



When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture (Studies in Cultural History)

By Paul Boyer

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Millions of Americans take the Bible at its word and turn to like-minded local ministers and TV preachers, periodicals and paperbacks for help in finding their place in God's prophetic plan for mankind. And yet, influential as this phenomenon is in the worldview of so many, the belief in biblical prophecy remains a popular mystery, largely unstudied and little understood. *When Time Shall Be No More* offers for the first time an in-depth look at the subtle, pervasive ways in which prophecy belief shapes contemporary American thought and culture.

Belief in prophecy dates back to antiquity, and there Paul Boyer begins, seeking out the origins of this particular brand of faith in early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings, then tracing its development over time. Against this broad historical overview, the effect of prophecy belief on the events and themes of recent decades emerges in clear and striking detail. Nuclear war, the Soviet Union, Israel and the Middle East, the destiny of the United States, the rise of a computerized global economic order?Boyer shows how impressive feats of exegesis have incorporated all of these in the popular imagination in terms of the Bible's apocalyptic works. Reflecting finally on the tenacity of prophecy belief in our supposedly secular age, Boyer considers the direction such popular conviction might take?and the forms it might assume?in the post-Cold War era.

The product of a four-year immersion in the literature and culture of prophecy belief, *When Time Shall Be No More* serves as a pathbreaking guide to this vast *terra incognita* of contemporary American popular thought?a thorough and thoroughly fascinating index to its sources, its implications, and its enduring appeal.



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When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture (Studies in Cultural History) By Paul Boyer Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #541051 in Books
- Published on: 1994-01-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 1.24" w x 6.00" l, 1.58 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 488 pages



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Editorial Review

Review

A splendid, rigorously documented treatise, as up to date as the morning newspaper...No book provides more comprehensive information about the awesome degree to which Biblical literalism and prophetic fervor have invaded the hearts and minds of Americans, rich and poor, educated and ignorant...[Those] who read the book can laugh and weep. (Martin Gardner *Washington Post Book World*)

Paul Boyer traces the roots and branches of the rich, strange complex of biblical exegesis and twisted journalism that he calls 'prophecy belief.' *When Time Shall Be No More* exhaustively describes a strange species of rabid predictions of the wrath to come. (Anthony Grafton *New Republic*)

Splendid... [A] compelling cultural history. (L. S. Klepp *Village Voice Literary Supplement*)

This is one of the most important and impressive books I have ever read in American cultural history. It is richly researched, ably argued, exhaustive in its coverage of the subject of apocalyptic belief in the United States, yet a constant revelation. Indeed, it amounts to the discovery of what many of us in this field have halfway understood but never quite realized, that the dominion of prophecy and 'end-time' religion is vast and of utmost importance in understanding the whole of American culture. It will scarcely be possible now not to see the importance of this fringe culture that affects millions of Americans and which, from time to time, finds itself near the very center. (James Gilbert, University of Maryland)

This is not a facile study, attempting to draw large and arresting conclusions from a mere sample of the evidence. Boyer committed himself to an intense study of popular prophetic belief and the result is a learned, persuasive, and nuanced study of a very important subject. The book is inherently interesting and superbly written. (Nathan O. Hatch, University of Notre Dame)

It is a work of high quality in every respect and is as good as anything I know of on the subject. In addition to writing well, the author is judicious and insightful in his judgments and maintains a tone of seeking understanding rather than, as do most writers on such topics, taking cheap shots at easy targets. Also and importantly, I found the book engaging and was eager to keep reading. (George Marsden, University of Notre Dame)

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--James Gilbert, University of Maryland

From the Back Cover

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kimberly Franks:

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