

What eschatology fits our socio-cultural conditions better? An exercise in theology “from below”

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Abstract-

Eschatological beliefs have matured alongside both biblical composition and Christian history. This evolution can be traced using cultural evolutionary studies. The process reflects attempts to adapt to new conditions and challenges—sometimes giving place to more focused views, but also sometimes to failures and dysfunctional forms or fruitless variations. It becomes a theological duty to assess this evolution better. The key element is the reception of these eschatological beliefs, to discern what expressions of them are more helpful in encouraging Christian fidelity, coping with distress, and engaging with individual and societal challenges. In this article, we outline a research programme that links eschatology to anthropology, and that tries to analyse beliefs according to state-of-the-art methods, such as evolutionary cultural studies and research on the believing process. We also contribute a case study based on the concept of hell to test the proposed approach.

Index Terms-

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