


**Releasing Kings
for Ministry
in the Marketplace**



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Chapter 9

What Is in the Future?

Finally, we need to look at a Christian's view of the future and its impact on marketplace ministry. If we accept that God is a remote, all-knowing, all-controlling Deity Who requires obedience as the highest honor we can give, and if we further accept that we are inherently evil to the core, then our view of the world's future will be skewed seriously toward fatalism, destruction, and darkness. However, with a clear understanding of what the Bible is really teaching about the nature of God and the nature of humanity, we can clear out our misconceptions of tragic endtime predictions and see the future as Scripture reveals it.

Your Eschatology

“Eschatology” is the theological term for the study of endtime events. Millions of American Christians have learned their eschatology from certain engaging preachers and televangelists who teach that everything is predetermined down to the tiniest detail, leaving nothing for us to do but watch the unfolding events before us. Those events include Satan progressively taking over the minds of non-Christians; an evil individual called the Antichrist taking total control of the finances and governments of this world; a Great Tribulation lasting seven years,

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during which time God will pour out His wrath upon the Earth, ending in destruction which encompasses all of humanity's existence: economic, political, social, physical, and spiritual. All fronts will be subjected to the most nefarious afflictions ever known. At some point (before, during, or after the Tribulation), God will remove Christians from the Earth by "rapturing" them into Heaven. All of this could occur at any moment and it most likely will happen very soon.

I will refer to this eschatological viewpoint as "modern, fear-based eschatology" because Bible teachers studied in these areas recognize this way of thinking as a recent phenomenon in the Church and originating from a very pessimistic perspective (in comparison to the optimistic perspective which I will explain shortly).

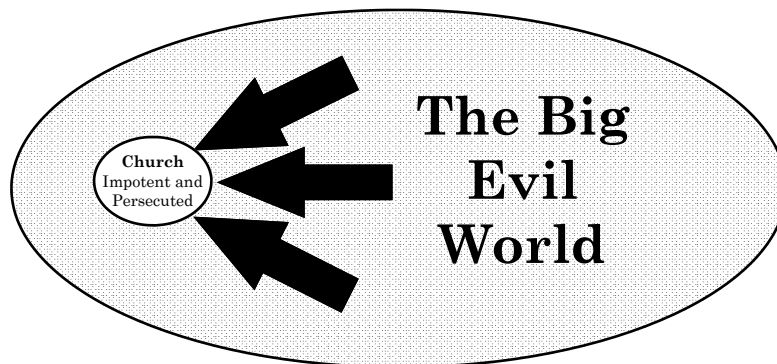
Here are some of the key implications of modern, fear-based eschatology, followed by a diagram that depicts the persecuted, ineffective, and soon-to-be raptured Church.

- The **world** is getting darker and darker, while humanity is becoming increasingly degenerate to the point that God soon will have to pour out His wrath and destroy everything.
- **Governments** and nations are more and more becoming evil tools of the Antichrist. Christians must be particularly leery of Russia, and China (they are Gog and Magog referred to in Scripture), or any coalition of nations which try to work together, such as the United Nations or the European Economic Union.

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- The **Church** is an ark on a stormy sea, strong in herself, but impotent to change the evil which is flooding this world. We dare not leave the protection of the Church lest we be left behind.
- The **message** of the Church is to preach the Gospel to all nations, but don't expect a response from a generally evil population. In fact, a great apostasy will come in the future. At best, a faithful remnant will make it through successfully.
- The **Kingdom of God** is something which is up in Heaven right now, and Jesus will bring it to the Earth for a 1,000-year period after the Tribulation. Hence, the Kingdom is not to be experienced today and any attempt to establish the reign of Jesus Christ now is vain.
- **Work** is a necessary evil, a curse, that contaminates us with worldly influences.

**The Worldview of Christians
Holding to Modern, Fear-based Eschatology**



The Consequences of Your Eschatology

If a believer holds to the views of the modern, fear-based eschatology, can you expect him/her to be effective in the marketplace? The practical and theological answer is a simple, “NO.”

Imagine a businessperson sitting in Church on Sunday morning listening to the preacher try to convince him/her that the Antichrist will soon take over all finances and economic control. Furthermore, God, at any moment, is going to burn everything. How can that shell-shocked businessperson go to work Monday morning, plan for the future, hire new employees, or develop products and marketing plans? How can a teacher, who believes the world is about to end, teach mathematics, science, English, and other subjects which never will be useful to the students sitting in the classroom? How can a newly married couple invest in a home or plan for a family when their pastor tells them week after week that everything is about to end?

Too many Christians carry a fear-based worldview that is robbing them of faith, hope, and love. They have accepted the lie that the Church is impotent and never will impact this world in any significant way. Their perception is stealing their hope because they see the Church as a cumbersome ark moving through an ocean of evil. They focus on the myth that Satan is in control of this world, rather than recognizing that Jesus is Lord and Satan already has been defeated. They think that they love people, but in reality, they live with abiding

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suspensions that their neighbor, the government, the church across town, the financial giants, Russia, China, and the Islamic world soon will be used by the Antichrist to deceive all those who are unaware.

Modern, fear-based eschatology leads one to believe that somewhere there are evil leaders now meeting and strategizing how they will take over the world—if they have not taken control already. An evil conspiracy is in progress.

I have good news for you. I have an optimistic eschatology to offer you. There is only one conspiracy that will end in the takeover of this Earth. It is a holy conspiracy. Jesus Christ and the Church are in the process of taking control. God is answering our prayers: “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.” The Kingdoms of this world are becoming the Kingdoms of our God. The Kingdom of God was established 2,000 years ago when Jesus sat down on His throne, and the Kingdom is growing as seeds in good soil. Yes, there is a great conspiracy to take over the world. I am a part of it and I hope you are, too.

The Historic Church Had a Victorious View

You should know that the pessimistic teachings of modern, fear-based eschatology have been popular in Christianity for only the past 50 years—and in truth those teachings are originating primarily from a small area in the world, in particular segments of mistaken Christian groups in the United States.

Most of the historic Church around the world for

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the last 2,000 years has held a victorious outlook, believing that it is our job to establish the Kingdom of God (that is the will of Jesus Christ) over this Earth. Furthermore, we shall be successful in this task. To see this, just think of the Church during the Middle Ages and the huge cathedrals that were built. Many of those cathedrals took more than 100 years to construct. The people were not thinking that Jesus Christ might return at any moment. No. They were taking responsibility to establish the Church for generations to come.

The most common eschatological belief in the Church during the last 2,000 years is called “Amillennialism,” a belief which emphasizes that it is the Church’s responsibility to establish the Kingdom of God here on this Earth now. I am not espousing Amillennialism, but I do embrace the God-given responsibility we have to establish the Kingdom of God here on Earth while we are alive. I also want to make you aware of how other Christians in history and across the world believe. Amillennialism remains, even today, the primary eschatological belief of most of the mainline denominations, such as Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox.

Many of my readers may have rejected the beliefs of “old mainline denominations” because they consider themselves to be more “biblically based.” If you are one of them, you also should know that the vast majority of Christians in America who considered themselves as “Bible-believing” throughout the 1800’s held to “Postmillennial eschatology,”

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which is a view even more victorious than Amillennialism. Historians often recognize the Postmillennial beliefs of Christians in the 1800's as the impetus for many positive societal changes during the nineteenth century, including the founding of many universities.

The views of modern, fear-based eschatology are a relatively recent phenomena within Christianity. As a Bible-believing Christian, I have rejected those views. I hope that you, too, will reexamine the Scriptures. I really do not care how you envision all of the end time details working out, so long as you embrace the hope of a victorious Church and advancing Kingdom.*

The Truth Will Set You Free

Can you see the importance of changing your worldview? How productive can you be if you believe that God is merely a Force, people are totally evil, and the future is bleak because God's wrath soon will be poured out on all this world? Can you see the impact that modern, fear-based eschatology has on you and on marketplace ministry?

The function of Kings is to advance the Kingdom of God through the marketplace. That kind of outreach takes forethought, planning, and most of all, an optimistic view of the future. No one with a pessimistic view of an impending destruction is going to try very hard to reach the lost through marketplace ministry.

* For a full presentation of a victorious eschatology see Harold R. Eberle's book entitled *Bringing the Future into Focus*, available through Worldcast Publishing, Yakima, WA.

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Under this dark teaching, the average Christian will go into a holding pattern. Indeed, today there are Christians who won't plan for retirement or save for their children's education because they feel that a rapture is right around the corner. Others who are gifted in politics and government excuse themselves from running for office with the idea that it's all going to be over soon—so why bother? Many Christians look forward to the world suffering mightily in the Tribulation, while they observe it from the safety of the clouds. These are seriously flawed attitudes, and they are holding back the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

The truth is that the Kingdom of God is advancing. Jesus is Lord. And we are victorious here on this Earth. Try going to work tomorrow with that attitude!

Things Are Getting Better

Any serious study of history will reveal that the world is not getting darker and darker, but rather improving. Yes, there are pockets of resistance and evil unspeakable in some dark corners. Indeed, we still have major battles ahead of us, but an honest appraisal of world history will lead to the conclusion that, generally speaking, things are getting better.

Just take a couple of snapshots back in time. For example, as an American citizen I can glance back 200 years and see the conditions of my country in the early 1800's. There were some godly leaders laying the foundation of our government but the moral and

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ethical climate of America was tragic. The enslavement of tens of thousands of Africans was a curse upon our culture. Thousands of Chinese people also were being brought into our country to serve as forced laborers. Several of our early presidents owned slaves. President Jefferson is known to have fathered several children through his slaves. The native Americans were being forced off of their lands and many murdered. Pioneers who pushed into the West had almost no churches to attend until years after their settlements were established. Church membership records of that time reveal that the percentage of US citizens attending church then was smaller than it is today. The age of sexual consent in some states was 13 years old. History books tell us that alcoholism was at its highest rate in our country's history. Things were not better morally, ethically, nor spiritually at that time in our history. The "good old days" were not so good.

Glance back further and take a snapshot of the whole world 2000 years ago. When Jesus Christ came into this world as a baby, the Jews were the only group of people in the whole world that had a revelation of the one true God—and even they had not recognized the Messiah. They lived under the domination of Greek culture and the Roman government, both people groups who worshipped many gods, such as Zeus and Venus. At that time in history, most Africans and North Americans were worshipping their ancestors or elements of nature itself. Similarly, the millions in China, India, Russia, and Australia were wandering in darkness. In South

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America, millions were worshipping a bloodthirsty god who demanded human sacrifices, often numbering in the thousands in one ceremony.

Do you think the world was better 2000 years ago? Think again. Consider the words of Paul when he reminded the early Christians of their previous condition: "...formerly you who are Gentiles...were separate from Christ...without hope and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:11-12).

So many Christians today have bought into the everything-is-going-downhill message. When the television brings news of some tragic event to their attention, they lose sight of the bigger picture. They forget that Christianity is exploding in growth across the world today. According to current growth trends, the Church will triple in size between 2000 and 2010. Right now the greatest growth is happening in China, with 20,000 to 25,000 Chinese becoming Christians every day. The same television that brings bad news is now broadcasting the Gospel to every corner of the Earth for the first time in history.

If you have been seduced by modern, fear-based eschatology, then your eyes will be focused on the evils which, indeed, do remain in the Earth. On the other hand, if you have done any real study of world history, you will be glad that you are alive today, rather than at any previous time in history.

Progressive Eschatology

I hold to what is called "Progressive Eschatology." Jesus Christ will build His Church (His people) and

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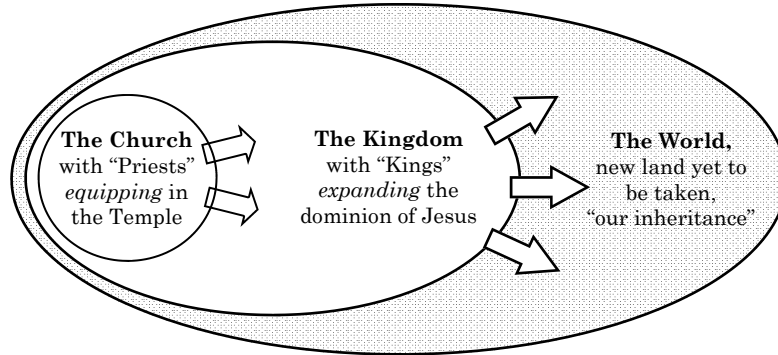
the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18). The Kingdom of God is growing and it will continue to grow until it is the largest tree in the garden (Matt. 13:31-32). Of course, there will be struggles between righteousness and unrighteousness until Jesus returns, but the greatest revival which the world ever has seen is ahead of us.

Here are some of the key implications of progressive eschatology, followed by the diagram which we have been using throughout this book, showing the Church and the Kingdom of God growing across the Earth.

- The **world** is getting brighter and brighter as the glory of the Lord is progressively being revealed.
- **Governments**, nations, and leaders are tools in God's hand. His government is increasing (Is. 9:6) and the authority structures or nations that exist are established by God (Rom. 13:1). We have a responsibility as Kings to possess the lands of politics and governments.
- The **Church** is becoming a spotless Bride, a demonstration of God's glory, power, and love.
- The **message** of the Gospel is being preached to the world, and we are making disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19-20).
- The **Kingdom of God** is accessible now for Christians, and it is advancing in the world to influence the marketplace and all areas of society.
- **Work** is a blessing and a calling from God. My occupation is where ministry occurs.

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The Worldview of Progressive Eschatology *



* For a complete explanation of Progressive Eschatology, consult *Bringing the Future into Focus*, by Harold R. Eberle. (www.worldcastpublishing.com)

Conclusion to Part II

We have considered essential theological adjustments that will provide a natural motivation for marketplace ministry. We have set about to embrace a personal God, show a realistic view of humanity, and provide an optimistic basis for the future.

Do you believe these things? Whether or not you accept them, it is vital that you look into your own theology and uncover your own beliefs. Your entire life is motivated by your view of God, humanity, and the future. I encourage you to examine the material carefully, do further reading, come to your own conclusions.

With an eschatology of optimism as a motivational foundation, we can move “naturally” into marketplace ministry and release a generation of Kings to help us carry out the Great Commission of expanding God’s Kingdom into all the Earth.

