

Glen Iverson

1730: The End Times: Victorious Eschatology or Tribulation?

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Teaching His disciples how to **pray**, Jesus uses the words "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"(Matthew 6:10). Proponents of Dominionism put a spin on this verse as they teach that we are to establish dominion over the earth prior to Christ coming back; but scripture teaches that Jesus will establish His Kingdom upon His return and we are only to pray. C. Peter Wagner who is a very influential leader in the Charismatic movement states the following:

"My basic premise is that God's kingdom should come and His will should be done here on earth as it is in heaven. This is clearly a Christian principal because as I have said, these are the very words that Jesus taught His disciples to pray everyday in the Lord's prayer."

(Wagner, 3)

To accommodate a "Victorious Eschatology" as opposed to a coming tribulation, Wagner has adopted Partial Preterism to fit this agenda:

"Victorious eschatology makes a convincing argument that the biblical prophecies concerning the "last days" or the "end times" were literally fulfilled at the time of the destruction of

Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The end times marked the ending of the old covenant and the beginning of the new covenant. Jesus literally will return to the earth in the future (see Matthew 24:36-25:46), but none of the signs of Matthew 24:4-34 are expected to precede His return, because they have already occurred. This is known by professional theologians as the Partial Preterist view of eschatology, and it is the view with which I personally identify.”

(Wagner, 61)

Although a leader in the NAR, Wagner isn't alone in regard to the understanding of eschatology. Kris Vallotton, Senior Associate Pastor of Bethel Church in Redding California also includes his view of eschatology in his core values:

“I will not accept an eschatology that takes away my children's future, and creates mindsets that undermine the mentality of leaving a legacy.”

(Vallotton, web)

We need a clear understanding of eschatology, not twist it to fit our desires. We're on a timeline that is moving towards the Second Coming of Jesus. As we get closer to this glorious event, world events will become increasingly more difficult. Jesus states in the Olivet Discourse as quoted in Matthew 24 3-8:

" And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For

many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."

Dominionism looks towards a "victorious eschatology" but Jesus doesn't speak of a victorious eschatology. Privately the disciples want to know the signs of the end of the world. Jesus starts by warning them to take "heed" that they are not deceived in Mathew 24:4. Heed comes from the Greek βλέπω blepo meaning "beware". Deceive comes from the Greek πλανάω planáō ' meaning to wander from truth or seduce. Jesus is warning his disciples "beware that you are not seduced". One is seduced by flattery or good news not negative news. Solomon describes deception in the following manner in Proverbs 26:25-26: "When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart. Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation."

After warning of deception, Jesus then mentions wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes as the beginning. While Rome destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD, the famine and disease was only within the walls of Jerusalem, not worldwide. So while preterists point to this as fulfillment of prophecy, it doesn't fit the text.

Paul, in his 1st letter to the Thessalonians repeats the same message as Jesus in chapter 5: 2-3: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when

they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. “

Paul is speaking to gentile believers in Greece, not Jewish believers in Jerusalem and explaining of a future judgment as the Day of the Lord which is mentioned many times thorough the Prophets. Paul also warns that when they say peace and safety, then destruction will come. Proponents of Dominionism are preaching peace and safety.

Paul continues to outline events in the end times in his 1st letter to Timothy in chapter 4:1-2: “ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;”

Paul brings up 4 issues that will directly affect believers:

1. Apostasy “some will depart from the faith”
2. Deception (also warned of by Jesus) “giving heed to seducing spirits “
3. False Teaching: “doctrines of devils”
4. Lies and hypocrisy

Proponents of dominionism also hold to the view that Christians are to take over the “7 mountains of influence”. These mountains are defined as the following: “ business, government, media, arts and entertainment, education, the family and religion.” (Bright, web). The 7 Mountain Mandate plays into “victorious eschatology” as it brings hope to followers of this system. The problem

is that Scripture doesn't teach that Christians are to take over the "7 mountains", nor does it teach that eschatology will be "victorious", which places Dominionism into the category of "deceptive" and "false teaching". The words spoken by Jesus and Paul as well as the many passages related to the "Day of the Lord" clearly outline a coming destruction.

While we pray for God's kingdom to come, we are not commanded to take over the "mountains of influence", only to spread the Gospel. Christians may desire a political system that is "God-honoring", family friendly entertainment and honesty in secular business, God's Word does not place the responsibility on the Christian to "redeem Rome" with political lobbying to change laws and standards for the non-believer to abide by. In most cases, the compromise required for a Christian as an elected official would work against the faith of the believer. Jesus states in John 18:36:

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

In Jesus' trial, Pilate specifically asks Him if He is a king. Jesus answers that His kingdom is not of this world. This goes against the claim of Dominionists that we as believers are to establish dominion over the mountains of influence. During the 1st century when the New Testament was written, Judea was under direct Roman occupation and administration. Jesus doesn't suggest to rise up against Rome, but instead states that His kingdom is not of this world.

In Matthew 22:19-21, Jesus states that we are to pay our taxes.

"Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are

God's."

Jesus doesn't comment on the unfairness of over taxation or corruption. He simply states to "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's" There is no subtext of organizing the Jews to protest or rebel against the Romans.

Paul echoes Jesus' statement made in Matthew 22 in Romans 13: 1-3:

"Every person must be subject to the governing authorities, for no authority exists except by God's permission. The existing authorities have been established by God, so that whoever resists the authorities opposes what God has established, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For the authorities are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you like to live without being afraid of the authorities? Then do what is right, and you will receive their approval."

Instead of conveying a message of uprising, Paul exhorts the church in Rome to be obedient to government. This is a very important to note considering the corruption of Rome. While this is in context of obeying the government, what about redeeming the mountain of "Arts and Entertainment." This is not in regard to Christians creating faith-based films or music, but redeeming this cultural mountain. 1st John 2:15-17 states:

" Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

While the previous passages refer to government, this passage points directly to the entertainment

industry. Entertainment largely exists as a distraction from corruption in government to divert focus. Entertainment focuses directly on the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. It's a means for consumerism with the advertisement industry and this is what John is speaking about.

As believers, we are part of the Kingdom of God which is not of this world until Jesus comes back and establishes His kingdom. There is no text that hints at taking over the world for Christ. Our great commission is to teach and disciple others in the faith. The inspired Word also recognizes that it's not possible to take over the world as politics is a game of compromise while entertainment and education are a means of propaganda to serve the agenda of the Global Elite as I outlined in my briefing on Entertainment and the New Age.

We know that the events leading up to the coming tribulation will become increasingly worse, not victorious and that Believers are not tasked with redeeming the "7 Mountains of Influence" even if it were possible. One might ask what Scripture details about the coming tribulation. The Day of the Lord is a future event that will bring worldwide judgment and cataclysm. The prophet Daniel states the following in chapter 9:27:

“ And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

This is referred to by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse as quoted by Matthew in 24:15:

“ When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet,

stand in the holy place, whoso readeth, let him understand :”

The Daniel 70 week prophecy is key to understanding prophetic events. While the preterist position is that this was fulfilled in 70 AD, Titus didn't setup the desecration in the Temple. The Temple was accidentally burnt down by the Romans, then completely destroyed. Daniel is referring to the coming leader popularly known as the Antichrist even though he has 33 titles in the Old Testament and 13 in the New Testament. The Antichrist makes a peace treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27) setting off this prophecy which is detailed in the book of Revelation.



(Image 1)

The judgments listed in Revelation starts with the 7 “Seal” judgments. These begin with the 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

1. Rev 6:1-2 introduces a rider coming in to conquer on a White Horse. Many Bible commentators identify this rider as the coming world leader that is known as the Antichrist as the rider has a bow which is symbolic of a covenant. Also the rider has a crown symbolic of authority to conquer. Many scholars make the connection with

this rider and the one who makes a covenant with Israel in Daniel 9:27 starting Daniel's 70th week.

2. Rev 6:3-4 is the Red Horse of War
3. Rev 6:5 is the Black Horse of famine
4. Rev 6:7-8 is the Pale Horse of death from disease.

While described in apocalyptic language, the progression of events of the horsemen are logical in a large conquest. A powerful conqueror brings war. War brings famine. Famine brings death and disease. We learn the following from what the Pale Horse brings: "And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." The word "Earth" gives the scope. Earth comes from the Greek γῆ "Ghay" meaning the whole globe. While the partial preterist will suggest that this refers to Jerusalem in 70 AD, the text isn't limited to Jerusalem. If Jerusalem was meant, that's what the text would clearly say. One quarter of the world's population will die at this point. Assuming a 7 billion population, this means 1.75 billion people will die worldwide. We remember the Holocaust of WWII where ten million died. We also look back to the death toll in Russia and China, but it's hard to fathom this death toll and accompanying destruction.

5. The Fifth seal is martyrdom of believers that were not killed during the war and famine. (6-11)
6. The Sixth Seal (12-17) is a worldwide earthquake resulting in all islands moving out of place, sky rolling up, stars falling to earth and the sun turning dark and moon turning

to blood. This has never happened in the history of the world. It is a unprecedented supernatural cataclysm that is not only difficult to imagine, but has not even been depicted in a literal fashion in movies.

7. The Seventh Seal is not listed until Revelation 8 and involves an angel throwing a censer to the earth which sets up the next round of judgments known as the "Trumpet Judgments.

From the "Seal" judgments where war, famine, disease have killed as many as 1.75 billion people, a worldwide earthquake has caused untold damage and collapse to infrastructure and supernatural events in the heavens which would cause unprecedented fear in the remaining population, things only get worse. The Trumpet Judgments begin in Revelation 8:7.

1. "hail and fire were mixed with blood and thrown on the earth. One-third of the earth was burned up, one-third of the trees was burned up, and all the green grass was burned up."
2. A great mountain being cast into the sea, an asteroid strike causing a third of all fish to die and a third of all ships to be destroyed
3. A falling star upon a third of springs and rivers (fresh water contamination)
4. A third of the sun, moon and stars became dark

In these first four trumpet judgments, a third of the earth, trees, green grass and fresh water is destroyed and a third of the sun, moon and stars are darkened. It's safe to assume that millions more lives would be lost in these cataclysms. Things continue to get worse, not better with the "Three

Woe's”.

5. The first woe is stated in verses 9-11: the bottomless pit opened releasing a demonic horde of locusts whose purpose is to torture those who have not received the mark of God in their foreheads (9-4) for 5 months with the pain of a scorpion sting. It also notes that they will not die. While difficult to understand, it brings to mind images from the “apocalyptic” genre of movies focusing on zombies.
6. The second Woe: angels loosed with two hundred million supernatural horseman causing a third of humanity to be killed.

Assuming there are still 5 billion people, another 1.7 billion will die leaving 3.3 billion people existing in what would be a post-apocalyptic wasteland with no infrastructure, little food and daily violence to just survive. At the seventh trumpet in 11:15, the “kingdoms of the world are declared the kingdoms of Christ” with a warning that the final “woe” is coming.

The seven Bowls of Wrath are detailed in Revelation 16

1. “A horrible, painful sore appeared on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped the image.”
2. Every living thing in the sea dies.
3. Rivers and springs turned to blood. This can be looked at as all remaining fresh water is contaminated.
4. The sun burns people with fire.
5. Darkness and people gnawed their tongue in anguish.

6. Euphrates dries up paving the way for the final Battle. They are demonic spirits that perform signs. They go to the kings of the whole earth and gather them for the war of the great Day of God Almighty.
7. An earthquake so great that all the islands of the earth vanish and all the mountains are leveled in addition to 100 pound hailstones.

With the three groups of judgment: Seals, Trumpets and Bowls, the earth is progressively destroyed, billions of people die and yet, there is no repentance. There is no ray of hope and no escape. This clearly hasn't happened before and events surrounding the Destruction of the Temple in 70 AD don't fit the text. This completely refutes the idea proposed from Dominionists that the Church will transform the world through the means of reclaiming the mountains of influence. While there is a debate on the timing of the rapture with the two popular positions being pretrib vs prewrath, the fifth Seal judgment is martyrdom. If there are any believers at the start of the tribulation, many of them will be eliminated early,

Jesus Second coming will be the conclusion of the Day of the Lord when Jesus will establish His kingdom. Revelation 19:11-16 states:

“Then I saw heaven standing open, and there was a white horse! Its rider is named Faithful and True. He administers justice and wages war righteously. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many royal crowns. He has a name written on him that nobody knows except himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God. The armies of heaven, wearing fine linen, white and pure, follow him on white horses. A sharp sword comes out of his mouth to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod and tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and his thigh he has a name

written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS”

John identifies that at the final battle after the outpouring of God's wrath on the Earth, Jesus comes and delivers justice. There is no mention of the Earth being set right by Christians taking over the 7 mountains of influence. Jesus leads a final battle on a world that is decimated.

John's vision in Revelation isn't a stand-alone text as the Prophet Isaiah also states in Isaiah 63:1-4

"Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, in garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in such splendor, marching in his great might? It is I, speaking in vindication, mighty to save. Why is your clothing red, and your garments like those worn by the ones who tread in the winepress? I have trodden the winepress alone, and from my people no one was with me, I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and I stained all my clothing. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year for my redeeming work had come."

This is another vision of Jesus' return and tells of the same event that John saw with additional details. Jesus garments are stained red with blood. Jesus is returning with power to destroy evil and setup His kingdom. The prophet Zechariah also tells of the return of the Messiah in Zechariah 14:3-4:

"Then the LORD will go out to battle against those nations, waging war as in a day of battle. His feet will stand in that day on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. Then the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a very large valley, with half of the mountain moving toward the north and half toward the south.

Zechariah adds the detail that the Mount of Olives will be split in two on That Day.

The final battle occurs when the nations of the world gather against Jerusalem. Jesus Second Coming

isn't peaceful acknowledging good works of Christian society, it's instead destroying an army gathered together that marches on Jerusalem. The image portrayed isn't a loving Jesus smiling down on a worship concert in a charismatic mega church after the influential mountains of religion, family, education, government, entertainment\arts, media and business are redeemed for Christ through political alliance, lobbying and speaking positive words.

To conclude, Dominionism claims that Christians are to retake the world and make it a place worthy of Jesus returning, but Jesus doesn't return to Earth that has been redeemed by good works of believers. At the time of Jesus' Second Coming, the text doesn't hint that Christendom will be established by prophets and apostles who delegate authority over the 7 cultural mountains. On the contrary, events will continue to grow darker before the fulfillment of Daniel's 70th week. Once the Antichrist appears, successive judgments destroy both the earth and people dwelling in the earth until the final battle when Jesus establishes His kingdom by force. There is no "victorious eschatology" to look forward to and those that promote dominionism are either willfully ignorant of the truth (deceived) or they know the truth, but understand that bad news won't bring in thousands to fund conferences and grow numbers in the local church the way "appealing to the flesh" would. This would then make them liars and false teachers. All this goes back to the passage cited earlier. 1 Timothy 4: 1-2:

" Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;"

We're not to be deceived by any eschatology position that portrays God's coming judgment as

the Millennial Kingdom where there will be peace and happiness. While we are to continue to share the Gospel of Salvation, we can't let ourselves be deceived by false doctrine. Understanding of eschatology as well as looking at clear issues that we're facing and how it relates to the Bible isn't a side issue.

While there is room for friendly debate on the timing of the rapture and how world events play into the Biblical narrative, we need to understand what our church leaders teach on eschatology. We also need to understand if our church leaders are lining up with the Bible or the Dominionist narrative as only the Bible proclaims the truth.

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