



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Understanding the End Times According to Revelation – Part 2

Guest(s): Pastor Gary Hamrick

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Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.

Roger Marsh: Well welcome back to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. On our last program, we began an enlightening conversation featuring Gary Bauer, our senior vice president of public policy here at the JDFI. He's also the host of the Defending Faith, Family, and Freedom podcast, and Gary's guest, Pastor Gary Hamrick, talking about his powerful new book called *Standing on the Edge of Eternity*. Pastor Hamrick leads Cornerstone Chapel in Leesburg, Virginia and his insights into the book of Revelation have helped countless believers understand this often misunderstood portion of Scripture. Now during our first discussion on this topic, Pastor Hamrick walked us through the different approaches to interpreting Revelation and explained why he believes in a literal futuristic view of this prophetic book. He reminded us that Revelation isn't meant to scare us, but actually to prepare us for what's ahead. It's God's final wake-up call to a world that desperately needs salvation.

Now on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, we're continuing the conversation featuring Pastor Gary Hamrick and Gary Bauer as Pastor Hamrick dives deeper into the signs of the times, the two witnesses, and what believers should be doing as we wait for Christ's return. His message is clear: this is not the time to check out. We must stay engaged in our culture, in our communities until Jesus comes again. Now let's join Gary Bauer and his guest, Pastor Gary Hamrick, for part two of this compelling discussion on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Gary Bauer: Well, we're back here for our second day with Pastor Gary Hamrick, the pastor of Cornerstone Chapel and the author of this new book, *Standing on the Edge of Eternity*. Pastor, I don't want to waste any more time. Let's get right into it.

Gary Hamrick: It's good to be back with you.

Gary Bauer: Your mention of when the rapture occurs. That is one of the things that the body of Christ divided about, right? And it isn't... I am not a theologian, but I don't see it as a question. I see it as a question that divides us, but it's not a question that threatens our salvation.

Gary Hamrick: That's right. Yeah. And I say to... now my position is I believe in the pre-tribulation rapture of the church, which means I believe that Christians will be taken before the tribulation starts. Friends who disagree and think, well, I don't think it's until the mid of the tribulation, mid-tribers and people post-trib. I won't divide over them, but we each have to look at Scripture and see what we believe is the best evidence for which position. But I remember the words of Dr. Ed Heinsen who was another great brother in Christ who had a great impact in country, but Dr. Heinsen said that the post-trib view does not make any sense because does it make sense that Jesus wants to beat up the bride and then take her to the wedding banquet, all bloodied and beaten? And he said, no, that doesn't make sense. So we can have debates. But to be honest, some of those positions don't even make sense to me.

Gary Bauer: To our listeners, look, one of the things, it's this book is so good, *Standing on the Edge of Eternity* by Gary Hamrick. Pastor, you go verse by verse and you explain it in clear English. You cut through some of the things that are hard to imagine with our modern minds looking back at this account being written in the first century after Christ. Seriously, it's a tremendous guide to a book that can be a little unnerving for people. You address this question. People when they read Revelation, they are looking and hearing and trying to process really bad things happening. And I often will hear even pastors say, "You need to read Revelation because it tells you what's going to happen to you." But you point out its main point is not judgment, it's actually God's rescue.

Gary Hamrick: Yeah, indeed. I think the book at Revelation is meant to prepare us, not to scare us, that God has revealed what is going to happen in the book of Revelation for the purpose of awakening a people around the world who have been reluctant to put their faith in trust in Jesus. And sometimes, sometimes, and I think this is probably the testimony of many believers today, the Lord has to use some kind of a proverbial two by four to knock us upside the head before we realize our desperate need for a savior. And so all these cataclysmic and catastrophic events that you see happening in the Book of Revelation are really God's attempt to reach a Christ-rejecting God-forsaking world. It is His last call, so that as many as possible might be saved. And that's what the Bible says. God wants none to perish but all to come to repentance.

And so sometimes He uses very harsh means and methods to accomplish that purpose because of the stubbornness of man's heart. And so when some read Revelation and they think, "Oh, this is terrible, there's a lot of death." Yeah, there is a lot of death in it, but unfortunately that's because people are stubborn and reluctant to surrender to the Lord. This is all His final wake-up call to get people's attention. And so therefore it really is a book about His salvation, about His rescue, about His desire to save people because the end of the age is about ready to happen. There is no more window of time for people to get saved when all this is said and done. So it's the urgency of the hour and that's how I think Revelation should be seen. God's wake-up call for a Christ-rejecting, God-forsaking world.

- Gary Bauer: I think you mentioned that Revelation is connected with the word apocalypse, and apocalypse has come to mean in the popular mind, a really terrible, horrifying event, but the actual etymology of the word really isn't horror, is it?
- Gary Hamrick: No. It means a revealing. Apocalypses in the Greek. It's a revelation. That's what the word means. It is a revealing so that people can see that their eyes would be open and their heart would be open to this final rescue call that God brings to the earth. So yeah, it's not an apocalypse in a doomsday kind of a sense. It's an apocalypse of the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- Gary Bauer: A lot of American politics. I guess politics all over the world is a debate over getting justice for people: helping the downtrodden, et cetera. But again, that's what Revelation is describing, right? In the sense that God's kingdom comes and then it's perfect justice.
- Gary Hamrick: It's interesting. In Romans 13, Paul says that the responsibility of government is to wield the sword and to bring justice. God is both just and merciful. And so when He came the first time, He came meek and mild riding on a donkey into Jerusalem to die for the sins of the world. When He comes the second time, He will bring justice to the earth and He will defeat the armies that have gathered in the battle of Armageddon against Israel, which is really a battle against the God of Israel. Yes, He will be a king and Lord and He will rule and reign. So His second coming will be very different from His first coming. But for all the people who have always said, "When will God even the score? When will He settle the playing field?" Well, when He comes again, He will make all things just and right. And He will balance those scales once and for all because He is a God of justice and a God of mercy.
- Gary Bauer: And I know I don't need to encourage you to disagree with anything I might say in setting up these questions, but if we take the book literally when He returns, He doesn't come to Washington, D.C. even though we certainly think of Washington as the center of the world, as the capital of the most...But remind our listeners where He comes.
- Gary Hamrick: Yeah, He comes back to Jerusalem. In fact, it's specific. It tells us that He comes back to the Mount of Olives. Remember when He ascended, the angels appeared to the disciples who were standing there gazing up into Heaven, and the angels said in Acts 1 that this Jesus will come back in the same way that He, in the same manner that He departed, meaning His feet took off from the Mount of Olives and His feet shall come back to the Mount of Olives.
- And Zechariah, the prophet tells us the same thing and says that when Jesus returns to the Mount of Olives just east of Jerusalem, that there will be a great earthquake and that the half of the mountains will shift to the north and half to the south, and Zechariah even tells us that there will be a fresh water stream that flows from underneath the temple mount of Jerusalem and it will go down to the Dead Sea. Ezekiel picks up on this too and he says, and the Dead Sea, which is the most saltiest, has the highest concentration of salinity of anybody

of water on the earth, and the Bible says that it will become fresh water teeming with life. And so I could go on and on amazing things. By the way, I tell people because of what the Bible says, that the Dead Sea will start to teem with life. If you want to get a headstart on a corner of the market, open up a bait and tackle shop down by the Dead Sea because one day it's going to have fish in it and you'll get a head start.

Gary Bauer: I love that. That shows some entrepreneurial spirit on your part too, pastor. That is really, that's a great point. So we kind of alluded to this a little earlier that we're now getting technology that could help fulfill some of the things that Revelation describes. Are there things that you see or things that we should look more for in order to be able to determine what time it is?

Gary Hamrick: I think it's important that we always keep our eyes on Israel because as Israel goes, so goes the rest of the world because biblical prophecy really is centered on Israel. And so one of the things I think Gary is just a harbinger of things to come, is when you watch the different nations that are aligning with each other, nations that are coming against Israel. We are seeing in our lifetime an alliance that really has never been before, which is between Russia and Iran and 1935 Iran was known as Persia. So in the Scriptures, in Ezekiel 38, it talks about this alliance between Magog, which is Russia and Persia, and there are other European countries that form that alliance, Germany and Poland. But when you start to see this kind of an alliance coming together like we've never seen before, I think that that is a real indicator that time is short. We're getting closer and closer to the return of Christ.

Now obviously no one knows, even Jesus said no one knows the day nor the hour, and He even said not even the Son. This is one thing that was kept in the heart of the Father until such time that it should be revealed. So nobody knows when Christ is going to come again, but we can sure look at the signs of the time. You can read all of Matthew 24 where Jesus even talks about different events like earthquakes and the rise of pestilence, which we have seen. Diseases and antibiotic resistant diseases, and it talks about great surging of the sea. You can see different events at sea that are happening and the love of most will grow cold and so many different factors that are indicators that we are getting closer and closer to the second coming of Christ, which is all the more reason why we should each be ready.

Gary Bauer: That is obviously the most important part of this whole discussion, that He is going to come again and the church needs to be ready and each of us as individuals need to be ready. I've seen a tendency over the history that I've read is that when some segment of the church believes we are there that it is going to happen next week or next month or in the next two years, there's been a tendency to use that moment to withdraw from the world. In other words, to just say, "Oh, okay, I'm going to just go into my church and wait." If Christ comes tomorrow, I want to be in the battle when He comes. I don't want to have to explain why I was AWOL.

Gary Hamrick: Yeah, there you go. Well, and you see the same thing happening in the early church in Thessalonians. Paul wrote to the church at Thessaloniki and he said, if you don't work, you shall not eat. And the reason why he said that was because they quit their jobs and they're sitting around just waiting for the imminent return of Jesus. And Paul has to challenge them like you can't just check out. You have to stay engaged. I mean, Gary, we know this. This is the whole reason why Jesus talked in Matthew 5 about us being the salt of the world and the light of the world, the salt of the earth because He wants us to have this impactful outreach keeping engaged in the culture and that we might have influence and impact in our world. And you're right, I think a lot of Christians are just sitting back, "Well, Jesus is coming again and I don't need to do anything and I don't need to be involved." And quite the opposite. Jesus said, "Occupy till I come." We cannot check out. In fact, Dietrich Bonhoeffer said that the church is the conscience of the state and if the church checks out, who will keep the state in check? So there's a lot of responsibility we have as the church to stay engaged until Jesus comes and this is not the time to check out.

Gary Bauer: There is not...America has problems obviously. Well the whole world has problems, but America obviously has problems as the years go on. And I can't find one of those problems that can be solved without people who love Jesus being central to the solution.

Gary Hamrick: Yeah, absolutely.

Gary Bauer: Whether it's racial reconciliation or corruption, the rebuilding of the family, it's just so obvious to me that we would be derelict to be absent from those solutions.

Gary Hamrick: Yeah, it's obvious to you. It's obvious to me. I wish it was more obvious to others. I mean, there's a great remnant of the church still active and fighting today, but unfortunately, we're seeing more and more Christians who are apathetic, disengaged, and I pray that with the recent assassination of Charlie Kirk, God can use every tragedy to accomplish His purposes. What evil intended, God can make for good. And I'm trusting that the Lord is going to awaken a sleeping church and there's going to be a great revival that sweeps across our country. We're seeing some of that right now. I mean, our church has swelled with attendance just since Charlie Kirk's assassination. I know a lot of churches where people are going to church for the first time or after many years, and I think we're seeing a resurgence and a revival that I hope truly becomes a similar revival to the Jesus revolution of the seventies or the first or second great awakening. I mean, we are due for a great revival in America, and I pray it sooner rather than later.

Gary Bauer: There's definitely signs of that. You talked about this earlier, that some pastors think, "Well, if I get into anything 'political,' it might hurt my fundraising or hurt my building fund." But it also, that's politics and it might hurt. Some people think it might hurt the cause of Christ, but actually, and very interestingly, it's been Charlie Kirk's somewhat political message on the campuses that seemed

to have contributed to students asking, “Gee, why is he like this? Why does he seem so happy?”

Gary Hamrick:

That's right.

Gary Bauer:

What explains his marriage? Thinking back on the memorial service, it might've been his pastor that said, “If people buy into and swim in the stream of liberty, they'll start asking themselves, where did that liberty come from? And that leads you back to God.”

Gary Hamrick:

That's right. Well, Charlie's biblical views shaped his political views that then confronted the cultural views. And so when people of the culture started listening to these debates and engaging him on college campuses. When they pared it all down at the core, the root of his beliefs were shaped by the Bible and by his faith in Jesus Christ. And so that has drawn people to a curiosity about the Bible and about faith and about Jesus, because at the end of the day, that's what Charlie Kirk was all about because that's what shaped his views and opinions that he would share on these college campuses. So yeah, I praise God that the Lord can use such a tragedy to bring about a great revival in our country, and I pray he does.

Gary Bauer:

I pray the same. Standing on the Edge of Eternity by Pastor Gary Hamrick. Pastor, I'm going to abuse my role as host to ask you one more question about the two witnesses. I don't know why over the years I've been fascinated by the story of the two witnesses. I don't think any, maybe no one knows for sure, but who are they? I mean, there's a variety of theories about who they might be, and I think all of them are based on the idea that they're two men that have been here before.

Gary Hamrick:

They are. And you're right, there are some debates and differences about who the two witnesses might be. I personally think that the two witnesses will be Elijah and Moses. When you look in Revelation 11 at some of the power that they have, it is very similar to the power that Elijah had, very similar to what Moses had in terms of power. I think it also makes sense because when you remember the amount of transfiguration who appeared with Jesus, but Elijah and Moses. And the best part about the two witnesses, it's not necessarily who they are because we can debate that all day long, but it's why they come and the reason they come is to bear witness to the truth of Jesus Christ and that more and more people might get saved. And so it's kind of a beautiful thing when you think about how God is going to dispatch two of these witnesses who will testify of Jesus again, I think it's Elijah and Moses, so that more and more people can come to faith in Jesus Christ.

God goes to such great lengths to try to help people during the time of the tribulation so that they might come to Him. In chapter 14 of Revelation, He even dispatches an angel who will fly around the world and share the gospel, which is the first time ever in Scripture where an angel is the agent of sharing the gospel. Up until that one example, God has entrusted that privilege and responsibility to

human beings, to us. But even in Revelation 14, He dispatches an angel to preach the gospel around the world from the heir. So He goes to great lengths, 144,000 of the Jews who are believers who go around like evangelists. He continues to try to reach the world because He loves the world, He died for the world, and He wants as many to be saved as possible.

Gary Bauer: It's like the ship's going down and He keeps throwing us one last life preserver.

Gary Hamrick: Exactly.

Gary Bauer: Yeah. What a wonderful image. Pastor, this has been a really wonderful time with you. I know our audience is going to love these interviews with you over these two days. *Standing on the Edge of Eternity* by Pastor Gary Hamrick. You got to get it, folks. It will help you understand a somewhat challenging book, and I think it will help you understand it in ways you may not have understood it before. And please check out Cornerstone Chapel and Pastor Hamrick's ministry. It's one of the best in the country. And may his type of pastoring be multiplied many times for the cause of Christ and an effort to save also our dear country. Thank you, pastor for being with us.

Gary Hamrick: Amen. Thank you, Gary. Best to you.

Roger Marsh: Well, the book of Revelation is about so much more than end times prophecy. It's about God's relentless pursuit of humanity, His final call for as many as possible to come to salvation before time runs out. You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and a conversation featuring Gary Bauer, our senior vice president of public policy here at the JDFI and his guest, Pastor Gary Hamrick, discussing his compelling new book called *Standing on the Edge of Eternity*. Now, if you missed any portion of these two days with Pastor Hamrick, or if you'd like to share these programs with a friend, go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And once you're there, you'll also find a link for Pastor Gary's new book, which served as the basis for our conversations.

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Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and from all of us here at the JDFI and Family Talk, thanks so much for listening today. Be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you can still trust, for the family you love.

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Dr. James Dobson: I've often been asked, which is more damaging to children: the parenting style that's very authoritarian and rigid are one that's permissive and loose.

Roger Marsh: Here's today's Dr. Dobson Minute with Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: At the oppressive end of the continuum, a child suffers the humiliation of total domination. Deep, abiding anger and serious adolescent rebellion often result from this domination, but the opposite extreme is also harmful to kids. In the absence of adult leadership, the child is her own master from earliest babyhood. Her mother is often the most frazzled and frustrated woman on her block. Now, it would be worth what she endures if her passivity produced respectful, secure children. It typically does not. The most healthy approach to child rearing is found in the safety of the middle ground between these disciplinary extremes.

Roger Marsh: For more information on this topic, visit drdobsonminute.org.