

This book is an odyssey into the truth of leadership's nature and essence. It is written in a contemplative style and uses dialogue to exercise a leader's will, intelligence, and spirit using dialogue, meditation, and contemplation.

THE END? OR, THE BEGINNING?: APOCALYPSE - A FIERY END? - OR, A GLORIOUS NEW BEGINNING?

By William J Allen

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THE END? **OR, THE BEGINNING?**

**APOCALYPSE – A FIERY END? – OR,
A GLORIOUS NEW BEGINNING?**

**Does God's Plan for man end
with the Apocalypse?**

WILLIAM J ALLEN

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Chapter 1 – “How It All Began”

First, we need to think through the foundations of our beliefs. This chapter will deal with the radical changes of the last five decades, why it is happening, and what is fueling it.

It began with the *Enlightenment Era* into the early 1700's, when it became fashionable to diminish God to a manageable totem. It reached a crescendo when Darwin provided an alternate explanation for animal life and human creation. But the real changes we see today had their germination in *Evolutionism*, the *Darwinian* idea that everything boils down to 1) man procreates, 2) man lives, 3) man dies. This means that *nothing* matters, finally. Culture, art, language, and everything else in man's experience, are impersonal, random, ultimately meaningless. There is a vague hope that this would result in an upward slant, with things eventually improving.

This *onward and upward* idea was captured politically by politicians and philosophers in a movement called *progressivism*. Fueled by Darwinian instincts, the idea was that this onward and upward concept would occur naturally, provided that the best qualified leaders oversaw the masses. Their superior education, training, genes, and honed skills would lead society to Utopia. In this way, all of society would be improved, over time. That is Socialism 101.

This was believed fervently and promoted by Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, John Dewey, educators,

philosophers, modern scientists, and even much of “Christian” religion.

What does this have to do with the *End Times*? We need to know where we are coming from, beginning at the Beginning. If we do not, a study of the *End Times* will just be an academic exercise. We need to see how our changing culture provides background for such a study. We need to think more about what concerns us and why.

We need to dig deeper. Back to the very beginning. Let us begin, then, at the beginning - the very beginning. At least, as the world sees it and scientism tells us.

There was nothing going on in the dark, dank universe. Nothing? Yep, nothing – because there was *nothing* there. Well, except for an incredibly tiny (unmeasurable, unseeable) bit of matter floating around out *there*, wherever “there” might be.

Suddenly, *it* exploded – who knows why or how? But, *it* did. That is amazing, but there is a lot more. Even more amazing, this sub-microscopic bit gave birth, in the explosion, to gazillions of matter. It must have been something like our fireworks displays. These bits of matter kept moving, expanding, heating, collating, and cooling, until we had our stars, moon, and planets, all serendipitously arranging themselves in an orderly, consistent pattern.

Much later, on one tiny planet we call Earth, fantastic things occurred. The Earth was a mass of roiling, boiling, cooling pile of liquid – a *primeval ooze*, we might call it. In that mess were some *non-living somethings*, which somehow, in the course of time, became *living somethings*. Wow! That is impressive! But wait for it – that is not all!

Some of those living somethings became, in the course of time, plants, animals, birds, fish, amphibians, and, eventually, man (or at least, his precursors). The animals, birds, fish, amphibians, mammals, etc. developed various forms. Some

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developed legs and arms and hands, and some became upright creatures, walking about. Some developed wings and flew. Others were apparently content to be grass – fodder for animals.

Eventually, man became the highest form, developing into the mankind we know today. What a leap of progress that has turned out to be! Man began to be religious, seeking to understand and explain how all this happened and from whence it came. In fact, modern Scientism is demonstrably religious, with dogma, priests (scientists,) and formal doctrines which are inviolable. Of course, in our little story, we are guilty of imposing modern scientific thought to this pre-scientific age. We realize primitive man did not know anything about that little exploding *thingy*.

Applying his brain, Man began to develop the idea that this was all so enormous, it had to have been arranged by some super type of man. No one man could have put it all together, so there had to be a collegium of men and women, each assigned to a specific condition or responsibility. There had to be a hierarchy of supermen, whom man decided to call *gods*. And for some six millennia, this was essentially the explanation, something we call *paganism*.

As man traveled and procreated, various cultures developed, and each had his own pantheon of gods. The Scandinavians had one pantheon, the Greeks another, the Romans, yet another, and so on. And then, a strange thing happened, some two millennia ago.

A small band of itinerant people, called Hebrews, discovered through divine revelation that everything was explained by a single God, who was omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He created everything that is, including the universe, and sustained all forms of life, including man. He revealed Himself to the Hebrews, as He chose them to be a special people to Him.

Most civilizations remained polytheistic pagans. Christianity began as an offshoot of the Hebrew Bible. Through the developing Christianity's evangelistic efforts, the biblical idea of God became prevalent in the Western World.

That worked well until the era of the *Enlightenment*, when men sought to apply their minds to thinking "outside the box" of religion. This eventually spawned the notion that maybe there was no God. Maybe things just happened. But what could we do about man believing he was made in the image of God? Darwin gave us the keys to *freedom*, asserting that man just happened, evolving over eons of time. Man was an accident of time and chance.

This *intellectual* revolution took root, grew rapidly, and finally bred the dominant philosophy and religion we know today. This has taken two forms, which are sort of twin cousins. They are related, but not identical. There has arisen a third form, which I will call "modern mysticism." We will deal with that in a bit.

One form is called *Existentialism*. The other is called *Progressivism*. Existentialism is most closely related to its parent, *Evolutionism*. As such, it is essentially nihilistic, perceiving that life goes nowhere and is meaningless. The problem is that man shrinks back from that helpless, hopeless concept. Existentialism tells man that, although he *is* meaningless, without a future, he can *choose* to live and act *as if* his life *were* meaningful. Thus, he can develop a life that *seems* significant, because he pretends to live as if it were.

Progressivism, on the other hand, is a more recent, more uplifting, more promising philosophy. It confidently asserts that man's trajectory is ever onward and upward. How is this possible? By developing a social and political system that utilizes the talents and leadership of the best people to lead and guide the masses along to a richer, fuller life. Who are these elites? The sons and daughters of the most-qualified people,

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educated in all the right schools, raised in the best culture, and equipped with the financial means (acquired from their forebears) to carry out their plans. This, then, is the new Aristocracy that mankind needs to lead upward, always improving, developing new ideas and ways.

How is that working out? That is what we have, in effect, in America today. Flip back to our Introduction and read the second set of bullets again. That is how it is working out! The problem is that *Elite* man is himself filled with desires, lusts, and the power syndrome. The world calls it man's "dark side." To use a biblical term, he is sinful.

We will dig a little deeper to see how all this came about. Chapter 2 deals with what has gone wrong in our society. Then, we move to consider the basic questions every person has, to set the scene for Chapter 3, which provides answers.

Chapter 2 – “Questions?”

Something has gone haywire in our culture, but what? Everything seems topsy-turvy. What once was considered *good* is often considered now to be *evil*, and what was evil is often praised as good. Ideas we once valued are now seen as archaic or naïve. Ideas and patterns of living once considered depraved or absurd are now perceived as modern, sophisticated, noble. Would going back to basics help us get back on track?

Life was seen (not so many generations ago) as normal, with normal desires. We grow up, get a job, get married, have children, and invest our lives in their well-being. We live normally, go to church or synagogue often, are known for our honesty, integrity, friendliness, kindness, and compassion. We enjoy sports, music, travel, backyard barbeques, and friendships. Has that evaporated or morphed into what we see today? Or, are we just covering over our concerns and questions with busyness and diversions??

In that bygone era, religion and the teachings of the Bible were usually important and settling. We believed, perhaps a bit carelessly, in God, the Creator, and built our lives and communities around that shared value. We longed to have some sensible answers to the basic questions of life:

- Who AM I?
- Why am I Here?
- Does my life really matter?

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- Is death the end?
- Is there a life after death?
- If so, will there be a judgment? By whom? On what basis?
- Will I pass that judgment?
- Is there really a Heaven and a Hell?
- How must / should I live this life?
- How can I modify or change my life and my future?

Throughout the ages, various religions sought to answer these questions. In man's early history, he posited a gaggle of *gods*, believing that each dealt with a certain area or condition of life. Those gods were imagined to be sort of supermen or superwomen, with interests and passions much like ours, only on a larger scale. We did not ask much of them, usually hoping they would not even notice us, or occasionally hoping they would take pity on us. In our hearts we may not have really believed in them but considered it useful to society for all to at least pretend they existed. Too often, they seemed to be terrifying, capricious, and sadistic, as witness the storms, earthquakes, plagues, and other dreadful experiences that threatened us.

About four thousand years ago, an insignificant tribe, called *Hebrews*, claimed that there was only one God. He created us, directed us, communicated with us, and judged us. He could be kind and helpful, but He could also exact justice, with penalties. His word was law for all mankind. Yet, He claimed a special affection for this Semitic tribe, treating them as His *Elect Ones*. He promised a great future, to be ushered in by a unique person, *Messiah*, the *Anointed One*. Through Him, all things would be made right.

Some of these Jews came to believe that Messiah came to Earth, to fulfill God's promises. He would treat this little band as His own special people. Sadly, He was executed as a

criminal, died, and was buried, ending their hopes. To their amazement, in three days He re-appeared, rising from the grave. He met with His followers for over a month and finally ascended to Heaven, before their very eyes, promising one day to come again to establish His *Messianic Kingdom*. This little Jewish group grew rapidly among their compatriots and were tagged with the somewhat pejorative name of *Christian*, hated by their Jewish brethren, and despised as weaklings by the Romans.

After the Jews were driven from Jerusalem and Judea the Christians continued to grow and influence many in the Roman Empire. Some 300 years later, they were embraced by the Emperor Constantine, and within a few generations displaced the polytheistic religions of Rome. Christianity became the official religion of the state. To the Christians, the Bible was the very Word of God, His direct, definitive communication with man, to be honored by men everywhere.

This continued and blossomed for some 1500 years, when, in an era called the *Enlightenment*, European scholars began to question the Bible and its teachings, looking for errors and misinformation in it. By the 18th century, the Bible was viewed increasingly as a doubtful foundation. In the mid-19th century, a man called Charles Darwin applied the death-stroke to the Bible for many of the educated class. He concluded that man was an accident of nature, merely the latest in an eons-long progression from the simplest forms of life, gradually becoming man as we know him today.

Darwin put the finishing touches on a growing methodology called *Evolution*, which purports to show everything happening randomly, through time and chance, without a Creator. From then until today, this has been the almost universal view of all the Western World. Any idea or philosophy that challenged it was quickly discarded to the junk pile, along with the Bible.

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Evolutionism and *Darwinism* were now guiding principles of all education, science, philosophy, politics, and religion. Indeed, this became our modern religion, held with true religious fervor.

In our next chapter, we will see how this new religion stacks up. We will see how efforts to dress up this bleak outlook, seeking to soften the hard edges, became a significant task of science, or, more accurately, of *Scientism*, the philosophy that sprang from their efforts.

Chapter 3 – “Answers?”

How does modern man answer the basic questions of life?

He develops a plausible world view that enables him to provide a feasible answer to life's questions. For two millennia, the Christian has found this a plausible, rational view of life and the world, one that has served him well. It is centered in the Bible, God's revelation to man, typified in magnificent fashion by Jesus Christ. Man aligns himself with the commands and claims of God, rather than the pantheistic paganism that sought to align the gods with man.

In the wake of the *Enlightenment* era, fueled by easy production and replication of books and messages, thanks to the Gutenberg press, man began to seek by reason alone the answers needed in life. The German rationalists challenged much of the Bible as full of errant, misleading fables.

This gave birth to the concepts of Evolution, where man is viewed as the latest product of an impersonal, natural development. To swallow this, an immense amount of time had to be conjured up. They denied the biblical message of Creation by an uncreated God. Man came into being accidentally, over long periods of time. Through studies and comparisons of human and animal life, one might see a certain parallelism of relationship. Man could readily grasp this argument. But he remained ambivalent about the implications for man. Could man have somehow evolved? That flew directly in the face of the

Bible. Evolution might be possible for most of the creatures and nature, but what about for man himself?

Darwin gave solidity and comfort to Evolutionary theory, as he asserted that man *must* have evolved along with everything else. However, this rendered man as no more essential or valuable than a snail or worm. The concept of millions of years of time made this unpalatable notion a bit more digestible. This new concept, far removed from the Bible, gained traction in society. Gradually, science, although birthed in the womb of biblical teaching, began to see everything through an evolutionistic lens. The study of man in the “social sciences” promoted the gradual shift of man as a unique creature to seeing him as a mass of physical, psychological, neurological notions. Man was no longer autonomous (excepting, presumably, the Elites who led the charge). He could be explained away as just a mass of matter. Everything was mechanical and material in essence. Man had no soul, no purpose, no future.

Take a moment to ponder this with a few questions and answers. The basic answers are shown in capitals emphasizing the Evolutionary / Darwinian world view, which has been a saturating influence in society.

- Who am I? – NOBODY.
- Why am I here? – NO REASON; I'M JUST AN ACCIDENT OF NATURE.
- Does my life matter or make any difference? – NOT REALLY.
- Is death the end of me? – ABSOLUTELY.
- Where do I go after death? – NOWHERE – JUST TO THE GRAVE.
- Is there not an afterlife? – ABSOLUTELY NOT.
- Will there be a final judgment? – OF COURSE NOT. No one to be the judge, no one to be judged.

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- So, does it matter how I live? – NOPE. IT REALLY DOESN'T MATTER.
- Can I somehow change my direction or future? – ARE YOU KIDDING?

We could go on, but you get the basic idea. That is not a joke. Nothing really does matter in the Evolutionary view. Evolution basically requires that you get born, you propagate, and you die.

It is not surprising, then, that man finds this hard to live with. He must anesthetize himself with work, sports, music, politics, war, or other things to keep him busy, so he will not have to deal with the barren, somber reality.

A thinking man has problems with these implications. In our modern era, we see three branches of thought developed to soften the blow of this dis-souling of man. One is *Existentialism*, the second is *Progressivism*, and the third is a *modern fantasy religion*.

Existentialism is an attempt to answer philosophically the problems of Evolution, particularly in the light of Darwinism. Darwinism leads down a dark corridor to – *nowhere*. But that results in desperate measures to find meaning or to abort the inevitable pointless journey. Depression, alcohol, drugs, or suicide become important ways to short-circuit this dreadful end.

This philosophy called *Existentialism* essentially attempts to fabricate meaning into one's life, despite the pointlessness of it all. They say one can create or generate meaningful living, even though there is no meaning. In other words, one can "con" himself into thinking his life has meaning. Jean Paul Sartre, a French philosopher, as well as others, popularized this notion. And it has been percolating through most of our American colleges and universities since World War II. You can wrap yourself in a little personal cocoon of your mind and

imagination, perhaps creating some ethical or moral value, so long as you can maintain your private little subterfuge. Sartre could not. He committed suicide. For existentialists, ethics and morals have no base or basis in fact. They are merely a construct of your own desires or thoughts.

An earlier attempt to make something out of the nothingness of Darwinism was the political philosophy called *Progressivism*. This took root in America with Theodore Roosevelt, brought to a boil with Woodrow Wilson, and seized American Liberalism and elements of the Democratic party in the early days of the *New Deal*. The idea was that man could carve out a meaningful life, *collectively*, in a way compatible with the “proven science” of Evolutionism and Darwinism.

It was fostered by a pair of manifestos in the early mid-twentieth century, titled *Religious Humanism* and *Secular Humanism*. The first, produced by the American Humanist Society, merged with Existentialism. Their idea was to have a religious element they called *Religious Humanism*, though without an afterlife, salvation, or judgment. A decade or two later, many of the signers of this declaration came out with an advanced program, essentially tearing away the mask of religion, saying that man could and would save himself through application of his mind, through science and philosophy. The idea is to promote man’s *collective salvation* through science, economics, and especially through political action. This is a predominant feature today of our modern liberalism, largely, but not exclusively, saturating much of the Democratic party, and elements of the Republican party as well. The Elites of both parties tend to hold this view. That is responsible for the sordid state of our Government and society today.

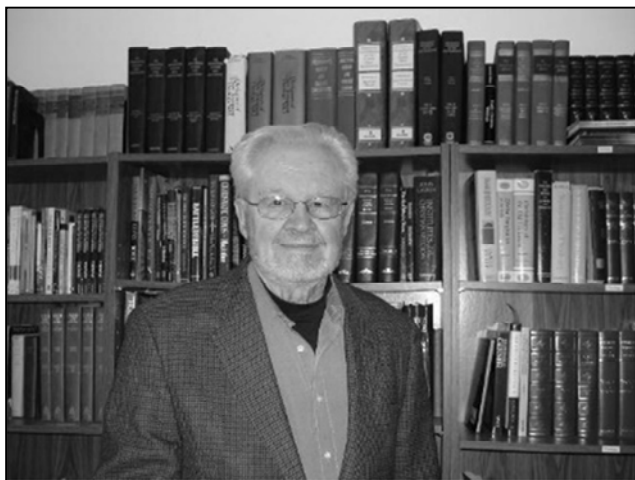
After World War II, a third solution to the problem of meaninglessness emerged, fueled to a large extent with a fascination for Eastern religious views such as Buddhism and

Hinduism. Reincarnation became of large interest, as it suggested the possibility of having meaningful life, although the final “life” would be *drowned* in the nothingness of Nirvana, like a drop of water is dumped into the ocean. This swept many campuses and even nominal Christian churches. It came to be called, among other things, the *New Age movement*, and has been quite popular with many as it builds a sort of fairy tale existence for one’s life today. Everything is spiritual, matter is ultimately meaningless.

These three major efforts had one thing in common. God was not allowed to exist or be present, and the Bible was declared valueless. By obscuring the truth of the Bible, one could find purpose and meaning in an ultimately meaningless life.

The bottom line is that there is no Creator. Man is not created, but is the happenstance result of a natural process, unaided by a Creator’s mind. The assertions of creation, man, life, and judgment are pointless, absurd. Man has never given up the idea of a good life – without God. In our next chapter, we will briefly explore various religious ways developed to dethrone God. Then, we will discuss the validity of the Bible and God.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Bill has been a student and teacher of the Bible for more than sixty years. He is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, majoring in Systematic Theology. He sat under the teaching of Drs. Walvoord, Hook, Ryrie, Pentecost, Robinson, Waltke, Ross, and Hoehner, among other great giants of the faith.

His objective has been to teach the Word of God clearly, so that anyone can better understand the value and significance of God's Word.

He is deeply committed to the proposition that the Bible is, in fact, the Words of God, ministered through the minds of godly men, so that what they wrote is clearly God's Word, as they constantly declare, rather than their thoughts and ideas about God.

He has pastored churches in Connecticut, Texas, and New York for more than forty years.

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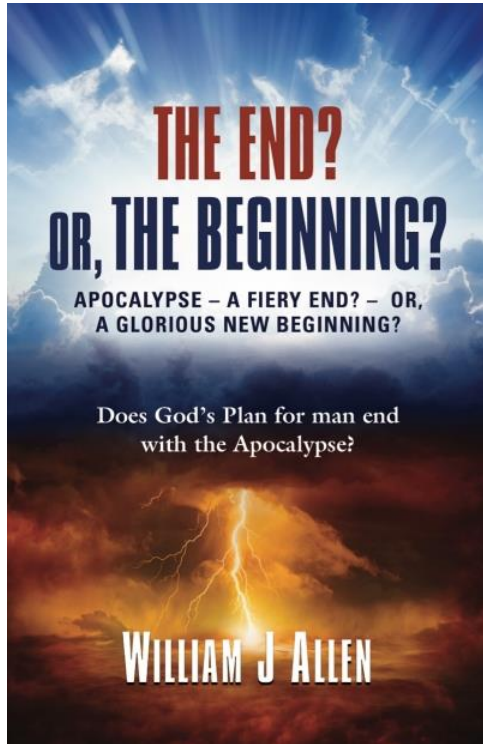
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Others to follow, as the Lord Enables.

Contact the author directly at: bill@col267.com



This book is an odyssey into the truth of leadership's nature and essence. It is written in a contemplative style and uses dialogue to exercise a leader's will, intelligence, and spirit using dialogue, meditation, and contemplation.

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