geography. And so therefore, all you have to do is find in scripture passages that say that the gospel had, in fact, been preached throughout the entire roman empire before that generation passed away. And I always ask Christians, if the Bible says that the gospel had, in fact, been preached in the entire world before that generation passed away, will you believe that that passage was fulfilled in Matthew 24:14? Well, everybody has to say yes. And so I just take them to a couple of passages that show that the gospel had, in fact, been preached throughout the entire Roman

Empire before that generation passed away. It's simple comparing scripture with scripture.

Hank Hanegraaff 48:50

I think there's an important point here that should be made, and that is today, someone like Ehrman, and don't mean to pick on him, but he's made a cottage industry out of upending the faith of Christians. But it seems to me that someone like him would have no excuse whatsoever for misreading this, because we now have access to the Greek that was used. So there's no mystery what Greek word *oikumene* is being used here. And on the other hand, you can go to Matthew 26, and there you see a similar thing being said, different context, where Jesus says, I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of me. So here you have the world again. But if you have the resources, as Bart Ehrman does or anybody does today, you can go back to the original Greek and recognize that here the word that's being used refers to cosmos as opposed to inhabited world.

Gary DeMar 50:10

Yeah, and the thing is that Bart Ehrman is a professor of religious studies, University of North Carolina. If he's still there, I mean, this isn't a guy where this is kind of a hobby with him. This is his field of study. And I'm assuming he probably knows Greek better than I do. But let's assume for a moment, let's just assume for a moment that the word that's there is cosmos. That the King James translation, it translates that as world, is, in fact, the Greek word cosmos. All you have to do is go to Romans, chapter one, verse eight. And it says, first I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. And there the Greek word cosmos is actually used. And again, now we're back to kind of getting into hermeneutical, exegetical issues. This is obviously hyperbole

on Paul's part, a rhetorical hyperbole. But then it's even more significant when you go to Colossians 1:6, where Paul writes in verse five, he talks about the gospel which has come to you just as in all the world. Also, it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing even. It has been doing in you since the day you heard of it, understood by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then look at verse Colossians 1:23 again, talking about the gospel. If you continue in the faith, firmly established and steadfast and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul was made a minister. So Matthew 24:14, if you just believe the Bible, you don't have to deal with statistics. You don't have to deal with other types of arguments, just with what the Bible actually says. Matthew 24:14 was fulfilled prior to that generation, passed away. Now, you know, I debated a number of people on this particular topic, and I debated Tommy Ice nine times on this. And he said, well, Gary, you're right. *Oikumene* is used, and *oikumene* generally means that. But what expands the use of oikumene is the fact that it had to be preached to all the nations. And so I said no. So, Tommy, what you're saying is that governing the Greek word *oikumene* is the word all the nations. And so if I can find a passage in the New Testament says that the gospel had in fact been preached through all the nations, then you would have to say that Matthew 24:14 was already fulfilled. Well, I'm no lawyer, but I know what the lawyers are supposed to do. Before you ask a question, you better know what the answer is going to be. And so you go to Romans 16, and you find in here that of course, Paul was planning to take the gospel to Spain, and he may have even gone farther than that. But if you look at Romans 16:25, it says: *now to him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of*

faith. So no matter which way you go with trying to explain Matthew chapter 24:14, it was fulfilled. And there was a debate a number of years ago between Douglas Wilson and Christopher Hitchens called collision. If your listeners haven't watched it, really, it's a terrific debate. It's not a typical stand up debate between two guys, but it was over a number of days through various venues, and they're at Westminster Theological Seminary, and Doug and Christopher Hitchens are sitting next to one another, and Hitchens brings up Matthew 24. It only took Doug Wilson a minute, a minute and a half to say, no, Christopher, you don't understand the language here. This is a typical language from the Old Testament that Jesus is borrowing. And Jesus wasn't referring to the end of the world. He was referring to the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. That was it. Can you imagine a dispensationalist trying to explain the Olivet Discourse to an antitheist like Christopher Hitchens? In a minute, it just wouldn't have worked. But that's all it took. And I have to say, Christopher Hitchens, as you know, is a very brilliant guy, but he was stymied by the answer that Douglas Wilson gave.

Hank Hanegraaff 54:46

And I think we could also go on with all of the discourse to the language that Jesus Christ uses later on, where he says, immediately after the distress of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. Now, that language is used by those who want to say that Jesus is a false apocalyptic prophet, whether Bart Ehrman or Albert Schweitzer or Bertrand Russell or whoever, that very language is being used to say, look, this has to mean the end of the world. But as you've already alluded to, or maybe even underscored, if you read scripture in light of scripture, you find out that this is common language. It's not only used in the book of Revelation by John, who's using it in the same way

that Jesus is using it, but it's also used in the Old Testament. You can go to Isaiah 13, and you see that Isaiah uses the exact same language to talk about the Medes putting out the lights or the glories of the babylonian empire. The exact same language is used. So it has nothing to do with the end of the world. It's judgment language. And here you have Jesus, the heir to the linguistic riches of the Old Testament prophets, and a far greater prophet than them all. He's employing that language and now he's applying it to the destruction of Jerusalem. Now, again, that takes reading the Bible in light of the Bible. You can give certain skeptics a pass because they just don't know the Bible. But when you have dispensationalists who read the Bible, who tell people to read the Bible, who are constantly giving programs for how to read the Bible in a year's time and so forth, you would assume that they know the language of scripture and therefore know that this has nothing to do with the end of the world. It has nothing to do with the stars falling out of the sky. I mean, one star would obliterate the earth, let alone the stars. Plural, falling out of the sky. This is judgment language. I'm trying to get to maybe a question here for you. How in the world can they miss this? It seems so plain and obvious.

Gary DeMar 57:17

It is a mystery to me. In fact, I was reading a commentary by D.A. Carson on Matthew, and he would agree with us all the way up Matthew 24:28. And he would say this is dealing with events leading up to and including the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. But when you get to Matthew 24:29, this is something that has not taken place yet. But you read the first two words, but immediately, but immediately after the tribulation of those days. And so verse 29 has to follow immediately after verse 28. Anybody who believes one through 28 refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, which D.A. Carson does. You've got to go with what happens next. And that's immediately after the tribulation of those days. Now again,

I'm using new American Standard, and new American Standard does a very nifty thing with its translation. Every time there's a quotation from the Old Testament, it puts it in small capital letters. And Matthew 24:29-31 are almost all small caps, which means that what the translators of the new American Standard Bible are doing, they are seeing these things. Jesus is quoting from the Old Testament. And as you mentioned, that passage from Isaiah 13. But you will also find it in Ezekiel 32:1-8.

Hank Hanegraaff 58:38

Joel, there are many examples.

Gary DeMar 58:40

Yeah, it's all over the prophets. And the question is, why does the sun, moon and stars language? Remember, Jesus is dealing with the destruction of the temple. Jesus is dealing with the old covenant, ages passing away. Why would he pick this particular passage? I think there are two reasons. Number one is that Israel in the Old Testament is described as sun, moon and stars. All you have to do is look at Genesis 37 in Joseph's dream about the sun, moon and eleven stars bowing down to him. And then I think the second part is here. This is probably a little more controversial, but I believe Jesus is identifying apostate Israel at this particular point in history as New Testament Babylon. It's taking up the characteristics of Babylon as the persecutor of the people of God and so forth, and attempting to put them into captivity and so forth. So Jesus takes language that was attributed to Babylon in Isaiah 13, and then says, this applies to what we're dealing with, with the destruction of Jerusalem. That language is used for Jerusalem. In fact, if you get to the book of revelation, Revelation 12, that woman who gives birth is. She's standing on the moon, she's clothed with the sun, she's got twelve stars. That is a description. When the stars are bright in the sky and the sun is shining and the moon is

bright, that's a sign of blessing. But when the sun goes dark and the moon goes dark and the stars fall, that is a sign of judgment. And once again, we're seeing judgment language here.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:00:18

Yeah. So let's talk about another phrase in the elephant discourse, and we've certainly mentioned it in passing, but I want to focus in on this phrase because it seems like it's right at the epicenter of the dispensational argument. And it's the phrase, this generation. The dispensationalist cannot read that in the sense in which it's intended. They have to look at this and they have to use all kinds of games to get around this. Jesus is saying, this generation. Well, the dispensationalist says, well, jesus didn't really mean this when he said this. He meant that. Or they say generation doesn't really mean generation. Generation really means race. Talk about this game, this semantical game that's being played on the part of dispensationalist John Hagee. I mean, you can name 100 very prominent people that you listen to on radio, television, read about in Christian magazines. They play this game all the time.

Gary DeMar 01:01:25

They do. And it was really popularized in the Scofield Reference Bible, where C. I. Scofield claimed that the Greek word *genea*, which is translated elsewhere as generation, can also mean race. And again, you don't have to be a Greek scholar to do this. And so here's what I tell people to do. That word in Matthew 24:34, generation, let's see how the Bible translates that. What does it mean? So let's take Scofield's race translation and go to the first time you find the Greek word *genea* in the Gospel of Matthew. And then it is in Matthew 1:17. Let's plug the word race in here every time the Greek word *genea* is found. So here I go. *Therefore, all the races from Abraham to David are 14 races. And from David to the deportation to Babylon, 14 races. And from the*

deportation to Babylon to the time of Christ, 14 races. Well, that makes absolutely no sense. So let's plug the actual meaning in, therefore, all the generations, generations, generations, generations. The only word that makes sense in that passage is, in fact, the word generation. This does not mean a race. And the other problem with it is it's the wrong Greek word. The Greek word here is *genea*, but the Greek word for race is *ganos*. I mean, they look and sound a lot alike. They're english words that are like that, too, but they don't mean the same thing. Jesus was talking about a particular period of time, generation. In this case, that particular generation, because what you've got there is the near demonstrative. This generation will not pass away until all these things take place. If Jesus had a future generation in mind, he would have said that generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:03:15

So Jesus is not linguistically.

Gary DeMar 01:03:18

Yeah. If anybody knows his grammar and his vocabulary and what words mean, it's Jesus. And so, you're right, there's this kind of. I called it silly putty. Just they want to stretch something to fit their particular position. And so Tim Lahaye and Tommy Ice, a book they did together, here's how they translated this. The generation that sees these signs will not pass away until all these things take place. So they got rid of the word this, and they added the. And seize these signs to the text in order to get it to mean what it says. But, okay, let's take that. Let's say what Jesus really meant here is, the generation that sees these signs will not pass away until all these things take place. I'll go with that. So, look at Matthew 24:33, the verse just before this. Notice the audience reference. Even. So, you, too, when you see all these things, recognize that he is near right at the door. Or it is near

right at the door. So Jesus is saying, the people who are living and hearing this, when they see these things, recognize that these things take place. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. There's no getting around that. Jesus is referring to that particular generation. And there's a lot to lose in coming to this particular position because so many books, so many radio shows, so many tv shows, so many articles, so many ministries are based upon the premise that what Jesus is describing in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 and Luke 21 is an end time scenario. And the thing of it is, it's hard to sell books dealing with prophecies that have already taken place. It's easier to sell books describing what's going to take place in the future. It's like playing the stock market. If I had a really great stock. And Hank, you know, I'm going to tell you about a stock I made a million dollars on. You might say, well, that's great, Gary, but tell me some stocks that I can make a million dollars on. So there's not a lot of sensationalism in describing events that already took place, but there's a great deal of sensationalism and a book buying public that buys into sensationalism by attempting to show what's going to happen in the future. And so to change a prophetic position is difficult for people because there's so much wrapped up in that particular prophetic position. Look, I know people who have changed their prophetic position and have lost literally a million dollars. I debated Kent Hovind, who still believes in the seven-year tribulation period, but he went from a pre trib to a pre wrath position. And he told me he yeah, just by taking that position, not denying a rapture, not denying a seven year tribulation period, but just saying, I don't believe the Bible teaches a pretrial rapture. I believe it teaches a pre wrath rapture. He said they lost a million dollars in donation. Imagine taking the position that this has nothing to do with a seven year future tribulation period, but this is a past prophetic event. People are a lot to lose by changing a position. That is so, to me, self evident.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:06:29

Yeah, I can say the same thing. I mean, for years and years on the Bible answer men broadcast, when people asked me about eschatology, I would answer their questions by giving the various positions that were extant. And when people wanted to know what I believed, I told them that I wasn't qualified to tell them. I hadn't even finished memorizing the Olivet Discourse, much less the book of Revelation, so I didn't feel qualified to answer the question. When I finally had spent a lot of time in memorization and meditation and mining the Bible for all it's worth, I wrote a book called the Apocalypse Code. Find out what the Bible really says about the end times and why it matters today. When I wrote that book, I was asked to resign from boards. I was no longer welcome in many of the pulpits that I preached in for years. And our ministry lost, without any hyperbole, millions upon millions of dollars. So the point you just made I can testify to on a personal level. I want to say something else, and that is you in quoting Matthew 23 and then going on to Matthew 24 and various other passages. I remember in this podcast when you said the word you, you kept emphasizing that. In other words, you put a lot of emphasis on that word as you were saying it. So that word you is a very important word in this whole process, and you've already alluded to. But I think it's good for those listening in to underscore this a little more, the word you means you. It doesn't mean a future generation or a generation in the 21st century. I mean, all of the Bible was written for us, but all of the Bible certainly wasn't written to us.

Gary DeMar 01:08:24

Yeah, the audience relevance is extremely important to determine what's going on here. And in fact, if you follow Matthew 21 all the way through to Matthew 24, and just follow the second person plural throughout. And in fact, if you go back to Matthew 21 again, Jesus is talking to these religious leaders in the parable of the landowner. In Matthew 21:43,

Jesus says, therefore, I say to you, kingdom of God will be taken away from you and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces. But on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust. And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they understood that he was speaking about them. And so here you have people who were skeptics of Jesus, critics of Jesus, but understanding that what Jesus was saying applied to them, because Jesus used second person plural, and you just follow the second person plural throughout all of that discourse. Matthew 23:31, I quoted this earlier. Consequently, you bear witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your father. I mean, I don't know how else you can get around the audience relevance here. And then you get to Matthew 24 and we see it again. We see the second person plural throughout Matthew 24:9. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation. Were they delivered up to tribulation? Of course they were. Paul gives a litany of all the persecution that he went through and will kill you. Did they kill them? Yes. Stephen was killed. James, the brother of John, was killed by Herod, and it's all the way through this particular chapter. And so you have the meaning of this generation. All you have to do is go back to Matthew, chapters eleven and twelve to see how this generation is used in that context. You got the audience reference of the second person plural and you can't get away from it. And it's transformative. Once you've come to understand this, so much else falls into line and makes sense and makes the Bible much more applicational to us today, because we see how God dealt with a particular period of time, a particular place and particular people, and you find the same thing. This is why I believe that the seven churches in the book of Revelation, chapters two and three, it was a warning to those churches that the same thing could happen to them that happened to Israel if they follow the same path that Israel followed to their destruction.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:11:00

And you can extend that, Gary, because we believe that coming here is judgment language, as we've discussed earlier. But that in no way negates the second coming of Christ, when the problem of sin and Satan will be fully and finally resolved, when we will be resurrected, immortal, imperishable, incorruptible. So the application still false to us. Every single word of this has real application to us, and it's absolutely true. I mean, you looked at the book of Revelation. It's written to seven churches in the epicenter of the Caesar cult. They're told to be faithful and fruitful. They're going to suffer for a short time. Their vindication is going to be an eternal vindication. And so that applies to us as well. So Revelation wasn't written to us, but it was written for us. Romans wasn't written to us, but it was written for us.

Gary DeMar 01:12:05

Yeah, you look at those seven churches, Revelation 2:5. Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen and repent and do the deeds you did at first, or else listen, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place unless you repent. So here's a coming of Jesus. That is neither the ad 70 coming of Jesus in judgment or the final, consummating coming of Jesus. And you find the same thing in Revelation 2:16. Repent therefore, else I am coming to you quickly and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth. I mean, God's his word, and I think there's one other place. Revelation 2:25. Nevertheless, what you have, hold fast until I come. Revelation 3:3. If, therefore, you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you. So you're absolutely right. Not only this consummating judgment that will be brought upon us, but even throughout history, we don't believe in a deistic God. God can come in judgment at any time in history, and it doesn't nullify what took place in the first century with the destruction of Jerusalem at AD 70. Just because a prophecy is

already fulfilled doesn't mean it doesn't have any application. Jesus makes that case in Matthew 24 because he takes a judgment that was applied to Egypt in Isaiah 19, and applies it to Israel in the first century. So you're absolutely right. Just because a prophecy is fulfilled doesn't mean it doesn't have any application for us today. There are said to be over 300 prophecies about the first coming of Jesus. None of us would ever say because Jesus died on the cross and all those prophecies were fulfilled. It doesn't have any application for us today. It has great application for us today. You and I wouldn't be here talking about, we're talking about if those prophecies hadn't already been fulfilled and they apply to us today.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:14:02

And you have this throughout the Bible. So you look at the book of Revelation as a classic case in point. Again, it's dealing with seven churches in the epicenter of a Caesar cult. But in the end, John talks about, then I see a new heaven. It's coming down from God, prepared as a bride, beautifully adorned for a husband. I hear a loud voice from the throne saying, now the dwelling of God is with men. He will live with him. You have this escalation from the current situation to the eternal situation. We're always called to raise our eyes and look at eternity because this life is just a drop in the ocean of eternity. So all of the books of the Bible underscore that in red, if you would.

Gary DeMar 01:14:51

Yeah. If you look at those last two chapters, it's amazing how it goes all the way back to the book of Genesis. The tree of life is there. Then you talk about the new heavens and a new earth. Isaiah talks about that. And Isaiah 65 and Isaiah 66. Again, you can't understand a book like the book of Revelation without understanding the Old Testament. And all of those allusions to the Old Testament, we already saw that the beasts

that are mentioned and of course, new heavens and new earth. And you mentioned stars falling not just one star falling, but you got in Revelation 6, you got a third of the stars fall from heaven and hit the earth. That language is again judgmental language that we read about elsewhere in scripture. And that's how you understand the Bible. You don't have to be a Bible scholar. You don't have to go to seminary. I mean, some of that all helps, but it's all there in the pages of scripture. In fact, you and I have been discussing this almost for an hour and a half. And you think about it. We haven't gone outside the Bible to interpret the Bible. We use the Bible to interpret itself. Taking the words of the Bible seriously, applying scriptures with other scriptures, showing how they were used in one context, and see how they're used in another context. This is how you do Bible study. Anyone can do it. Some are better at it than others, as in all cases. But we use the Bible to interpret the Bible. The Bible is the best interpreter of itself.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:16:16

Okay, so now I'm going to stump you, Gary, because we're at the end of this, and so it's about time to stump Gary. Now, I'm just joking, because you're not going to be stumped with this at all. But let me go on to quote just another small portion of the Oliver discourse. As it was in the days of Noah, so will be at the coming of the son of man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving up in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark. And they knew nothing about what was going to happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it's going to be at the coming of the son of man. Two men will be in the field, one will be taken, the other left. Two women will be grinding with a handmill, one will be taken and the other left. So here you have left behind very, very clearly in the all of the discourse. Here you have the rapture. How could it be more clear than that, Gary?

Gary DeMar 01:17:17

Well, it is very clear, actually, because the ones who are taken are the ones who are taken, probably most likely by the Romans in judgment. And we know that they were taken. Josephus says there were about a million who were killed during the melee, the overtaking of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple and all that. But there were many who were taken off into slavery. And you can see an edifice in Rome showing where the elements of the temple were paraded through Rome. And that, I think the estimates are like 50,000 of them were in fact taken so this particular passage has nothing to do with the church being taken off the earth. The ones who are left behind are the ones who are the survivors of this particular onslaught by the Romans. And if you go back to Luke's gospel, Luke, chapter 21, Jesus is told, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, it's time to get out of town. If you look at Matthew 24, and Luke and Mark's version of this, this was a local judgment. You could escape this by going to the hills outside of Judea. That's what Jesus says in Matthew 24. Don't go back into your house. Those who are on the rooftop. When's the last time we were on the roof? In our day, we don't use our domiciles for entertainment in order to escape this. If this is in the future, we would all have to go to Jerusalem and escape and go to Judea. This was a local judgment. And there were those who were killed and slaughtered by the Romans and those who were taken away, that is, taken as slaves to the roman empire. Those who were left behind were those who survived this onslaught and continue to live and continue to preach the Gospel.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:19:01

Let me move quickly to the book of Revelation. And this always struck me as I was memorizing this. When you get to the very first few verses of the book of Revelation, you find out that it is the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known

by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything that he saw. That is the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. So here you have in the prologue to the book of Revelation, you have the words soon and near, and then you have the dispensationalists who want to say, I'm taking the Bible literally. Offuscating on those two words. Soon doesn't mean soon, and near doesn't mean near.

Gary DeMar 01:20:08

I went through in concordance and list every instance of the word near and shortly and quickly found in the New Testament. And, Hank, I know you'll be surprised at this, but you know what they mean. Near shortly and quickly. Every context, that's what they mean. But all of a sudden, you get the prophecy, and they don't mean that. And so you got the book of Revelation bookended by the word near. You've got it in revelation, chapter one, verse three. You've got it in Revelation 22, verse ten. And he said to me, do not fill up the words of the prophecy of this book for the time is near. Now, what's curious about that is you go back to the book of Daniel. Daniel 12:4. Daniel is told to seal up that prophecy for sometime in the future. And so many believe that what we're seeing in the book of Revelation is kind of the unsealing of some things that were revealed to Daniel but that we're not told about. And you're supposed to seal this up because this is sometime in the future. The Book of Revelation opens that up. And these events were to happen, I believe, before the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in AD 70. The temple is still standing in Revelation. And you go on with this and you begin to see that that makes a whole lot more sense than anything that you can imagine in doing all this. That was revelation, chapter eleven, that the temple is still standing. John is told them, to measure the temple, you

would have to posit a rebuilt temple. And the New Testament doesn't say a thing about a rebuilt temple. And yet that is in fact one of the focal points of dispensationalism, the need for a rebuilt temple. And you will find prophecy writers who believe there's going to be a rebuilt temple, who will actually come out and say that there is no verse in the New Testament that says the temple is going to be rebuilt. And yet here are literalists claiming that the temple is going to be rebuilt. And yet there's not a single verse that actually says that.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:22:03

Isn't it a horrible thing when you think about this? I mean, when you think about the idea of a rebuilt temple, not only a third temple, but perhaps a fourth temple, when Hebrews talks clearly about the fact that the temple is no longer necessary because we have the temple in our midst, Jesus Christ replaces temple, priest and sacrifice. And if we go back to temple, priest and sacrifice, it's tantamount to trampling upon the sacred blood of Jesus Christ. So this is not an unimportant issue. I mean, this is an issue that the Bible drives home, I think, with great power and purpose, because we recognize that Christ fulfills all the types and shadows. We don't need to go back to a temple. The ultimate temple has come and we are living stones in that temple.

Gary DeMar 01:23:02

Yeah, Jesus said, destroy this temple, temple of his body, and I'll raise it up. And Jesus talking about Jesus'body here, he is the manifestation of the temple, the temple of stone and everything in the temple. Everything in the temple and the temple itself was a type of the true temple, Jesus Christ. To rebuild the temple would be blasphemous. But again, the dispensationists always seem to have an answer for all this. And they, you know, this is one of the reasons why the Jews are going to be judged again, because they're going to rebuild

the temple and the sacrificial system and so forth. And I'm always amazed. I said, here you go. You guys say that the prophetic clock for Israel changed and stopped. And then we are living now in a parenthesis and a gap of nearly 2000 years, but God's going to redeem his people again. And I say, now you're telling me. So after the rapture of the church and 2000 years have passed and God's going to redeem his temple. And we talked about this at the very beginning. So God waits. Finally, 2000 years have passed and God's going to allow two thirds of the Jews to be slaughtered again. And so how does this fit your paradigm that God waits all this time to redeem Israel? And by the way, a generation that had nothing to do with crucifying the Lord of glory, that this particular generation, guiltless in terms of the generation that actually put Jesus to death, guiltless, is now going to suffer another holocaust. Two thirds of them are going to be slaughtered. It makes absolutely no sense to me and to lots of other people who are finally getting out of the whole dispensational system.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:24:38

When you look at a book like the book of Revelation, there are a lot of ways in which you can unlock its mystery, so to speak. I mean, you want to find out the location in which it was written. You want to know the essence of the book. You want to know the genre, the form, you want to know who is the author, you want to know the context. But you also want to know when this book was written. And perhaps we can end with this. I mean, I have a whole sheet of questions I was going to ask you and I haven't even gotten to any of those, so I would wear you out if I got to all of those questions. Maybe I have to do another podcast at some point in time, but let's talk about the years, because I think this is really important. When was revelation actually written? Was it written before the destruction of Jerusalem or was it written after the destruction of Jerusalem? And how can we know?

Gary DeMar 01:25:35

Well, that's the big, big debate. When was the book of Revelation written? And as you know, there are two primary kind of orthodox positions one is before the destruction of Jerusalem and some others. A very popular position is it was written during the reign of Domitian in the mid ninety s. And you mentioned the time indicators. These things must shortly take place. The time is near. Well, if those words mean what they mean elsewhere, and if the Book of Revelation hasn't been fulfilled, then those words don't mean anything. And so those time indicators are very important. And then the fact that the temple is still standing in Revelation 11. So those are two indicators. And most of this comes down to external evidence. That's internal evidence. There are other internal indicators, one being that the 6th king is still alive. And many believe that that was Nero. Many believe that the number 666 applies to Nero Caesar, the great persecutor of the church. Because if you take Neron Kaiser, the consonants in Hebrew, which, by the way, there are only consonants in Hebrew, they come out to 666 because there was no numbering system. They use letters as numbers. There are lots of internal evidence that indicate that the Book of Revelation was written prior to destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Ken Gentry has written the definitive book on that called Before Jerusalem Fell. So much of the evidence for the late date comes from external evidence, and that is Aranaeus, that supposedly that this was written during the time that John was still alive during the time of Domitian, and that the vision was seen during that particular period of time. Well, that is external evidence. And I believe that if it's either he was seen or it was seen, that is, whether John was seen still alive during the time of Domitian, or whether the Book of Revelation was seen, that is revealed to John. I believe either way you look at that, I believe in my case, if it was seen, that is the book of Revelation, because Aranaeus was dealing with the number of the beast. Was it 616 or 666? Some manuscripts have 616. Some manuscripts

have 666, because it was either Nero, Kaizor or Neyron Kaiser, the final noon being 50 points. And I believe that if it was seen, that is the book of Revelation was seen, that in order to find out whether it was 616 or 666, the original manuscript of the Book of Revelation was still available. And the only way you could find out whether it was 616 or 666 was to look at the original manuscript that was still available to be seen in AD 95, because, remember, it was copied and circulated to the various churches. So those evidences, to me, go very clearly to show that the Book of Revelation was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, 1870. And Frank Gummerlock has written a terrific book called Revelation and the First Century, Preterist's interpretations of the apocalypse and early Christianity. And he's a Latin scholar and has been going through and translating all kinds of very Old Latin works that have never been translated into English. And it is amazing how many very early Christian writers believed that the Book of Revelation was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. So we both have internal and external evidence as support for an early date for the Book of Revelation.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:29:10

And it seems like common sense. I mean, if I was writing a history of New York City, if I was writing that history after September 11, 2001, I would mention that horrific thing that happened. So here you have the most apocalyptic event in the history of the Jewish nation, where Jerusalem and the temple are not just manifestly desecrated, but manifestly destroyed. If that had already happened, I think you would certainly write about it.

Gary DeMar 01:29:47

Yeah, that is another argument. It's kind of interesting that the Book of Revelation doesn't mention it at all, mentions so much else, so many other things, and probably the most

fundamental event in Jewish history is completely left off the board. It doesn't make any sense.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:30:04

Well, Gary, I want to say this. Kudos to you, because it's very rare to find someone who has truly mastered a subject. You didn't know what questions I was going to ask you. We didn't discuss this before the podcast. We just got on the podcast and started talking, and you've shown absolute mastery of a subject. And whether people agree with you or disagree with you, the one thing they could never say is you have not done your homework. You have done your homework.

Gary DeMar 01:30:36

I appreciate that.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:30:37

Well, it's fun to see someone who has complete mastery of a subject. It's gratifying to me, and I certainly appreciate the time that you've taken on the Hank unplugged podcast, and I've appreciated your books over the years, but I keep going back to end times fiction. I love that book. I also look at some of the primers that you've done, like myths that are being communicated in proper end time scenarios and so forth. So again, I really appreciate the work you've done on this subjectary.

Gary DeMar 01:31:08

Well, thank you. Thank you for having me on.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:31:10

Well, thanks for taking all the time. I mean, this was a long podcast, and honestly, I have sheets in front of me that I've never gotten to. I wanted to ask you all kinds of questions. I wanted to talk about the mark of the beast and six six six.

And you did allude to that or 144,000 or the two witnesses, and we could go on and on, but maybe we'll do that in another podcast.

Gary DeMar 01:31:34

All right. Ken Gentry is very, of course, on the book of Revelation. He's written a two volume work on the book of Revelation. It's not out yet, but he'd be a really good one on the book of Revelation.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:31:45

Well, he is a good one on the book of Revelation. I've had him on the Bible answer man broadcast quite a number of times in the past.

Gary DeMar 01:31:52

Well, again, thanks, Hank, for having me, and the hour and 40 minutes went pretty fast, very quickly.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:32:00

Well, it was fun catching up with you again, and I had completely forgotten the time we spent together in China, but it was good reminiscing and catching up.

Gary DeMar 01:32:09

All right, thanks again.

Hank Hanegraaff 01:32:11

God bless you, Gary. And again, for everyone who appreciates this podcast rate and review. We'll get so many five star ratings. I was just looking at one before I came into the studio today by Rick in Canada, who says, I stumbled across your podcast recently, Hank. Thank you for your thoughtful, intelligent perspective on the christian faith and its relationship to many of the concerning issues I've been

wrestling with as a follower of Jesus Christ. I've only listened to three podcasts so far, but I have found your roster of guests most interesting. Keep up the good work. Much appreciated. And that's exactly what we try to do. We try to come up with the most interesting, informative, and inspirational people on the planet. And as I close this podcast, let me just reiterate a point that I made in my book the Apocalypse code. Find out what the Bible really says about the end times and why it matters today. What I say in that book is that I coined the phrase exegetical eschatology to underscore that above all else, I am deeply committed to a proper method of biblical interpretation rather than to any particular model of eschatology. In other words, the plain and proper meaning of a biblical passage must always take precedence over a particular eschatological presupposition or paradigm. And to highlight the significance of proper methodology in my book, I use the symbol e squared interchangeably with the phrase exegetical eschatology. Because just as in mathematics, the squaring of a number increases its value exponentially, so too perceiving eschatology through the prism of biblical exegesis will increase its value exponentially. And I say all of this in preface to a comment made by Dr. R. C. Sproul in the forward to one of Gary DeMar's books. It was a book titled End Times Fiction, and I mentioned it on the podcast, but it's a great book. In the preface to this book, Sproul speaks of a reading that he had on a commentary. The commentary was on 2 Thessalonians, and it was written by Dr. Harry Ironside. And Sproul recalls being thrilled with the commentary until he got to a puzzling passage in two Thessalonians. Chapter two, a passage in which St. Paul notes that the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he's taken out of the way, and then the lawless one will be revealed. Well, then Sproul went on to give us a method by which Ironside interpreted this passage, and I love the way Sproul did this. And again, you can find this in the preface to Gary DeMar's book. But Sproul does

this. He says premise. And again, he's looking at the method by which Ironside interprets this passage. So premise A, the Holy Spirit is the restrainer mentioned by Paul. Premise B, the restrainer must be removed before the man of lawlessness is revealed. Premise C, since the Holy Spirit indwells every Christian, the only way for the restrainer to be removed from this world is for Christians to all be removed. So premise D is that since christians will be raptured, this text must refer to the rapture. Conclusion the rapture will occur before the unleashing of the man of lawlessness and the great tribulation. So the Ironside argument rests first on pure speculation regarding the identity of the restrainer, and then upon the bizarre and gratuitous leap of the need to remove all christians from the world to remove the restraint. Well, what is the conclusion? Why is this in the preface by R. C. Sproul in Gary DeMar's book? Well, the conclusion is that this is imaginative exegesis at its worst. Why? Because not one word of the text explicitly teaches a pretribulational rapture. All of this in conclusion, to point to Gary DeMar's books. You can find them on the web wherever books are sold. We've recommended many of them. You can find our recommendations on equip.org. And with that, I want to put an end to this podcast. Again, my thanks to Gary DeMar. Thanks for all of you who have made this podcast not only possible, but popular around the world. And I certainly look forward to seeing or engaging all of you again in the next Hank unplugged podcast. So thanks for tuning in. Look forward to more coming in the near future. So long for now.