VICTORIOUS ESCHATOLOGY

Dr Neville Westerbeek van Eerten | D.Miss, BVSc

1. Introduction

Eschatology is the study of the last things (Christ's return, resurrection and final judgement). Awakening Impact Ministries is a Victorious Eschatology ministry. We believe Christ reigns now, and the church's calling is to advance God's kingdom into the nations.

This lesson contrasts that understanding with teachings that place the Great Tribulation and the Antichrist as future events for us. The judgments were carried out in the first-century generation, while we still await Christ's bodily return. The expectation is therefore confident participation in God's purposes with the Holy Spirit.

I'd like to thank Dr Harold R. Eberle, whom I met while we were both serving in Pakistan in 2016. His teaching and the book 'Victorious Eschatology' have helped me immensely in understanding this subject.

2. Victorious Eschatology

A. History of Victorious Eschatology

Christians throughout history have proclaimed Christ's ultimate victory, while differing over the Millennium and the fulfilment of Revelation. Our agreement with earlier Christian writers concerns that confidence in His kingdom, without implying that they all shared the chronology presented here.

The Scofield Reference Bible (first published in 1909) was instrumental in popularising dispensational futurism, especially amongst American evangelicals. It was a major vehicle for spreading that interpretation.

B. Victorious Eschatology and Father-Son Theology

According to Father-Son Theology, God's original intention was to have sons and daughters.

Ephesians 1:4-5 (NKJV)

> Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

Our Father's purpose is to bring us into His family through Jesus Christ, forming sons and daughters who are holy and blameless before Him in love. This gives Victorious Eschatology its foundation: we approach the future with confidence in the Father's purposes and participate in His work through evangelism, discipleship and life in the Spirit.

C. Victorious Eschatology and Glorious Sons & Daughters

Further to this, God desires for His sons and daughters to be glorious:

Hebrews 2:10 (NKJV)

> For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

God's purpose of bringing His children to glory is His work of sanctification in the present age. He sanctifies His people, and Hebrews 2:11 makes it clear that we are His sanctified ones and His brothers and sisters.

Hebrews 2:11 (NKJV)

> For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

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Victorious Eschatology sees God's sons and daughters as called to grow in maturity, take the gospel to the nations, and exercise their spiritual authority in Christ. That's the calling of the present day, looking forward to the fullness of glory yet to be revealed. Suffering in no way nullifies that hope. Paul actually puts the two together:

Romans 8:18-19 (NKJV)

> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

D. Victorious Eschatology and Glory Fills the Earth

Victorious Eschatology looks for the knowledge of God's glory to spread throughout the earth before Christ's final return, as His sons and daughters go out to proclaim the gospel and reveal God's character. Habakkuk's promise is that very thing: the global outpouring of the knowledge of God's glory.

Habakkuk 2:14 (NKJV)

> For the earth will be filled
> With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
> As the waters cover the sea.

This expectation shapes our mission. We pray, preach and serve with confidence that the gospel can transform lives and communities throughout the nations. The promise directs our attention to the worldwide knowledge of God's glory and strengthens our faith to participate in His purposes.

3. Futurist Eschatology View

What we believe about the future can shape our expectations and influence how we pray and minister. Teaching that focuses on approaching disaster and the church's decline can weaken confidence in the gospel's transforming power. However, Christians who hold futurist views can also demonstrate strong faith, practise spiritual gifts and pursue evangelism with great expectation.

Victorious Eschatology encourages us to strengthen our hearts by trusting in Christ's present reign. In my ministry in Muslim countries, I expect hundreds—and sometimes thousands—to come to Christ. This expectation motivates me to preach boldly and to trust the Holy Spirit to work powerfully.

A. History of Futurist View

John Nelson Darby (18 November 1800–29 April 1882) was an early, influential leader in the Plymouth Brethren movement. The 1848 division produced Open and Exclusive branches, with Darby becoming the leading figure among the Exclusive Brethren. His teaching helped establish modern dispensationalism and popularise the expectation of a future pre-tribulation rapture. This particular system should be distinguished from the broader range of Christian views that anticipate future fulfilments of biblical prophecy.

Traditional cessationist teaching within the Brethren movement allows that God may heal sovereignly, including in response to prayer, while holding that believers no longer exercise the spiritual gift of healing as they did in the apostolic church. Our disagreement concerns the continuation of these gifts, rather than God's ability to heal. However, there were various serious doctrinal disputes, sufficient for Spurgeon to call them heresies, probably including futurism.

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Charles H. Spurgeon, quoted by James Grant, (1875). The Plymouth Brethren: Their History & Heresies.

> "With the deadly heresies entertained and taught by the Plymouth Brethren, in relation to some of the most momentous of all the doctrines of the Gospel and to which I have adverted at some length, I feel assured that my readers will not be surprised at any other views, however unscriptural and pernicious they may be, which the Darbyites have embraced and zealously seek to propagate."

B. Dispensational View

Darby's futurist system forms part of his dispensational framework, but Christians can hold futurist views without accepting dispensationalism or cessationism.

Cessationism holds that certain spiritual gifts ceased with the apostolic era. Dispensationalism and cessationism are distinct positions, although they have often been taught together. Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians may retain futurist interpretations while affirming the continuing gifts of healing, prophecy and miracles. AIM affirms that the Holy Spirit continues to equip believers through these gifts.

4. Preterist Views vs Futurist Views

A. Futurist View

Many futurist interpreters understand the parousia in Matthew 24 as Christ's future bodily return. However, parousia means "presence," "arrival," or "coming"; the word itself does not establish which event is intended. As explained in our lesson Jesus' Comings, Matthew 24 concerns the first-century judgment witnessed by the generation Jesus addressed. This coming in judgment is distinct from His future bodily return.

B. Preterist View

Full preterism understands Christ's promised coming, the resurrection and final judgment as fulfilled by Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE. It therefore does not anticipate a future bodily return and resurrection as we understand them.

Our lesson, 'The Comings of Christ: His Reign, Judgment and His Final Coming', covers His birth, entrance into public ministry, manifestation at the Transfiguration, coming to the Father for His enthronement in 30 CE, first-century coming in judgment, and His future bodily return. These events are not all described by the same Greek word, and each passage must be interpreted in context.

We're quite happy to say that Jesus' prophecy of the judgment of Jerusalem was for the generation to which He spoke. We see the heavenly sign of 67 CE as the sign of the judgment that was completed in 70 CE. That doesn't mean that every one of His promises has been fulfilled, though. We still look for His bodily coming, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment.

C. Partial Preterist View

Partial preterism holds that much of prophecy was fulfilled in the first century (particularly the prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE). It still holds to the belief in Christ's future bodily return, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment.

Awakening Impact Ministries makes this distinction between fulfilled prophecy and future expectation. As explained in '*The Comings of Christ*', we distinguish Christ's enthronement in 30 CE, the heavenly sign in 67 CE announcing judgment, the judgment culminating in Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE, and His future bodily return.

The Millennium is the phase of Christ's kingdom which follows the Great Tribulation against Jerusalem. His kingdom began at the Ascension; the *Millennium* is not its beginning. The 'thousand years' in Revelation is a symbolic description of that period of time, and we develop that interpretation in our *Millennium* lesson.

Christ reigns, and we are in His kingdom (we are co-heirs) till the resurrection and the final defeat of death. That alone is a source of confidence in evangelism and in the spiritual gifts.

Revelation 20:7-10 (NKJV)

> Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, … They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

5. Millennium

A. Future Millennium

Premillennialism holds that Christ will return bodily before a future millennial reign. Traditional dispensationalism would, of course, expect that such a reign would fulfil the promises to Israel and to Jerusalem. The point is that you don't have to expect a future Millennium to deny Christ's present kingship and the operation of the spiritual gifts today.

Our dispute is over when the millennial phase of His kingdom commences and how the "thousand years" in Revelation are to be interpreted.

B. Does One Day Represent a Thousand Years?

Some prophetic chronologies equate the six days of creation and the seventh day of rest with six thousand years of history and a thousand-year Millennium. That particular calculation is not necessary in every dispensational or futurist interpretation.

The statement that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years does not establish a timetable for Christ's return (2 Peter 3:8). Our Millennium lesson examines the Old Testament's symbolic use of "a thousand" and explains why we understand Revelation's number as describing a real period without requiring exactly one thousand calendar years

C. Victorious Eschatology View

Christ was enthroned at His ascension in 30 CE. The Millennium is a subsequent phase of His existing reign, beginning in December 70 CE after Jerusalem's destruction and the shortening of the devastating judgments. Our Millennium lesson explains this distinction while retaining April 73 CE as the endpoint of the broader Great Tribulation chronology.

1 Corinthians 15:24 (NKJV)

> Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

His kingdom is a present reality. We therefore proclaim the gospel with confidence and expect the Holy Spirit to work through believers, including through gifts of healing. This confidence rests in Christ's authority and promises.

Grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ (Romans 5:21). We serve our reigning King while awaiting His future bodily return, the resurrection and the final defeat of death.

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6. Antichrist

A. Futurist View

Many futurist interpretations anticipate an individual Antichrist who will arise before Christ's final return, oppose God and persecute believers. Popular dispensational presentations associate him with worldwide political, economic and religious control, although interpretations differ over the details.

B. Victorious Eschatology View

We identify Nero as the persecuting ruler represented by Revelation's beast and connect him with Paul's man of lawlessness. We develop these connections in our Antichrist lesson. John also speaks of "many antichrists," showing that opposition to Christ was already active in the first century (1 John 2:18).

Paul reminded the Thessalonians of his earlier teaching and said the mystery of lawlessness was already at work (2 Thessalonians 2:5–7). We therefore interpret his warning in its first-century context.

A central argument for identifying Revelation's beast with Nero is the number 666. The Hebrew spelling נרון קסר, representing "Neron Caesar," totals 666 using the letters' numerical values.

Our chronology places Nero's decision to launch the war of destruction against Judea on 23 December 66 CE, following Cestius Gallus's defeat. This is our calculated date, explained in the lesson *When Prophecy Met History: The Great Tribulation.*

Believers need not await Nero's persecution as a future event. Our calling is to remain faithful to Christ, resist deception and confidently proclaim His kingdom.

7. The Apostle John

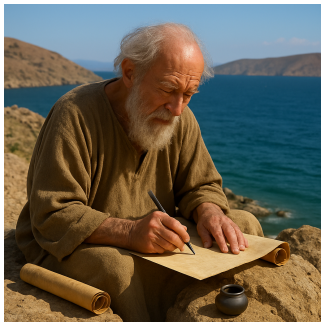
A. Futurist View

Many futurist interpreters date Revelation after Jerusalem's destruction. This lesson follows the earlier dating explained in our Introduction to Revelation.

B. Victorious Eschatology View

This lesson follows the early dating argued in our *Introduction to Revelation*, placing its composition in 63–65 CE. John addressed seven existing churches, whose circumstances and understanding must inform our interpretation.

Events that were future to John's readers need not remain future to us. Much of Revelation concerns the approaching first-century judgments, while Christ's final bodily return, the resurrection and final judgment remain future.



Apostle John on Patmos in 63-65 CE

C. The Great Apostasy

John confronted false teaching that denied Jesus Christ had truly come in the flesh. This denial is associated with docetic teaching—that Jesus only appeared to be human—and with strands of Gnosticism. Although John does not name his opponents "Gnostics," his teaching directly counters this error.

In his Gospel, John declares that "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14). He records Jesus' physical suffering and death, and the risen Lord inviting Thomas to examine His wounds (John 19:28–35; 20:27). These accounts affirm the reality of His humanity and bodily resurrection.

His epistles reinforce this eyewitness testimony: the apostles heard, saw and touched the Word of life (1 John 1:1–3). John identifies denial of Christ's coming in the flesh with the spirit of antichrist and warns that such deceivers were already active (1 John 4:1–3; 2 John 7).

John also insists that knowing God is demonstrated through obedience and love (1 John 2:3–6; 4:7–8). His answer to deception combines sound teaching about Jesus with a transformed life. We understand these first-century warnings as part of the apostolic response to the anticipated apostasy.

8. The Seventy Week Prophecy

A. Futurist Interpretation

Dispensational futurist interpretations separate Daniel's seventieth week from the preceding sixty-nine weeks and place it in a future seven-year tribulation. Our interpretation follows the seventy weeks through to their fulfilment in Christ and the establishment of the New Covenant, without inserting a prolonged gap.

B. Who Confirms the Covenant?

We identify the covenant-confirming figure in Daniel 9:27 as Jesus the Messiah. Within this interpretation, assigning that work to the Antichrist attributes to him what Christ accomplished through His ministry and sacrificial death.

C. Covenant or Peace Treaty?

Daniel speaks of confirming "a covenant with many for one week"; he does not explicitly describe a seven-year peace treaty or name the Antichrist. We understand this covenant through Jesus' declaration that His blood establishes the New Covenant for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28).

His death brings sacrifice and offering to their fulfilment. Although Temple sacrifices continued, His once-for-all sacrifice removed the need for further offerings for sin (Hebrews 10:10–18).

D. Our Chronology

Our Seventy Weeks lesson takes 458 BCE as its starting year. The first sixty-nine weeks represent 483 years, bringing us to the beginning of Jesus' ministry in 26 CE.

We place His death in 30 CE at the midpoint of the final week. The apostles then continued proclaiming and establishing believers in the New Covenant. Our proposed chronology concludes this period with Stephen's martyrdom in 33 CE.

The detailed lesson explains the two 1,260-day periods and the calculated dates. The central argument is that Daniel's seventieth week concerns Christ's covenant-confirming work and its continuation through His apostles, rather than a future treaty made by the Antichrist.

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9. The Rapture

A. Futurist Views

Many dispensational futurists expect believers to be taken to heaven before a future seven-year tribulation. Other futurists place this gathering during or after the tribulation. Our disagreement concerns its timing and relationship to Christ's final return.

B. Victorious Eschatology View

We affirm that believers will be caught up to meet Jesus at His future bodily return. We place this gathering after the Millennium, in connection with the resurrection and before the Great White Throne judgment.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 (NKJV)

> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

We connect this event with the transformation described in 1 Corinthians 15:51–54, when the dead are raised incorruptible and living believers put on immortality. Death's final defeat belongs to the consummation, when Christ delivers the kingdom to the Father.

Our *Rapture* lesson distinguishes this gathering from the first-century judgment passages describing "one taken" and another left. We interpret those passages in relation to judgment and captivity, rather than believers being removed to heaven. We likewise understand the promise to Philadelphia in Revelation 3:10 within its first-century setting.

Our hope is therefore confident expectation of resurrection and everlasting fellowship with Christ. Paul instructs us to comfort one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

10. Great Tribulation

A. Futurist View and the Great Tribulation

Many futurist interpretations place the Great Tribulation ahead of us, associating it with a future Antichrist and the events preceding Christ's final return. Our interpretation places it within the first-century generation Jesus addressed.

Matthew 24:34 (NKJV)

> Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

Jesus connected His warning with the destruction of the temple and gave His hearers a recognisable signal to flee:

Luke 21:20 (NKJV)

> But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.

We identify the surrounding Roman armies with the approaching desolation and understand these warnings as fulfilled in the first century. Our *Dating the Great Tribulation* lesson places the broader period from 23 December 66 CE to 10 April 73 CE—2,300 elapsed days—with Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE as its central judgment.

As explained in *The Comings of Christ: His Reign, Judgment and Final Coming* and *The Rapture Doctrine Under Scrutiny,* this judgment is distinct from Christ's future bodily return and our gathering to Him. We therefore await His return with confidence, without expecting a future repetition of this Great Tribulation.

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B. Gospel Preached to All Nations

Jesus declared that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached throughout the world as a witness to all nations before the end came (Matthew 24:14). Some futurist interpretations regard this as an unfulfilled condition requiring a future Great Tribulation.

However, Paul described the gospel as having gone into "all the world" and having been preached "to every creature under heaven" (Colossians 1:6, 23). He also stated that it had been made known "to all nations" (Romans 16:26).

These first-century statements show that the worldwide witness Jesus foretold was accomplished before Jerusalem's destruction. They describe the gospel's extensive reach in the world of the apostles, rather than a modern geographical checklist.

This fulfilment does not end our missionary calling. Christ continues to commission His people to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19–20).

C. Seven Seals

Many futurist interpretations place Revelation's seven seals in a future period of tribulation. We understand them within the first-century setting of Jesus' prophecy, culminating in the judgments upon Jerusalem.

In our Seven Seals lesson, we associate the opening of the seals with Stephen's martyrdom in 33 CE, when he saw Jesus standing at God's right hand (Acts 7:55–56). This prophetic correspondence links Stephen's vision with Revelation's account of the Lamb opening the seals; Acts does not name the seals.

The seals portray conquest, warfare, famine, death, the suffering of martyrs and divine judgment.

We connect these themes with the events experienced by the first-century church and the world surrounding it. The darkened sun, blood-like moon and other heavenly imagery should be examined within Scripture's prophetic language, rather than automatically treated as predictions of modern astronomical events.

The detailed historical and scriptural correspondences are developed in our *Seven Seals* lesson.

D. 144,000 Jewish Virgins

Revelation 7 describes 144,000 servants of God sealed from the twelve tribes of Israel before the approaching judgments. Revelation 14 presents 144,000 standing with the Lamb, bearing His Father's name and following Him wherever He goes.

We identify these passages as describing the same company of Jewish believers in Jesus within the first-century church. Their sealing marks them as belonging to God before the Great Tribulation.

Their virginity portrays spiritual purity and covenant faithfulness. They follow the Lamb without mixing reliance upon the Old Covenant with their faith in Christ and His New Covenant. This interpretation is developed in our lesson on the 144,000.

E. Army Crossing the Euphrates

Some futurist interpretations connect Revelation's Euphrates passages with a future invasion by an enormous eastern army. We understand these visions within the first-century judgments upon Jerusalem.

Our *Euphrates Army* lesson connects the four angels and their release with the four Roman legions involved in Jerusalem's destruction: V Macedonica, X Fretensis, XII Fulminata and XV Apollinaris. Their forces included supporting infantry and cavalry, with connections to Rome's eastern frontier.

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The imagery of mounted troops, destructive power and the Euphrates points to these armies and their role in the judgment. We treat the "myriads of myriads" as apocalyptic imagery and relate it to the four military forces; this is a proposed prophetic correspondence rather than a straightforward translation of the Greek into a Roman troop total.

Revelation 9's release of the four angels and Revelation 16's drying of the Euphrates are distinct visions. Their relationship and proposed historical fulfilment are examined in the fuller lesson.

F. Dating the Great Tribulation

Our chronology distinguishes Daniel's seventieth week, fulfilled through Christ's ministry and the establishment of the New Covenant, from the later Great Tribulation.

In our *When Prophecy Met History: The Great Tribulation* lesson, we calculate this period from 23 December 66 CE, our proposed date for Nero's decision to launch the war of destruction against Judea, to 10 April 73 CE, our date for Masada's fall. This interval comprises 2,300 elapsed days, with Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE as its central judgment.

We understand Daniel's 2,300 evenings and mornings as primarily fulfilled in the period associated with Onias III and the sanctuary's cleansing under the Maccabees. We propose a further prophetic correspondence with the first-century tribulation, drawing on Jesus' reference to Daniel's abomination of desolation as still awaiting fulfilment in His generation.

The historical reasoning and calendar calculations supporting these dates are developed in the fuller lesson.

G. Forty-Two Month, 1290-, 1335-Day Prophecies

These periods in Daniel and Revelation find their fulfilment in the first-century judgments. Within our chronology, they begin at Passover, 15 Nisan, in 67 CE, associated with the temple signs examined in *67 CE: A Year of Signs*.

We connect Daniel's "time, times, and half a time" with Revelation's forty-two months. Our interpretation identifies the trampling of the holy city with the Idumeans' presence in Jerusalem, ending with its destruction in September 70 CE. Our calendar lesson explains the proposed reckoning of forty-two Hebrew months.

Daniel's 1,290 and 1,335 days extend beyond Jerusalem's fall. We associate their endpoints with the subsequent treatment of Jewish captives and their proposed deliverance in December 70 CE. We understand the blessing promised to those reaching the 1,335 days in relation to the New Covenant and the beginning of the millennial phase of Christ's reign.

The supporting calculations and historical arguments are developed in our dedicated lessons. These prophetic correspondences distinguish the judgments centred upon Jerusalem from the broader tribulation period ending at Masada in April 73 CE.

H. Five-Month Prophecy

Revelation 9:5,10 describes a five-month period of torment. We interpret this within the first-century judgment upon Jerusalem, connecting it with the final siege under Titus in 70 CE.

Our chronology runs from 15 Nisan to 14 Elul, five months in the Hebrew calendar, ending with Jerusalem's destruction. We understand the imagery as portraying the suffering of those caught within that judgment.

Our Five-Month Prophecy lesson develops this correspondence through Revelation's imagery, the historical course of the siege and the Hebrew calendar.

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11. Summary of Victorious Eschatology

- Our hope begins with the Father's purpose to bring sons and daughters into His family through Jesus Christ and form a glorious church.
- Jesus was enthroned at His ascension in 30 CE. His kingdom is a present reality, and His people participate in His reign.
- We understand Jesus' warnings concerning Jerusalem and the Great Tribulation within the first-century generation He addressed.
- Our chronology places the Great Tribulation from 23 December 66 CE to 10 April 73 CE, with Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE as its central judgment.
- We distinguish Christ's enthronement from the millennial phase of His reign, which we place in December 70 CE. Revelation's "thousand years" describes this period symbolically.
- Fulfilled prophecy does not remove our future hope: Jesus will return bodily, the dead will be raised, final judgment will take place, and death will be defeated.
- The Holy Spirit continues to equip believers for evangelism, discipleship, healing and the building up of Christ's body.
- We expect the gospel to transform lives and the knowledge of God's glory to spread throughout the earth. This confidence calls us to faithful action.
- Christians with different prophetic interpretations can share our love for the Father, commitment to mission and confidence in spiritual gifts. Our disagreement concerns how we understand and date particular prophecies.

12. Which View Better Describes Our Abba Father?

Which vision sounds more like the heart of a mighty God and a loving Father to you?

It has always been God's intention to have sons and daughters who are holy and blameless. He accomplished this through Jesus Christ. God will present a glorious Bride to Jesus to be His wife. From the beginning, God intended for the Holy Spirit to have one majestic temple—the Church—and millions of living temples: individual believers filled with the Spirit of God.

Victorious Eschatology places the Father's purpose at the centre of our expectation. Christ reigns, the Spirit equips His people, and the Church advances the gospel while awaiting resurrection and the consummation of His kingdom. This hope calls us to live as faithful sons and daughters who reveal the Father's character to the world.

AI Assistance Disclosure

Most of the research and writing for this lesson was prayerfully undertaken by Dr Neville Westerbeek van Eerten. AI tools assisted with editorial review and checks of consistency, references and chronology. Some wording and illustrations were developed with AI assistance. The author reviewed the final material and retains responsibility for its interpretations, accuracy and conclusions.

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