

Jewish Eschatology

Eschatology: Study of God
Developing People in His Image
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Understanding What We Know AND What We Do Not Know

GETTING OUR BEARINGS

Hemmed in by Worldviews

- Eschatology has been defined by *Gentile Church* worldviews
 - Gentiles (Non-Oriental) worldviews:
 - Empirical – Though this is functionally illogical
 - Neither observable nor repeatable
 - Linear – Constructs flow from point A to point B, etc.
 - Hierarchical Relationships
 - Chronological Relationships

Distortion Adherence to Worldview

- Old Testament descriptions are distorted to fit into various Gentile schemas of eschatology
- Eschatology – (ἔσχατος) Greek word that means the end or towards the end
- Gentile worldviews put eschatology at the end of God’s working with man
- Today seeing the “end” means that one has “cracked” God’s code, smartest one in class

Current Approaches to Eschatology

- The approaches to eschatology during the Church Age reminds me of the “blind men and the elephant” story
- Each approach only sees a part of the whole of eschatology
- Why has this occurred?



Worldview Blindness

- Each major approach is blinded or limited by their own worldview
- They are trapped, they do not recognize their worldview limitations
- Understanding one’s worldview is essential for spiritual growth!



Worldview (Philosophy) Binds Past, Present, Future into a Continuum



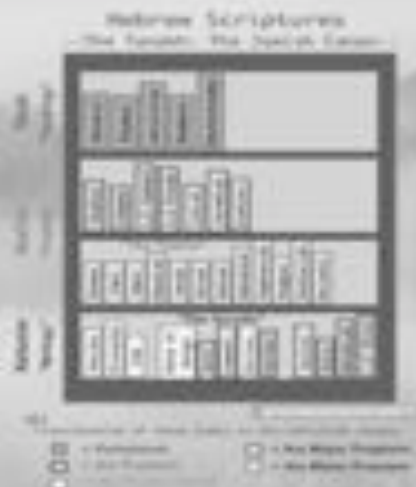
My Goal: For You and Myself

- Understanding each of the major worldviews to Eschatology
 - Understanding their strengths and weaknesses
 - Borrowing the coherent and rejecting the incoherent based solely upon the Bible
- We will start with the foundational approach to eschatology that is usually omitted in every study

Jewish (Hebrew) (Old Testament) Eschatology

The Hebrew word most often translated as end, especially as referenced to eschatology is אַחֵרִית [acherith] which has a meaning beyond just the study of the "end"

The end is meaningless without an understanding of the beginning that required the ending; that is, the end is inseparable from its beginning and vice versa



Geerhardus Vos

- Vos, in examining these passages
 - Job 8:7 (And though your beginning was small,
 - your latter days will be very great.)
 - Proverbs 5:1-6 (Fruit of sexual immorality)
- He showed how the word "acherith" is used as the end of something due to its beginning
- This is essential to grasp as it directly relates the end to what first started the process of the movement to the end

Hebrew Conceptual Eschatology

- Anticipated (Past)-The "already" cannot be isolated from the present or the future but defines the "why and how" of both
- Inaugurated (Present)-The "current" is merely the bridge between the Anticipated and the Future; this is where man impacts God's plan
- Future (Future)-Without the Past the Future is dangling beyond comprehension, without why

Eschatology Binds Past, Present, Future into a Continuum



Our Usual Approach to Doctrines



Eschatology is Kingdom of God Kingdom of Heaven

Kingdom of God/Heaven

Past

Present

Future

Kingdom of God is Outside of Creation

- Jewish conception understood God as always in control as His kingdom has always existed
- He is outside of this creation but ordering this creation according to His Law and plan
- God's plan is continuing unfolding on schedule
- 7 But the Lord sits enthroned forever; He has established His throne for judgment.
- 8 He judges the world with righteousness; He executes judgment on the nations with fairness.
- (Psalms 9:7-8)

God the Father Anointed God the Son

- The Father Who is outside of creation has anointed the Son Who is the intercessor with this creation (Jo 1:1-3)
- The past, present and future are a continuum of God working out His plan for His people without setback, delay or alterations
- 6 Your throne, God, is forever and ever; the scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of justice.
- 7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy more than your companions.
- (Psalms 45:6-7)

Isaiah's Vision-God in Time

- The Kingdom of God (eternal) interjected into Isaiah's present (our past) to define Isaiah's calling to his people (his present) with messages that often looked into the future; short-term and long-term
- Isaiah's message could have been totally contained in this one vision and more fully realized by him, via the Spirit, as he came to understand the vision more completely
- In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"
- (Isaiah 6:1-3)

God on Earth, Like God in Heaven

- Isaiah does not see the Kingdom of God on earth as separate from the Kingdom of God outside of creation
- One is the extension of the other which cannot not be altered by man or Satan
- Isaiah sees the antithesis of his mission in verse three when at some point the people's eyes will see and their ears will hear and accept this truth. God reigns (New Covenant)
- 1 Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice.
- 2 Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, a shelter from the storm, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.
- 3 Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed, and the ears of those who hear will give attention.
- (Isaiah 32:1-3)

Jesus is the Kingdom of Heaven

- From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!" (Mt 4:17)
- "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the good news!" (Mark 1:15)
- Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God will come, He answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with something observable; no one will say, 'Look here!' or 'There!' For you see, the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:20-21)

Jesus (Creator) Is Past, Present and Future in Himself (Eschatology)

- "My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus. "If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. As it is, My kingdom does not have its origin here. (Ps 45:6-7; John 18:36)
- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. (John 1:1-3)

Eschatology is Ongoing, not Ending

- Jesus replied, "I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot **see** the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)
- Jesus answered, "I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot **enter** the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)
- If I have told you about things that happen on earth and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you about things of heaven? No one has ascended into heaven except the One who descended from heaven — the Son of Man. (John 3:12-13)

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What Happened to the Jews?

- They could not leave their worldview behind
 - They would not conceive of a life without the flesh
 - They would not accept a coming world different from their present world
- They redefined their Scriptures with Traditions
 - Messiah would only be a human king
 - Israel would be the pinnacle of all nations
 - All would come to Israel to learn of God

Their Worldview Killed Them

- Their understanding became paramount over the teachings of God
 - Talmud
 - Mishnah, Midrash
- Whenever they encountered people with the true worldview from God:
 - Driven out of from society
 - Killed (Venerated by future generations)

Relationship Beginning to Ending

Genesis

- Night
- Seas
- Sun, moon, stars
- Flesh, from the old creation, earth
- Sin
- Rebellion
- Reject God as Lord and King

Revelation

- No night
- No seas
- No sun, moon, stars
- New body from new creation
- No sin
- Willing slaves to Christ
- Accept God as Lord and King

Eschatology *is* the Gospel

- Eschatology is *not* about what is coming
- Eschatology *is* the ongoing plan of God in Christ
- Jewish eschatology is our eschatology rather than the blind, piecemeal worldview approach
- It is our *privilege* to be part of God's plan in each present (day) allotted to each of us as His plan unfolds from past to future