A close-up photograph of a hand holding a quill pen over an open book. The book's pages are filled with dense Hebrew text, likely from the Bible. The lighting is warm and focused on the pen and the text it is about to write or has just written. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the foreground action.

Dr. Christopher Cone
drcone.com
calvary.edu

PROPHECY AND THE BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

500% IDK

Is the world going to end on September 23? Biblical prophecy of the 'Rapture' predicts the apocalypse will occur on that exact date

- Conspiracy theorists and doom-mongers predict the world is ending
- Stars are set to align on September 23 which could fulfill a Biblical prophecy
- The outlandish theory will see 'worthy' Christians lifted by Jesus into heaven
- The Revelation 12 Sign theory says Leo and Virgo will unite to bring the 'Rapture'

By MAILONLINE REPORTER

PUBLISHED: 04:54 EST, 15 September 2017 | UPDATED: 15:14 EST, 3 December 2017

- Those who do believe in the Rapture attribute their beliefs to two specific Bible scriptures.
- According to 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, the heavens will open during the end of days, with God lifting those who are alive 'into the clouds'.
- And 2 Peter 3:10, says: 'But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.'
- <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4887222/Biblical-prophecy-predicts-Rapture-September-23.html#ixzz57xH84e9n>



Trump calls Jerusalem Israel's capital 03:31

Editor's Note: Diana Butler Bass (@dianabutlerbass) holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from Duke University and is the author of 10 books on American religion and culture, including "Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks" (forthcoming, HarperOne: April 2018). The views expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.

(CNN) — As I watched Donald Trump announce that the United States would recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move our embassy to that city, I could only think of one thing: my high school youth group Bible study.



Diana Butler Bass

I know that sounds odd. Especially coming from a liberal Episcopalian like me. But there you have it. The President makes a world-important declaration about global politics, and an absurdly apocalyptic thought arises, "Jerusalem? The Last Days must be at hand!"

When I was a teenager in the 1970s, I attended a "Bible church," a nondenominational congregation that prided itself on a singular devotion to scripture. We read the Bible all the time: in personal Bible study and evening

Bible classes. We listened to hourlong Sunday morning sermons. For us, the Bible was not just a guide to piety. It also revealed God's plan for history. Through it, we learned how God had worked in the past and what God would do in the future.

Central to that plan was Jerusalem, the city of peace, and the dwelling place of God. It was special to the Jews because it was the home of Abraham and David. It was special to us because it was where Jesus had died and risen. We believed that ultimately, Christ would return to Jerusalem to rule as its king. We longed for this outcome -- and we prayed that human history would help bring about this biblical conclusion.

- This theology -- a literal belief that all these things must happen before Jesus will return to reign on Earth -- is called "dispensational pre-millennialism" **and it is not the quirky opinion of some isolated church.** Although the majority of Christians do not share these views, versions of dispensational pre-millennialism dominate American evangelicalism.

• <https://www.cnn.com/2017/12/08/opinions/jerusalem-israel-evangelicals-end-times-butler-bass-opinion/index.html>

IN THE MAGAZINE CULTURE

THE BIBLE: SO MISUNDERSTOOD IT'S A SIN

BY KURT EICHENWALD ON 12/23/14 AT 6:54 AM



- They are God's frauds, cafeteria Christians who pick and choose which Bible verses they heed with less care than they exercise in selecting side orders for lunch. They are joined by religious rationalizers—fundamentalists who, unable to find Scripture supporting their biases and beliefs, twist phrases and modify translations to prove they are honoring the Bible's words.

Newsweek

IN THE MAGAZINE CULTURE

THE BIBLE: SO MISUNDERSTOOD IT'S A SIN

BY KURT EICHENWALD ON 12/23/14 AT 6:54 AM



- This is no longer a matter of personal or private faith. With politicians, social leaders and even some clergy invoking a book they seem to have never read and whose phrases they don't understand, America is being besieged by Biblical illiteracy. Climate change is said to be impossible because of promises God made to Noah; Mosaic law from the Old Testament directs American government; creationism should be taught in schools; helping Syrians resist chemical weapons attacks is a sign of the end times—all of these arguments have been advanced by modern evangelical politicians and their brethren, yet none of them are supported in the Scriptures as they were originally written.

IN THE MAGAZINE CULTURE

THE BIBLE: SO MISUNDERSTOOD IT'S A SIN

BY KURT EICHENWALD ON 12/23/14 AT 6:54 AM




- So why study the Bible at all? Since it's loaded with contradictions and translation errors and wasn't written by witnesses and includes words added by unknown scribes to inject Church orthodoxy, should it just be abandoned?
- No. This examination is not an attack on the Bible or Christianity. Instead, Christians seeking greater understanding of their religion should view it as an attempt to save the Bible from the ignorance, hatred and bias that has been heaped upon it. If Christians truly want to treat the New Testament as the foundation of the religion, they have to know it. Too many of them seem to read John Grisham novels with greater care than they apply to the book they consider to be the most important document in the world

DECEMBER 4, 2017

Support of Israel Wanes Among Younger Evangelicals

- Forty-five percent say the Bible has had the biggest influence on their views of Israel.
- Sixty-three percent say they support Israel primarily because “God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people.”
- Twenty-two percent are not sure if biblical promises about the land of Israel are still in force.
- Eighty percent say God promised the land of Israel to Abraham and his descendants for all time.
- Eighty percent say the rebirth of Israel in 1948 was a fulfillment of biblical prophecy.
- <https://lifewayresearch.com/2017/12/04/support-of-israel-among-younger-evangelicals/>



**Where
does
Biblical
prophecy
fit???**

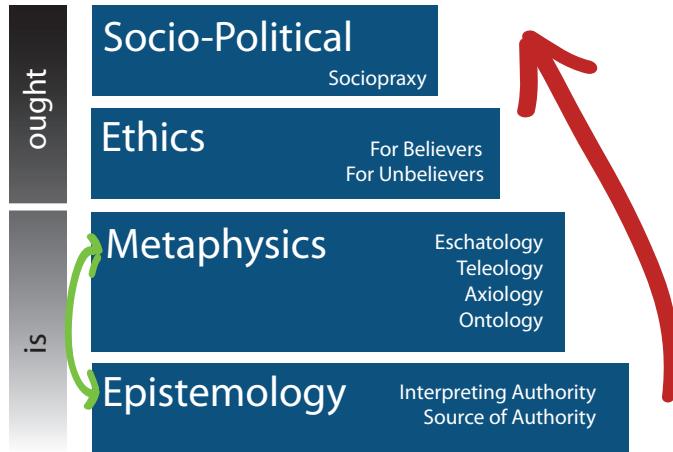
Components of Worldview



Prophecy and “Is”

Prophecy and Epistemology

Source of Authority: Fulfilled Prophecy in the Creation Week



- 1:3, 6, 9(x2), 11, 14, 15, 20 (x2), 24, 26
- 11 fulfilled prophecies demonstrate His sovereignty, and rights as Creator

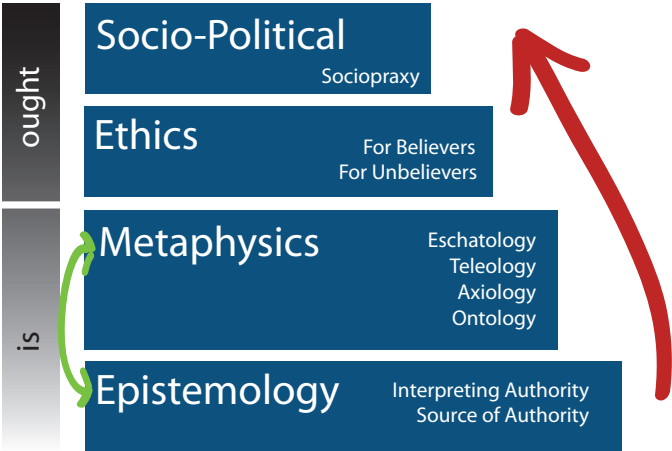
Interpreting Authority (Hermeneutics): Fulfilled Prophecy in Genesis



- 2:16-17 – spiritual death from sin
- 2:18 – a helper
- 3:19/5:5 – physical death from sin
- 6-9 – deliverance through judgment
- 17-18/21 – a son
- 19 – judgment, looking back
- 31 – striped and spotted sheep
- 32:28, 35:10 – Israel
- 37, 40-41 – dreams come true
- Fulfilled prophecy in Genesis provides a hermeneutic model for the rest of prophecy.

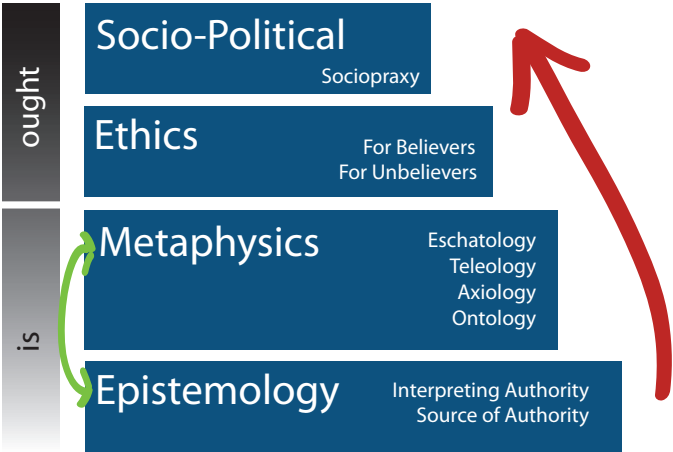
Prophecy and Metaphysics

Prophecy and Metaphysics: Pessimism?

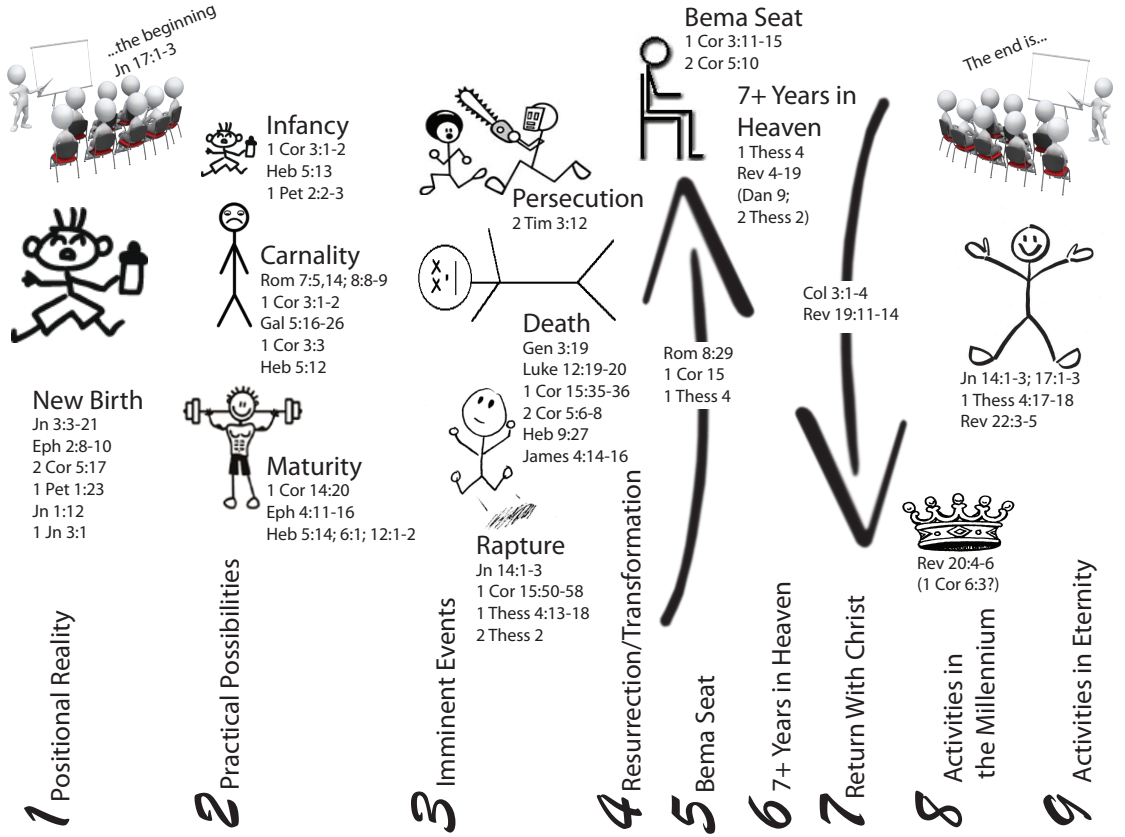


- People grow more....awful (2 Tim 3:1-5)
- More wars and more unstable environment (Mt 24:7)
- A third of the vegetation is burned up (Rev 8:7)
- A third of all sea creatures killed (Rev 8:9)
- A third of all fresh water polluted (Rev 8:10-11)
- A third of humanity is killed by war (Rev 9:15)
- A third of sun, moon and stars fail to give light (Rev 8:12)
- Heaven and earth pass away (Rev 21:1) with intense heat (2 Pet 3:10)

Prophecy and Metaphysics: Apathy?

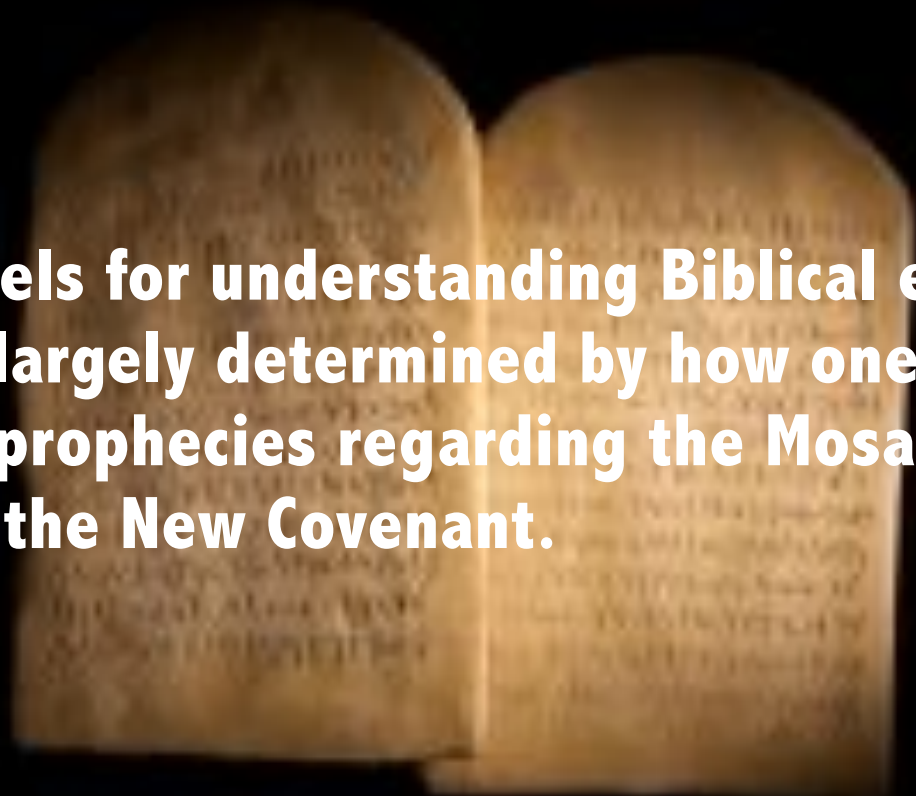


- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
- 13 *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.*
- 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.
- 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.
- 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*
- 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.



Prophecy and “Ought”

Prophecy and Ethics

The image shows two stone tablets with Hebrew text, representing the Mosaic Law. The text is written in a cursive script and is arranged in columns. The tablets are set against a dark background, and the text is highlighted in white. The text on the tablets is the Ten Commandments, written in Hebrew. The first tablet contains the first five commandments, and the second tablet contains the remaining five. The text is:

Modelos para entender a ética bíblica
são determinados principalmente por como se
vê as profecias sobre a Lei Moisés e o
Novo Testamento.

3 Views on Biblical Ethics

Components of Worldview



- Continuity – three categories of Law (moral, civil, ceremonial) all still in effect.
 - Theonomy, Reconstructionism
 - Rooted in authority is law (good is being like God)
- Semi Continuity – moral Law still in effect for sanctification
 - Reformed
 - Rooted in authority is law (good is being like God)
- Discontinuity – the Law not applicable for sanctification
 - Dispensational
 - Rooted in authority over law (God is over law)

A Continuity Model

Components of Worldview



- Rooted in authority is law (strong)
- “The abiding validity of the Law” (Bahnsen, “Theonomy in Christian Ethics, ch. 2)
- Matthew 5:17 shows that moral, civil, and ceremonial are all equally applicable
- Ceremonial Law as restorative

A Continuity Model

Components of Worldview



- “The accomplishment of redemption changes the way in which we observe the ceremonial law, and the change of culture and times alters the specific ways in which we observe the case laws. The cases are different but the same moral principles remain.”
(Greg Bahnsen, “The Faculty Discussion of Theonomy,” Question 9, <http://www.cmfnow.com/articles/pe192.htm>, 1978, at RTS)
- The James 2:10 problem

A Semi-Continuity Model

Components of Worldview



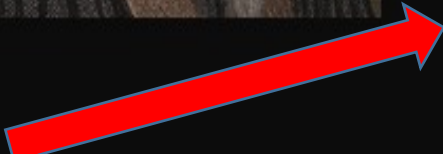
- The prevailing view of the church (David Jones, *Introduction to Biblical Ethics* (Nashville: TN, B&H Academic, 2013), 76.)
- Acts 15 ruled the ceremonial law not applicable to NT believers
- NT voices approval of non-theocratic governments (e.g., Rom 13:1-5, 1 Pet 2:13-17), thus civil law, not applicable
- Moral law is for sanctification (Jones, 139)
- Rooted in authority is law (weak)



To be Christians under the law of grace does not mean to wander unbridled outside the law, but to be engrafted in Christ, by whose grace we are free from the curse of the law, and by whose Spirit we have the law engraved upon our hearts.



To be Christians under the law of grace does not mean to wander unbridled outside the law, but to be engrafted in Christ, by whose grace we are free from the curse of the law, and by whose Spirit we have the law engraved upon our hearts.



A Semi-Continuity Model

Components of Worldview



- “The law sends us to the gospel that we may be justified, and the gospel sends us to the law again to enquire what is our duty in being justified.” (Samuel Bolton, *True Bonds of Christian Freedom* (London:UK, Banner of Truth, 1964), 80)
- “Since the Decalogue is a reflection of God’s moral character, the norms codified in the Ten Commandments are universally applicable and demonstrable both before and after their issuance on Mount Sinai.” (Jones, 139.)

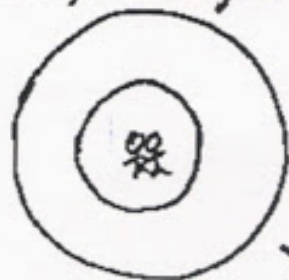
A Semi-Continuity Model

Components of Worldview

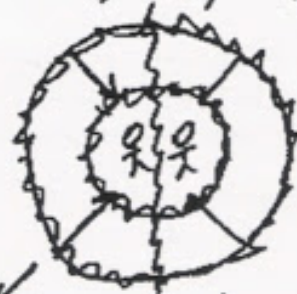


- “As the kingdom of God grows, then the gospel gradually counteracts and corrects the effects of sin in the world through the process of restoration and reconciliation...the gospel is no less comprehensive than the fall...” (Jones, 64.)
- The James 2:10 problem

Designed for good



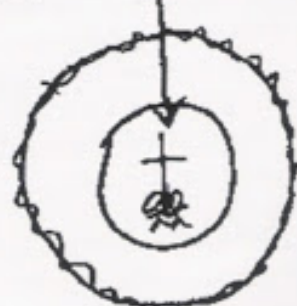
Damaged by evil



Seal together to heal



Restored for better



A Semi-Continuity Model

Components of Worldview



- “For Christians, then, the Sabbath is a sign of redemption and, as such, it depicts the eternal rest they have received from Jesus in salvation...Keeping the Sabbath ought not to be a legalistic burden, characterized by lists of permitted and forbidden activities. Rather the Sabbath ought to be a joyous celebration and a blessing...In a specific sense the fourth commandment calls believers to observe a regular day of worship...not to observe the Sabbath, in either a broad or a specific sense, is to behave in a distinctly un-Christlike manner...in the NT...the early church moved the day of Sabbath observance to the first day of the week.” (Jones, 166.)
- The James 2:10 problem

A Discontinuity Model

Components of Worldview



- Mosaic Law not ethically applicable to church
- Must be rooted in authority over law, if consistent
- Cannot make use of the threefold division of law if consistent
- One ethical standard (the holiness of God), Two distinct ethics applications: for unbelievers, and believers

A Discontinuity Model: Ethics for Unbelievers

Components of Worldview



• Vertical

- Universal accountability – Rom 1:18-21, (Romans 1-3), Mt 5:48
- Sanctity of life, a universal mandate, Gen 9:6, based on *imago dei*
- Belief in Jesus
 - Eph 2:1-3 – nature of unbelievers
 - Heb 11:6 – no ethical value outside of faith
 - Jn 6:47, 20:31, Jn 20:27

• Horizontal

- Sanctity of life, universal mandate, Gen 9:6, based on *imago dei*

A Discontinuity Model: Ethics for Believers

Components of Worldview



• Vertical

- Sanctity of life, a universal mandate, Gen 9:6, based on *imago dei*
- Through belief, accountability and faith mandate met
- Be obedient, by being holy (1 Pet 1:14-16)
- Be holy by loving God (Mt 22:37-40, 1 Cor 16:22)
 - Assuming Mt 28:20 refers to Jesus' commands to love (Mt 22:37-40 – not just grounded in the Law, but also the Prophets)
- Love God by being obedient (Jn 14:15, 21, 24, 15:10, 1 Jn 5:2-3)
- Holiness, obedience, and love expressed in many specific ways (some vertical some horizontal)

A Discontinuity Model: Ethics for Believers

Components of Worldview



• Horizontal

- Sanctity of life, a universal mandate, Gen 9:6, based on *imago dei*
- Love believers (Mt 22:37-40, Jn 13:34-35, 15:12-13, 1 Jn 4:7, 5:2)
 - Love seeks benefit for others: Gal 6:10, Php 2:3-5, Heb 10:24
 - Primary need of others? Sanctification
- Love unbelievers (Mt 22:37-40, 5:44, Lk 10:29-37, Rom 12:19-21, 1 Cor 5:9-13, Col 4:5-6, 2 Tim 2:24)
 - Love seeks benefit for others: Jn 3:16, Gal 6:10, Eph 2:3-7, Php 1:15-18
 - Primary need of others? Justification

A Discontinuity Model: Implications

Components of Worldview



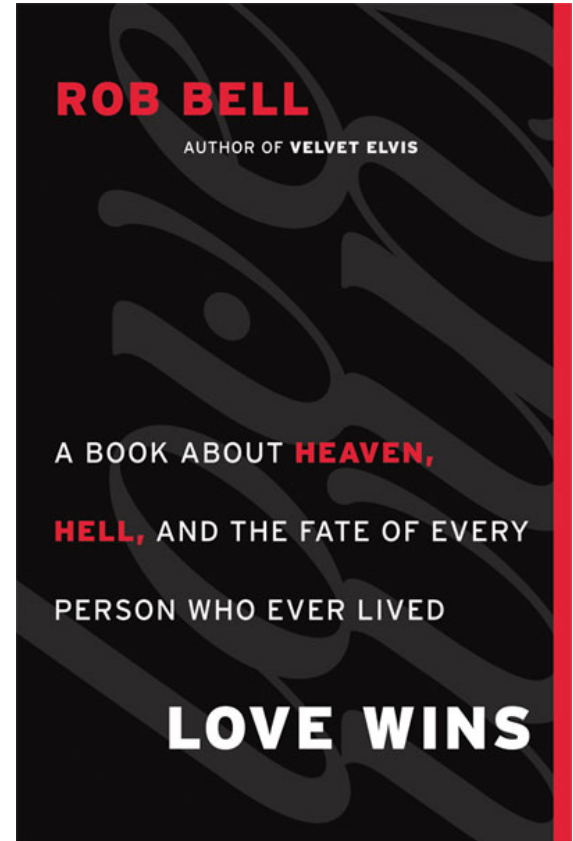
- Follows from Biblical epistemology (consistently literal grammatical historical hermeneutic)
- Follows from Biblical metaphysics
 - God is holy (ontology)
 - God determines good (axiology)
 - All for God's glory (teleology)
 - God will be glorified (eschatology)
- Provides certainty in specific ethics situations
- Leads to specific social political thinking

Prophecy and Socio-Political

Prophecy and Socio-Political

- *“If you believe that you’re going to leave and evacuate to somewhere else, then why do anything about this world?”*

(Rob Bell, *Love Wins* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2011), 46.)



Artificial Methods to Avoid Pessimism and Apathy

- Genre override
 - Apocalyptic
 - Myth
- Allegorical hermeneutics
- Canonical/complementary hermeneutics
- Theological hermeneutics
- Postmodern hermeneutics

Artificial Conclusion to Avoid Pessimism and Apathy: Kingdom is Now!

- Postmillennialism – Christ returns after the kingdom begins
- Amillennialism – the kingdom is a current spiritual reality
- Preterism (full and partial) – some are postmil, others amil
- Covenant Premillennialism – while there is a future earthly kingdom, a spiritual component is in place now
- Progressive dispensationalism – similar to covenant premillennialism
- Classical dispensationalism – some hold to “mystery form” of the kingdom (from Mt 13:11, Mk 4:11, Lk 8:10)
 - Mt 13:11 - Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.

Implications of *Kingdom Now* Theology

- “The kingship of the Messiah is the sovereignty of the Truth which He reveals and embodies. In virtue of this He demands obedience from all men.” (C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, UK: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1953), 229.)
- **...so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth...Php 2:10**

Implications of *Kingdom Now* Theology

- ...This future America will be again a “city on a hill” drawing all nations to the Lord Jesus Christ and teaching them to subdue the earth for the advancement of His kingdom. (American Vision, “About:Vision,” at <http://americanvision.org/about/#.T-krbitYta8>. Viewed 6/25/2012.)
- **‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. – Mt 6:10**

What is the Kingdom?

- As Sovereign Creator, God has an eternal kingdom (Ps 47)
- God created humanity in His image, to serve as His viceroys over creation (Gen 1:26-28)
- At the Fall, humanity lost the qualification, the capability, and the mandate to rule (Gen 3, 9:7)
- God promised David that there would be an eternal kingdom manifestation on earth with a qualified King (2 Sam 7)

What is the Kingdom?

- That kingdom manifestation was offered when Christ came (e.g., Mt 4:17, 6:10)
- That kingdom manifestation was postponed when it's King was rejected (Mt 12-13)
- That kingdom manifestation will begin its fulfillment when Christ returns (Rev 19-20)

What is the Kingdom?

- In the meantime, believers in Jesus are positionally transferred to His heavenly kingdom (Col 1:13), and are told to seek things above, because the kingdom is not here in any form (Col 2:20-3:4)
- Also, In the meantime, Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father, awaiting the beginning of that kingdom (Ps 110:1-2, Acts 2:34-36, 5:30-32, Rom 8:34, Eph 1:20, Heb 1:3,13, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2, and 1 Pet 3:22).

Is the Kingdom Here and Now?

- In a word: No. Not in any form.
- “The kingdom exists in this intercalation only in the sense that the sons of the kingdom are present. But strictly speaking the kingdom of the heavens in Matthew 13 refers to the prophesied and coming kingdom on the earth.” (Stanley D. Toussaint, *Behold the King: A Study of Matthew* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1980), 172.)

Implications of *Kingdom Not Now* Theology

- The literalist cannot appeal to the advancement of the kingdom on earth for social-political motivation. Still, there is significant motivation:
- **“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness...be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation” – 2 Pet 3:10-12**
- **“You, however, continue in the things you have learned... – 2 Tim 3:14**

Implications of *Kingdom Not Now* Theology

- **“...you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober” – 1 Thes 5:4-5**
- **Just as does Peter and Paul, Jesus presents the eschatological program as a motivator for godliness here and now: “Behold, I am coming quickly and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done” – Rev 22:12**

Pessimism and Apathy?

- Jesus' kingdom isn't here and it isn't now, but many of its citizens are.
- **“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith” –Gal 6:10**

Components of Worldview



Prophecy Undergirds the **Biblical** Worldview



50% IDK
50% IDC

- 19 So we have **the reliable prophetic word**, to which you do well to **pay attention** as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.
- 20 But this first you are knowing, that all prophecies of Scripture are not coming about of one's own interpretation,
- 21 for not in human will was produced prophecy ever but by being brought of the Holy Spirit men spoke from God. – 2 Pet 1:19-21