

# What hope for the future?

— by Peter Hammond

ARE WE AS CHRISTIANS DOOMED to defeat on earth – or are we destined for victory? Does your understanding of the future inspire you to positive prayer and action?

Or are you being paralysed into inactivity by an eschatology of escapism?

Is your faith being strengthened by the victorious vision of the Bible?

Or have you been neutralised by a defeatist view of the end times?

Do you long to see the Church revived and faithfully *“making disciples of all nations?”*

Or do you long to be removed from your responsibilities here on earth?

Is the fulfilment of our Lord’s Great Commission your supreme ambition?

Or is your main obsession to be raptured from your responsibilities here on earth?

Many Christians seem to have succumbed to a negative and defeatist view of the future. Paralysed by pessimism, many passive pew-warmers are praying for the rapture to rescue them out of their responsibilities. Yet, if we were to rightly divide the Word of Truth, and correctly understand the signs of the times, we would return to the fight of faith with renewed vigour and a revitalised vision.

God is all-powerful, all knowing and everywhere present. He is sovereign over the affairs of men. History is His-story. God has not predestined defeat for His people. The ultimate victory of the Kingdom of God is inevitable. Christians are not doomed to defeat, but called to conquest. *“Ask of Me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron sceptre; you will dash them to pieces like pottery. Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned you rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear...”* Ps 2:8-11

*“All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before Him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and He rules over the nations.”* Ps 22:27-28

*“In His days the righteous will flourish... He will rule from sea to sea...to the ends of the earth...His enemies will lick the dust...all kings will bow down to Him and all nations will serve Him.”* Ps 72:11

In these and so many other Psalms it is made clear that the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ will be fulfilled. The ends of the earth will be His possession, the nations His inheritance. All the families of all the nations will bow down before Christ, and He will rule the nations.

Because of these Scriptural prophesies we can have every confidence that the Great Commission will be fulfilled – that all kings will bow down to Christ and all nations will serve Him. We are neither working at uncertainty nor afraid of the result. God’s cause will triumph.

In that famous verse so often quoted at Christmas time: *“For unto us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders...of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.”* Isa 9:6-7

The prophet Daniel was given that tremendous vision and insight to world history. He saw a statue with a head of gold, the chest of silver, the stomach of bronze, the legs of iron and the feet of iron and clay. This symbolised the various empires and kingdoms of the world. He saw a rock come and smash the entire statue – the iron, bronze, clay, silver and gold, to pieces. And this stone, which the builders rejected as worthless, grew to be a mountain that filled the whole earth. *“In the time of those kings, the God of Heaven will set up a Kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.”* Dan 2:44

Daniel saw clearly that Jesus *“was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every*

*language worshipped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His Kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”* Dan 7:14

Even more than this, Daniel prophesied of the day when: *“The sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole Heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His Kingdom will be an everlasting Kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey Him.”* Dan 7:27

This is confirmed throughout the prophets: *“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”* Hab 2:14

*“The Lord will be awesome to them when He destroys all the gods of the land. The nations on every shore will worship Him, everyone in its own land.”* Zeph 2:11

*“The Lord will be King over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and His Name the only Name.”* Zech 14:9

Is there hope for the future? Absolutely. Almighty God is sovereign. He has granted us the keys of the Kingdom, what we bind on earth will be bound, what we loose will be loosed. The Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, Rom 1:16. We are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus Who loves us, Rom 8:37. *“Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world”* 1 John 4:4. *“We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us”* Phil 4:13.

This is what the Great Commission calls us to: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations... teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you...”* Matt 28:18-19

This is what it means to pray the Lord’s Prayer, *“Your Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”* Matt 6:10 *“The kingdom of this world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.”* Rev 11:15 ■