

SECOND EDITION  
Includes the Vicarious View of the Book of Revelation

# VICTORIOUS ESCHATOLOGY

A PARTIAL-PRETERIST VIEW

BY HAROLD R. EBERLE  
& MARTIN TRENCH

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Second Edition

*Harold R. Eberle*  
&  
*Martin Trench*



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# What Others Are Saying

When I first read *Victorious Eschatology*, a light bulb went on in a dim part of my brain! Since I have become a strong advocate of dominion theology, I have realized that my previous *Scofield Bible* eschatology would no longer cut it. However, while I knew what I wasn't, I didn't quite know what I was until Harold Eberle and Martin Trench came along. This is one of the most important books I have read in a long time!

C. Peter Wagner

Presiding Apostle, International Coalition of Apostles

I cannot imagine getting up every morning with a defeatist attitude about life. Nor can I imagine serving a God who cannot overcome evil, but simply snatches away a few poor souls. Harold Eberle and Martin Trench's new book, *Victorious Eschatology*, gives us a clear understanding of what to expect as kings of the King.

Don Atkins

President, Kingdomquest International Ministries

We need a reformation in the area of eschatology, and I believe Harold Eberle and Martin Trench's new book is a step in that direction. It gives a clear understanding of the Olivet Discourse and corrects present teaching that has taken the words of Jesus out of context. *Victorious Eschatology* will help shift your paradigm concerning the endtimes, and I highly recommend it as a foundational book in the present reformation.

John J. Eckhardt

Presiding Apostle, IMPACT Network



# Credits and Dedication

We have drawn from the writings of numerous authors whose names and works are mentioned in the bibliographies of this book. They have done research from which we benefited and hope to bless you.

Pastors Mike and Ruth Lightfoot deserve a special thank you for their input and encouragement. Pastor Ted Hanson is a pioneer in Christian thought, and he has been a constant inspiration. Herb Frizzel is a scholar on the subject of eschatology and in addition to adding a few comments to this book, he has written his own which we recommend to anyone wanting more in-depth studies. We also need to thank the thousands of Christians who listened to us teach these truths while we were still studying and developing our own understanding of the Church rising in victory and power before the return of Jesus Christ.

James Bryson is our hardest and most critical editor. Lori Peckham is the expert and a great asset to our team. Tristan Kohl, our final editor, is brilliant and amazing at finding mistakes no one else can see. Harold R. Eberle cannot release any book until his wife, Linda, puts on her final stamp of approval.

Thanks to all of you.

We dedicate this book to Annette Bradley, who served for many years editing our books and the books of many Christian authors. If heaven is truly heaven for her, she is now editing books for the saints who are with the Lord in eternity.



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# Foreword

Read this book with the help of the Holy Spirit. Do not approach it with religious or denominational filters, but allow the Holy Spirit to witness truth to you. What Harold Eberle and Martin Trench have written here will cause a shift in your thinking of eschatology or end-time events. We need a shift that will move the Church from a rapture mentality to a harvest theology. We must take off the grave clothes and put on the wedding gown as the Bride of Christ. We are the Bride of Christ, and the Groom is coming for His Bride, but He is coming for a Bride in victory that is bringing the kingdom of God on the earth by fulfilling the will of the Father.

Christians who focus on the harvest don't really have much time to worry about a rapture. Their goal is to get as many people into the kingdom as possible in preparation for the wedding. A victorious eschatology will put a rapture mind-set behind and a harvest work before you.

We are not the Church in failure, running out the back door while the devil kicks in the front door. We are the Church of Luke 10:19 that has authority over all the power of the enemy.

Cal Pierce  
Director, Healing Rooms Ministries International



# Introduction

Eschatology refers to the study of end-times. The eschatological view presented in this book reveals that the kingdom of God will grow and advance until it fills the earth. The Church will rise in unity, maturity, and glory before the return of Jesus. We will present to you a victorious eschatology.

Most of the great leaders throughout Church history held to a victorious eschatology.

However, during the twentieth century, Christians became increasingly skeptical and pessimistic about the future. During World War I, Christians in Europe began to embrace a negative view of the world. Christians in North America followed suit during the Depression and World War II. As the world was thrust face-to-face with challenges and the wickedness of war, people embraced a negative view of humanity and a pessimistic view of the future.

It was during those trying periods when many Christians embraced a more pessimistic eschatology. They came to believe that the world is gradually slipping under the influence of wicked leaders and eventually Satan will take control of the economic and religious systems of the world. Preachers who embraced that pessimistic view began to teach that an antichrist figure will soon rise to prominence and then deceive most of humanity. They also taught about a coming great tribulation during which God will pour out His wrath, judging and destroying the earth.

As we mentioned, most of the great leaders in Church history held to a more victorious eschatology. The pessimistic view did not enter into Christianity in any significant way until the publication of the *Scofield Reference Bible* (1909), which proposed in its footnotes a very negative scenario of future end-time events. Since that time, hundreds of scary end-time books have been promoted within Christianity. The most widely read are known as the *Left Behind* series, written by Tim La-Haye and Jerry B. Jenkins. Such books and the associated teachings have become so commonly accepted in the modern Church that the negative eschatology has become the most popular view. It is important to note, however, that this view has been popular in Christianity for only the past 60 years. It reached its zenith of acceptance just before the close of the last millennium, when Christians became fascinated with the possibility of the world ending in the year 2000.

Now that we have crossed into the new millennium, Christians are lifting their eyes to the future. Many leaders are discovering that the Scriptures give us a more optimistic view than they previously had believed. They are embracing a victorious eschatology that teaches that Jesus Christ and His Church are going to reign over this world, not Satan.

The theological label that is used to refer to the victorious eschatology presented in this book is the *partial preterist view*. In contrast, today's popular view is called the *futurist view*.

Eschatological View	Theological Name
Victorious View	Partial Preterist View
Popular View	Futurist View

These theological labels, the partial preterist view and the futurist view, refer to when the prophecies in Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation are fulfilled. The word “preterist” comes from the Latin *praeteritus*, meaning “that which has past.” So the partial preterist view is that which sees part of the prophecies in Matthew 24 and part of the book of Revelation as already fulfilled. In contrast, the futurist sees virtually all of the prophecies in Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation fulfilled in the future.

Theological Name	Matthew 24 & Revelation
Partial Preterist View	Part Past, Part Future
Futurist View	All Fulfilled in the Future

This is what we show you in the pages to follow. In section 1 we go through the prophecies recorded in Matthew 24. In section 2 we discuss some issues that are key in considering the partial preterist view. In section 3 we study the prophecies in chapters 2 and 9 of the book of Daniel. In section 4 we work through the book of Revelation. Then in sections 5, 6, and 7 we present the partial preterist views concerning the Jews, the antichrist, and the rapture. Finally, in section 8 we clarify what is meant by “the end-times.”

As pastors, we (Harold Eberle and Martin Trench) used to believe and teach the futurist view. However, even as we taught our church congregations the related ideas, we both realized that there are many scriptures that simply did not fit into the scenario of events proposed by the futurists. After several years of in-depth study, we have come to believe that the partial preterist view is more true to the Scriptures. This we will show you in the pages to follow.

In addition to studying specific Bible passages, we will insert a few quotes from well-known preachers, teachers, and reformers that show how the fathers of the faith shared a victorious eschatology. Not every leader throughout Church history would explain every verse of the Bible the same as we will; however, the fundamental view that the Church will rise in victory and power before the return of Jesus Christ has been the predominant view of the Church for the past 2,000 years.

### **Origen**

It is evident that . . . every form of worship will be destroyed except the religion of Christ, which will alone prevail. And indeed it will one day triumph, as its principles take possession of the minds of men more and more every day.

*(Origen Against Celsus, 1660, 8:68)*

### **John Wesley**

All unprejudiced persons may see with their eyes, that he [God] is already renewing the face of the earth: And we have strong reason to hope that the work he hath begun

he will carry on unto the day of the Lord Jesus; that he will never intermit this blessed work of his Spirit until he has fulfilled all his promises, until he hath put a period to sin and misery, and infirmity, and death; and re-established universal holiness and happiness, and caused all the inhabitants of the earth to sing together “Hallelujah.”

*(The Works of John Wesley, 1985, p. 499)*

### **Jonathan Edwards**

The visible kingdom of Satan shall be overthrown, and the kingdom of Christ set up on the ruins of it, everywhere throughout the whole habitable globe.

*(The Works of Jonathan Edwards, 1974, p. 488)*

### **Charles Spurgeon**

I myself believe that King Jesus will reign, and the idols be utterly abolished; but I expect the same power which turned the world upside down once, will still continue to do it. The Holy Ghost would never suffer the imputation to rest upon His holy name that He was not able to convert the world.

*(The Life and Work of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, 1992, 4:210)*





# Section 1: Understanding Matthew 24

In this section we will study Matthew 24, a passage that has become known as the “Olivet Discourse” because Jesus gave this teaching to His disciples while they were gathered on the Mount of Olives.

We will begin in Matthew 24:3, where the disciples asked Jesus some key questions.

*As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”*

In the verses that follow this one, our Lord gave answers that we will be examining. How you understand His answers determines what you believe about the end-times, the tribulation, the antichrist, and the unfolding of all future events.



## *Introduction to Matthew 24*

After the disciples asked Jesus their questions in Matthew 24:3, Jesus answered by talking about false leaders claiming to be Christ, wars, earthquakes, famines, persecutions, and people falling away from the faith. He also talked about the gospel being preached around the world, followed by destruction, tribulation, and people being taken away.

Christians who believe the futurist view study our Lord's answers and conclude that all of the events listed are going to happen in the future, shortly before the end of the world.

Partial preterists come to very different conclusions when studying Matthew 24. We will go with you through Matthew 24, verse by verse, to explain, but first we need to identify clearly the questions Jesus was asked by His disciples.

*As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*

(Matt. 24:3)

Some translations (e.g., King James Version) end this verse with "end of the world," because the word *aion*, which is used in the original Greek, may be translated as "age" or "world." Using the term "world," futurist teachers tend to summarize the questions asked by the disciples into an inquiry about the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world. Therefore, when Jesus gives His answers in the verses that follow, all His comments are thought to be about the short period of time leading up to the end of the world.

Partial preterist teachers begin by noting that in Matthew 24:3, the disciples asked Jesus three questions, not just one.

Question #1: *"When will these things happen?"*

Question #2: *"What will be the sign of Your coming?"*

Question #3: *"What about the end of the age (world)?"*

Recognizing three distinct questions dramatically changes how we understand the answers Jesus gives in the verses to follow. We will see how our Lord first answers question one in Matthew 24:4-28. Then He answers the second question in Matthew 24:29-35. Finally, He answers the question about the end of the age (or the end of the world) in Matthew 24:36-25:46.



## ***Question #1: “When Will These Things Happen?”***

The first question which the disciples asked Jesus was, “When will these things happen?” Before we look at Jesus’ answer, we need to identify what are “these things” about which the disciples were asking.

Christians who have been taught the futurist view immediately think that “these things” refers to the events that will precede the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world. We will come to a very different understanding if we read the context of this Bible passage.

Matthew 23 tells us about a day when Jesus was speaking in the Temple in Jerusalem. First, He warned the crowds and His disciples to watch out for the scribes and Pharisees (verses 2-12). Then beginning in Matthew 23:13, Jesus turned from the disciples and directed His words directly toward those religious leaders. We can sense the flavor of His message by glancing at the first few words of each verse that follows. Note the harshness of His words:

verse 13:

*“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.”*

verse 14:

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.”*

verse 15:

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.”*

verse 16:

*“Woe to you, blind guides.”*

Jesus was rebuking the religious leaders right there in their Temple. Glance down a few verses and pick up the intensity of His rebuke:

verse 23:

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”*

verse 24:

*“You blind guides.”*

verse 25:

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”*

verse 26:

*“You blind Pharisee.”*

verse 27:

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”*

verse 29:

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”*

Jesus built up to a climax in which He declared a severe judgment against those religious

leaders.

*“You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? Therefore, behold, I am 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, so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation.”*

(Matt. 23:33-36)

At that moment, you wouldn't have wanted to be sitting with the scribes and Pharisees.

As Jesus declared coming judgment, He referred to the blood of every righteous person, from Abel to Zechariah. That is significant because in the Hebrew Bible, Abel is in the first book and Zechariah is in the last book.

Therefore, Jesus was saying to the religious leaders that the judgment for the blood of every righteous person—from the beginning of their Holy Book to the end— would come upon them and on their generation!

Judgment had been decreed!

Typically, we understand a generation to be 40 years in length (e.g., the Hebrew people wandered in the wilderness for 40 years until a generation passed away). So if Jesus' words were to come true literally, then we should expect the judgment He declared to have fallen upon those religious leaders who were listening to His words and to those who were around during the following 40 years.

In Matthew 23, Jesus went on to tell more specifically how this great judgment was to occur. In verses 37 and 38, He cried out:

*“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 to you desolate!”*

Jesus declared these words while standing in the Temple in Jerusalem. He cried out to the scribes and Pharisees, saying that destruction would come upon them, their city, and their Temple.

### **John Chrysostom**

So now a punishment is appointed, one that brings exceeding dread and implies the overthrow of the entire city.

*(The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 74.3)*

## **The Judgement Fulfilled in A.D. 70**

Did the words of Jesus come true? Well, they would have had to have been fulfilled by A.D. 70, because Jesus made His declaration around A.D. 30. Historically, did anything happen? Yes, in A.D. 70 Jerusalem was destroyed. Within 40 years after Jesus declared judgment, 20,000 Roman soldiers, under the command of General Titus, surrounded the city and cut off all supplies of food for four months so the people would starve. Then the soldiers came into the city and mercilessly killed more than one million Jews. The soldiers set the Temple on fire and led away 97,000 Jews as captives. <sup>[1]</sup>

At that time the Jewish population was decimated. Historically, little is known about the Jews' lives for the following 60 years. It was not until A.D. 130-135 that they began reassembling with enough strength to attempt one last rebellion against Rome. Then after three years of battling, the Romans were able to crush that rebellion killing 580,000 Jews, and Israel was no longer recognized as a nation (until 1948). It was also at that time that the Roman commander ordered the Temple in Jerusalem to be demolished so completely, that each and every stone was carried away and the land upon which the Temple had stood was plowed over. The Temple was totally destroyed, as Jesus said it would be. <sup>[2]</sup>

Historians have a good number of documents from that time period that give us information about the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. However, most of our information comes from Josephus, a Jewish historian (not Christian) who was employed by the Roman government during that time to watch and record what actually took place. Concerning the war against and destruction of Jerusalem, Josephus wrote many things, including the following:

When they [the Roman soldiers] were come to the houses to plunder them, they found in them entire families of dead men . . . that is of such as died by the famine; they then stood in a horror at this sight, and went out without touching anything. But although they had this commiseration for such as were destroyed in that manner, yet had they not the same for those that were still alive, but they ran every one through whom they met with, and obstructed the very lanes with their dead bodies, and made the whole city run with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men's blood.

(The Wars of the Jews, 1998, vi:viii:5)

It is worth reading the whole of Josephus' writings about the fall of Jerusalem. What is so astounding about them is how clearly—sometimes word for word—they fulfilled the prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 23 and 24. The writings of Josephus are available in most Christian bookshops or libraries, and can be accessed freely on many web sites.

### **Eusebius**

All this occurred in this manner in the second year of the reign of Vespasian [A.D. 70],

according to the predictions of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

*(Ecclesiastical History, III:7)*

### **John Wesley**

This was most punctually fulfilled: for after the temple was burned, Titus, the Roman general, ordered the very foundations of it to be dug up; after which the ground on which it stood was ploughed by Turnus Rufus . . . this generation of men now living shall not pass till all these things be done—The expression implies that a great part of that generation would be passed away, but not the whole. Just so it was; for the city and temple were destroyed thirty-nine or forty years after.

*(The Works of John Wesley, 1985)*

## **The Context of Matthew 24**

We will discuss the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple more fully later, but here we are noting the context in which Matthew 24 begins. We know that in the original Greek manuscripts of the New Testament there are no chapter breaks. Matthew 23 flows right into Matthew 24 with no interruption. Matthew 24:1 goes on to say:

*Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, “Do 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.”*

(Matt. 24:1-2)

After repeating that the Temple would be completely demolished, Jesus walked away from the Temple, and His disciples followed Him.

Then the next verse starts off saying,

*As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives . . .*

(Matt. 24:3)

Where is the Mount of Olives? It is the hill just outside of the Temple mount in Jerusalem. As Jesus sat down with His disciples, they were looking right at the Temple from which they just had exited. <sup>[3]</sup>

Put yourself in the disciples' shoes. If you had been sitting there with Jesus, what would you have asked? On the forefront of the disciples' minds was the judgment that Jesus had just decreed over Jerusalem and the Temple. The disciples asked:

*“Tell us, when will these things happen?”*

They were asking, “When will Jerusalem and the Temple be destroyed?”

As we mentioned earlier, futurist teachers assume that the disciples were asking about the end of the world. However, it is not until the third question that they asked Jesus about the end. The reason that they asked about the end at the same time that they asked about the Temple being destroyed was because in their Jewish minds, what Jesus had just predicted was so cataclysmic that they must have wondered if it would be the end of the world. They were shocked at the thought of God’s holy Temple being destroyed. How could life go on without it? Could it possibly coincide with the end of the world? If not, when would that occur?

We will examine our Lord’s answers to the second and third questions, later. Here we need to realize that the first question the disciples asked Jesus was, “When will these things—Jerusalem and the Temple—be destroyed?”

**Charles Spurgeon**

The disciples enquired first about the time of the destruction of the temple...

*(The Gospel of the Kingdom, 1974, p. 212)*

**Within a Generation**

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