



KAPITEL 10 / CHAPTER 10¹⁰

**ESCHATOLOGY AND ESCHATOLOGICAL METANARRATIVE AS A KEY
POLITICAL TECHNOLOGY AND SOURCE OF LEGITIMATION OF
POWER**

DOI: 10.30890/2709-2313.2024-28-00-013

Introduction

The eschatological metanarrative is an extremely significant aspect of the political. Eschatology and eschatological metanarrative are inseparable parts of political technologies and ideologies. Very often, eschatological metanarrative is used by ideologies that seek to designate political stand in opposition to the liberal view of the world and of human being, what is especially relevant in the context of postmodernity, when we can observe the omnipresence of eschatological symbols in variety of discourses.

The question of the eschatological metanarrative and its significance for the social and political has not yet been studied with precision. The study of eschatological metanarrative in this context was fragmentary and, as a rule, dealt with this problem indirectly, since the main goal of such studies lay outside the question of eschatological *metanarration*. Nevertheless, many philosophers and political scientists have worked in the field of eschatology. For example, Taubes [10], Schmitt [14], Berdyaev [15] etc.

Eschatological metanarrative and eschatological *metanarration* in the sense in which it will be understood in the study is a complex political technology and mythmaking tool that concerns a variety of things that can resonate with ideas and feelings inside a human being and broad masses of people. Eschatology, whether it is personal or general, is the essence of human existence, which cannot disappear either with the departure of God or with the advent of postmodernity. The eschatological metanarrative is constantly being modified along with social changes. As a rule, only the eschatological functions, aesthetics and atmosphere remain unchanged, while the elements themselves may take on another look. With this approach, one can clearly

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detect the presence of eschatology both in the totalitarian ideologies of the 20th century and in the modern political discourse. Eschatology has been and remains a significant aspect of social, which, unfortunately, is usually not given due attention, especially considering the great importance that eschatology can have in the eyes of both political technologists and the masses of people. Thanks to the eschatological metanarrative, we can find the link that unites on the teleological level most totalitarian ideologies, political religions, and authoritarian regimes. In addition, due concern can make it possible to identify the development of such ideas in different political movements, parties, and agendas of different countries.

The importance and relevance of eschatology owe to its reflection on the human being. In ancient times, people saw their reward in the form of offspring and believed in a cycle of rebirths, mirroring the observed cosmic cycles. However, the individual's sense of loneliness in the world and the realization that one cannot experience the world through future generations' eyes brought them face to face with the concept of mortality and the beginning and end of existence. Human beings' attempt to understand nature, projected its qualities onto the image of the Creator, and onto the given world, attributing a personality similar to it. In many religions, the myth of the creation of the world from the body of a giant or the first human is widespread, which speaks of endowing the world with ideas about human nature.

For, beginning with a certain stage of culture, the cosmogonic myth explains the Creation through the slaying of a giant (Ymir in Germanic mythology, Purusha in Indian mythology, Pan-ku in China [1, p. 53]).

The limitations of “mortality” and “finiteness” could not be ascribed to the Creator. Instead, they were attributed to the immanent World, forming what can be referred to as the “myth of the End Times” in thinking. This myth, either implicitly or explicitly, can be found in modern historical consciousness. The theory of time that originated in religious eschatology, which focuses on the end of earthly time, individual lifespan, and the overall destiny of humanity, could be even found in a worldview within the framework of metanarratives of modernity like Communism or Nazism.

In addition, the emphasis of eschatology on the finiteness and meaning of human



life limited by time frames makes it related to existential philosophy in the context of which the question of human existence to death can be called a cornerstone. Besides that, according to Kierkegaard – “A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity” [2, p. 43]. This is a key feature of human nature in the context of research since a person can also be placed at the crossroads of the banal and the superordinary, the personal individual goal and the great historical goal – all this will also correspond to the synthesis described by Kierkegaard. A person is always free to choose between these two sides of existence, and sometimes this choice can be inclined according to the “Escape from freedom” of Erich Fromm (1969) – towards political religion.

The expectation of a world catastrophe came to the fore in ancient ideas, which was expressed in such symbolic images as the fall of the moon, sun, stars, the shock of the heavenly elements, and the world conflagration. All these symbols are available in a variety of eschatological sources like “The Sibylline Books”, “Book of Isaiah”, “Book of Ezekiel”, “Book of Daniel” etc. Usually, such sources symbolically depict catastrophic events that one way or another end in the triumph of God. In the context of postmodernity, when the apocalyptic has become a separate genre of pop culture, the idea of an eschatological triumph of good is usually overlooked. However, according to the chiliastic worldview, which in fact is a core idea of totalitarian metanarratives of modernity, the catastrophe only brings the transformation of the world closer, the onset of a new “golden age” on earth, and the establishment of the millennial kingdom.

The eschatological metanarrative could be used for the mobilization of human mental, spiritual, and physical resources to achieve certain sacred goals, especially at certain stages of history and great upheavals, when we can observe a rise of a mythological and apocalyptic perception of events. Through metanarrative, a person recognizes himself as a part of the process of history and sees in it an opportunity for realization in various ways, even by self-sacrifice. The eschatological metanarrative and its modifications allow a person to find himself in a ready-made system of world representation, which provides him or her with the meaning of existence and the



meaning of personal death, which thus frees a person from an acute fear of finiteness since a person can believe in being in the historical dimension. Figuratively speaking, a person is being mobilized, through the awareness of mortality, while this mobilization gives serious support, an argument for actions of a certain nature, movement, and simplicity of existence. As Cassirer would say – “the strongest organizing force of myth appears when a person is faced with the problem of death” [3, p. 48].

From the point of view of Berdyaev, a human is a historical being, and history, in his understanding, is the fate of a person, the path that he needs to go through, which is a consequence of being thrown into the created world of objectification. Human being is thus a historical being who cannot throw off the burden of history. History only makes sense because it will end. “Without the idea of historical completion, there is no perception of history, because history is essentially eschatological because it presupposes a resolving end, a resolving outcome, it presupposes a catastrophic accomplishment, where some new world, a new reality begins ...” [5, p. 26].

At tense moments in history, especially during wars and disasters, a person's eschatological feeling is aggravated, and the fear of death is sharpened since at such moments it becomes much more likely to die than at moments of conditional peace and tranquility. War is a field not only for physical and resource mobilization but also for spiritual mobilization. The proximity of death and the constant spiritual tension revealed in the remembrance of death provides a serious basis for the triumph of eschatological plots in discourse. As Berdyaev wrote:

History has always been a war par excellence, it is filled with wars. There were only comparatively short periods of peace, of relative equilibrium, which were easily overturned. The history took place on volcanic soil and periodically lava erupted. History must end, because history is war. There is an eschatological moment within history, a kind of internal apocalypse of history. This eschatological moment is especially keenly felt in catastrophic epochs, in wars, in revolutions, in crises of civilization. War is a historical phenomenon par excellence, and at the same time, the horrors of war give people a keen eschatological feeling that the end is near [6, pp. 3 – 14].



The meaning of existence is always something sacred, while in order to be sure of the value of that meaning and correctness of which is possible only through an act of faith. There is always a wall between the rational subject and the essence of existence, but since there is no pure rational subject the essence of existence is accessible through faith. A human being is deeply mythologized. As Lucien Lévy-Bruhl would say, whatever the level of human development, there is always a share of archaism in it [7]. Jung, noticed this by paying attention to the phenomena that in the beginning we can observe how people stated that angels were coming to them, while today aliens took the place of supernatural creatures [8].

A person always has the ability to be aware of sacredness, which can manifest itself at any point in life, including time and space [1]. In the context of postmodernity sacred could manifest itself even in cyberspace or cyber-text, which is proved by the rise of internet religious organizations and game industry. Thus, even if one does not refer to difficult historical periods, a person still remains extremely receptive to religious subjects, even if they are presented in a secular form. As Trubetskoy wrote: “Ideas about the afterlife – languishing in the underworld of the dead, torment, wandering in a ghostly world or repose and bliss in the land of gods and heroes – are widespread everywhere and, apparently, have deep psychological roots...” [9, p. 127]. For this reason, eschatology presents a great opportunity for reference, as it awakens archetypes buried deep in the human psyche. History and its revelation in the context of metanarratives give a person hope for eternity, the transformation of the world, and the meaning of existence, which cannot be contained in an unconscious inauthentic mode of existence. As Taubes wrote “History is the place where the substance of time and the substance of eternity, death and life, cross paths. Apocalypse means, in a literal and figurative sense, revelation. All apocalypse tells of the triumph of eternity.” [10, p. 4].

Ipsa facto Eschatology has a much broader meaning than just a branch of theology. There are a huge number of theories based on the archetype of the end times, using it to explain many phenomena. According to George Bradford Caird, there exist theories of “individual eschatology”, “historical eschatology”, “existential



eschatology”, and “radical eschatology”. Besides that, we can even observe “secular eschatology” in the context of modernity implemented in political religions of that time [11].

Eschatology can be interpreted not only in terms of religion but also in terms of modernist metanarratives. In general, there are two approaches to assessing Eschatology - the first approach implies passive contemplation of the unfolding of the historical process, where a person is simply a part of it and is unable to influence the result, while the second view speaks of the possibility of an active creative implementation of the eschatological scenario. This is in fact a division between cyclic and linear time, mythological and historical eschatology.

Eschatology is continuously present as social phenomenon because it is directly connected with human mortality, and it can be expressed both through Christianity and through the metanarratives of modernity, such as rationalism, scientism, anthropocentrism, enlightenment, emancipation, the legitimacy of knowledge, enlightenment interpretation of knowledge as a tool for solving any problems, the cognizability of everything by science, classical socialism and communism, Christian salvation, the Hegelian world spirit, National-Socialism, Keynesian equilibrium, material abundance, etc. On this subject, one can cite Pascal's quotation that it is human nature to seek some kind of support for existence. And even having lost the Christian metanarrative, human being continues its search in nature:

He alone is our true good. From the time we have forsaken him, it is a curious thing that nothing in nature has been capable of taking his place: stars, sky, earth, elements, plants, cabbages, leeks, animals, insects, calves, snakes, fever, plague, war, famine, vice, adultery, incest. From the time he lost his true good, man can see it everywhere, even in his own destruction, though it is so contrary to God, reason, and nature, all at once [12, p. 52].

All these metanarratives have a specific view of the historical process and its goal of it, which in one way or another makes them eschatological since they strive to change one world to another by the creative impulse. Metanarratives can be viewed as a kind of ideology, which imposes a certain worldview set of ideas on society and



culture. These ideas, limiting, suppressing, ordering, and controlling the consciousness and behavior of a person, exercise violence over him, while “*Metanarration*” is an epistemological construct that legitimizes ways of thinking, social institutions, and social system and thus creates the possibility of a total worldview.

The above-mentioned things do confirm the extreme relevance and importance of the research topic. Eschatology and eschatological metanarration seem to be a very important and broad phenomenon that affects different layers of being, from human nature, and human thinking, to anthropology, sociology, religion, and political science. Eschatological metanarrative is a concomitant phenomenon of almost any political instability, especially those that affect the issue of world order. Today, in the conditions of a bright phase of confrontation between the West and the East, one way or another, the issue of restructuring the world order, which was formed after the collapse of the USSR, is being raised. The conflicts accompanying this restructuring, including the Russo-Ukrainian war, form a field for the manifestation of the phenomenon of eschatological *metanarration*, which can be clearly found in modern political discourse, which may include speeches by various politicians from the West and Russia. Contemporary discourse offers a person a set of symbols, images, explanations, and guidelines for action, implicitly or explicitly connected to eschatological metanarrative. Nowadays it is impossible to think of a US or Russian regime without a touch of eschatology, without seeing that confidence in the correctness of actions that is present in their political discourses. The very statehood of the USA and Russia has an eschatological/ katechon basis, to which they appeal to legitimize their actions.

10.1. Theoretical foundations, analysis of eschatological concepts, and eschatological metanarration

In order to draw a holistic picture of the eschatological feelings and moods of people and to better understand what the eschatological metanarrative is; besides the Jewish prophets we also have to look at some concepts that are known to India, Ancient



Greece, and Rome. We will also pay attention to the eschatology of Christianity and heretical teachings, in particular to the trinitarian metaphysics of Joachim of Fiore. This is necessary in order to show a map of the most famous sources that have been used and continue to be used both openly and covertly by various politicians and institutions.

Although the eschatological metanarrative touches on a large number of disciplines, nevertheless, first of all, it is necessary to consider it from the point of view of narratology. Originally narratology developed primarily as a discipline that studies fictional narratives, which could be seen in Russian formalism, specifically in the work of Vladimir Propp's "Morphology of the Folktale" [13]. Propp's method was to describe the tale in terms of its constituent parts and the relationship of the parts to each other and to the whole. According to Propp, there are constants and variables in each tale. The constants include the functions of actors and their sequence. This comparative typological method allows us to highlight the main functions of the narrative, which can be achieved in the context of our study. The set of texts that we will consider have similar and often repeated components and functions. The discovery of these functions, components, and structure of the eschatological narrative will later help to establish the eschatological metanarrative in those contexts in which references to the metanarrative are not typical or where the eschatological metanarrative was used as a template and was distorted by verbal delivery.

In fact, narratives can have a variety of structures and many exceptions, since sometimes it is just enough to feel the narrative, which can be achieved in various ways, including verbal delivery. Todorov sees a narrative as a structure consisting of five parts and including the initial state of equilibrium, the imbalance caused by some event, a state of disequilibrium, transition to a state of new equilibrium, a state of new equilibrium, with which the narrative ends [16]. The eschatological metanarrative has a similar structure.

An important component of the narrative is a story since the narration always goes about some event that has its own development and surrounding. Metanarrative, in turn, is a kind of historical narrative, which in dialectical terms describes the history of mankind as a struggle, during which work is carried out for the sake of a great goal,



the achievement of which should affect the whole world. “A metanarrative implying a philosophy of history is used to legitimate knowledge” [17, p. 22]. Metanarratives as a public myth offer a set of symbols, images, explanations, and guidelines for action, which, strive to become the basis of the worldview of a person or community in order to legitimize authority and mobilize society.

The main focus of the metanarrative relates to the future and denouement of human history. This distinguishes the metanarrative from the historical narrative, which usually tells about the past events of history. The eschatological metanarrative, just like any metanarrative, is focused on the goal and, accordingly, on the future. The eschatological metanarrative focuses its attention precisely on the denouement. The end of the eschatological metanarrative is not something vague and always has, as a rule, a clear and even rational description. The eschatological metanarrative uses all its parts in the logic chain of history while depicting the future as something tangible and accessible. This focus on the denouement gives this metanarrative some kind of primacy and can be distinguished from other metanarratives. In addition, the eschatological metanarrative gives a specific, one might even say, mystical feeling of the current time, which necessarily occurs in extraordinary features since it is essentially a temporary gap between the epoch-making event that has already taken place and the end of history.

The eschatological metanarrative is in some way a template for other metanarratives. Focusing on the denouement as well as providing the feeling of extraordinary event content, gives the impetus for the sake of which there is a creative impulse of ideology or religion. Eschatology implies the concept of the coming end of the world, usually in the spiritual sense, but also in the physical. Eschatology is a kind of transformation, an entry into a new era, radically different from the entire history of mankind, it is the “eschaton” – the sum of history, the meaning of history, and its logical conclusion. Also, Eschatology, especially in the case of its application in the context of political religions, also affects the aspect of collective messianism, i.e. the fate of the whole group, and its role in the event of the apocalypse, which in turn has a personal reception and dimension as well.



Eschatology also touches on the question and sense of afterlife and death, which connects it with existential philosophy. It is a horror not only before death but also before being itself, before freedom and the possibility of creativity, before the awareness not only of throwing oneself into the world but also into the historical process, in which every act of a person affects the development of history and thereby its end.

The apocalyptic, eschatological view of the world is a basis, or rather, the source from which energy is drawn to transform the world and participate in the historical process, not only in the context of faith but also in the context of ideologies and political religions. Awareness or even horror not only before the unknown but also before the tangible, the idea that the world around us will eventually be destroyed or radically transformed gives an incredible impetus, special ethics, special values, and ontology. According to Berdyaev, “Metaphysics inevitably becomes eschatology. And the weakness of all the old metaphysicians was precisely in the fact that they were not eschatologies.” [15, pp. 547 – 548].

The study of eschatological concepts involves analyzing a set of ideas, images, and concepts that have been passed down through different eras and cultures, constantly being reinterpreted and reanalyzed. Eschatological ideas and motives can already be found in a number of mythological systems of early peoples [18, pp. 54 – 64]. These include, for example, myths about a cultural hero who lived in a mythical past, and then retired to a distant country or to the underworld but must return and bring certain benefits to his people.

Ideas about the afterlife – torment, wandering in a ghostly world, or repose and bliss in the country of gods and heroes – are inherent ideas of a wide range of cultures and religions. As religion penetrates with moral ideas, ideas about the afterlife judgment and retribution also appear, although religion seeks to provide the believer with afterlife bliss in addition to his moral merits - through spells or other religious means, as we see it among the Egyptians, and later among the Greeks, like in the Theurgy, and in Hermeticism. Along with the question of the fate of a single human person, the question of the ultimate fate of all mankind and the whole world may also



arise. The myth of the end of the world is a common trend that has spread throughout the Middle East, Iran, Palestine, the Mediterranean, and the Roman Empire.

Mythological eschatology suggests the possibility of a reverse process – the transformation of an ordered cosmos into chaos, the total destruction of the world and human society. Mythological consciousness draws the cosmos as a coherent system based primarily on binary oppositions and categories structuring the world, which were formulated and identified at the time of the creation of the world. The end of the world represents the destruction of the system of binary oppositions and categories, and the return of the world to a state of primordial chaos. Eschatology puts a certain boundary and limits both for the world and for humans. Eschaton, as it were, builds binary oppositions by the very possibility of their destruction. In the end, numerous binary oppositions are destroyed that can be relevant in the literal and symbolic sense only in the process of history, such as cosmos / chaos, profane / sacred, friend / enemy, evil / good, righteous / unrighteous, immanent / transcendent, beginning / end, rising/sunset, morning/evening, summer/winter, east/west, young/old, etc [1].

The base words “this” and “that” in relation to world are a further symbol of apocalypticism and are closely linked with the theme of self-alienation. The differentiation between “this” and “that ” world already implies a valuation. Even if in the earliest statements of apocalypticism the world is still within the sphere of God's omnipotence, then God's alienation from the world progresses until the world is identified with the “full-ness of evil, which God opposes as the “fullness of good.” [10, p. 28].

It is necessary to note that for cyclic religions it is very important (in the context of cosmology and eschatology) to strictly follow the cosmic calendar, to the position of the heavenly bodies in the sky. In such a way the eschatological context can be found in calendar myths about dying-and-rising deities (myths about Osiris, Balu, Adonis, Dionysus, etc.) [19]. The calendar year itself is a very important aspect both in the context of cyclic religions and in linear ones. In cyclical religions, everything is tied to the solstices. The concept of the year can be traced in all aspects of cosmic reality - in the change of day and night, summer and winter, and also transferred to a specific



person, where the birth of the sun corresponds to the birth and rebirth of a person, and the fading and winter solstice corresponds to old age, fading and death (and the subsequent resurrection).

The formation of eschatological ideas in various mythological systems was also influenced by the ideas of ancient people about the origin of the cosmos and its structure, about the emergence of various natural and cultural features, various rituals, usually associated with magic, focused on a regular season, as well as the myth of rebirth and eternal return. The most prominent representatives of the cyclical concepts are dharmic religions. The development of ideas about young and old age, both of humans and of the world, we can very clearly detect in Hinduism. Indian cosmology has a huge number of sources, for example in the Rig Veda, Upanishads, Puranas, Indian philosophy, and other texts. However, there exists a range of theories on the creation and structure of the world, some of which are contradictory.

If we consider Indian cosmology, in the brief, popular sense, then it represents the day of Brahma or Kalpa. From the Sanskrit Kalpa, it is “prescription”, “rule”, “mode of action”, “rite”, and “world period”. Kalpa is a polysemantic concept, meaning in the initial contexts of guidance in ritual practice, as well as beginningless world periods, “eones” [20, p. 429]. The entire period of the existence of the world - kalpa or “Day of Brahma” is 8,640,000,000 years [21]. At the end of each kalpa, the world perishes and then is reborn in a new form. Such large numbers, of course, give little idea of the surrounding world, nevertheless, the processes taking place within the kalpa give a much clearer idea of eschatology. Each Kalpa is divided into 14 “Manvantaras”, each of which, in turn, is divided into 71 “Maha Yugas”. Each “Maha Yuga” lasts 4,320,000 years. The “Maha Yuga” consists of four sub-periods: “Satya Yuga”, “Treta Yuga”, “Dvarapa Yuga” and “Kali Yuga”. During each of the cycles, the righteousness of people decreases by one quarter, life expectancy is reduced, and people move from a state of a happy and righteous life to a life full of horrors and worries. Kali Yuga is described as a period of complete oblivion of ethical norms, overturning of the social hierarchy, retreat from religion, domination of debauchery, injustice, and violence. Even nature is degrading, plants, animals, and people are decreasing in size, losing



strength and beauty. At the end of the “Kali Yuga”, the tenth avatar of Vishnu – Kalki will appear on Earth, destroy the sinners, and restore order, after which the Satya Yuga of the new Maha Yuga will come.

Views similar to the theory of changing Yugas can be found in the poem of the ancient Greek poet Hesiod “Works and Days”. Hesiod says that humanity has survived 5 ages in its existence: golden, silver, bronze, heroic, and iron [22]:

“110: In the beginning made a race of mortals that was gold. These people lived in Kronos' time when he was heaven's king.

125: A second, much inferior race, a silver race of men, Neither in understanding nor in stature like the other.

140: Then Zeus the father made another race of mortal ones, In nothing similar to the silver-this third race he made bronze.

155 – 160: When they were covered in their turn, when this race too was gone, Zeus on the ever-nourishing earth made yet another one; And these the son of Kronos made more righteous, better far, A race of heroes, godlike men-men of this fourth race are Called demigods;

170 – 175: I wish that I were not among this last, fifth race of men, But either dead already or had afterwards been born; For this race now is iron indeed, and never, night or morn, Will leave off from their suffering, worn down by toil and woe. The gods will give them harsh and grievous cares, but even so, They too shall have a share of good, mixed though it be with pain.”

As can be seen, Hesiod's system is in many respects close to the Indian concept of changing Yugas, but is largely devoid of its harmony and logic, since although the golden and iron ages represent the ideal and its opposite, the other ages are described vaguely and do not always follow the idea of extinction. In each of these concepts, there is one principle where the world and a human being at the beginning receive a serious energy impulse, which gradually fades away, a process of entropy occurs, followed by rebirth. Both approaches generally refer to the “current” time as the worst possible epoch. Hesiod's idea is a more open conception of the pessimistic historical process, in contrast to which there was an optimistic view in Greece. Such a view could



be found in the works of Aristotle, [23, pp. 461 – 477] and Epicurus. As an example, according to Epicurus [24], philosophy can free a person from fears of death and the supernatural as well as can suggest how to find happiness in almost any situation.

Being an optimist often means finding the meaning of life, and understanding life as one's own development, which leads to the goal. An optimist believes that life is not accidental, and in the end, the “good” will surely triumph over the “bad”. It is important that optimism presupposes the active implementation of the position. To make the world a better place, certain creative actions are needed. In other words, optimism is simultaneously presented in a theoretical and practical sense. From the position of philosophical optimism, imperfect things, at least, can be put in order, through a creative act aimed at eliminating imperfection. Creativity and the creation of something new are not possible in the context of a cyclic worldview, as this would be contrary to the idea of eternal return. Each act in such a world is a repetition of the archetype and does not carry anything fundamentally new. In the context of linear time, where there is an end, creativity, on the contrary, is the main engine of history. Almost any act in the context of linear time can be done for the first time. This difference could be underlined by the quote from the book of Revelation – “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” (Rev. 3:15-16¹¹). This quotation emphasizes the need for at least some kind of activity, which can be expressed in a constant spiritual act of faith that makes a person “hot” or expressed in the desire for a generic pagan “cold” life. Anything but not a passive and dogmatic, institutional perception of Christianity.

The emergence and development of eschatological ideas within the framework of the mythological picture were influenced by myths about various cosmic cataclysms. The most common of these are flood or conflagration myths. Ancient Roman cosmogony was inextricably linked with eschatology and represented such a view.

At every historical crisis two crepuscular myths obsessed the Roman people: (1)

¹¹ here and further all biblical references are done in accordance to “Bible Gateway (2023). BibleGateway.com. [online] Bible Gateway. Available at: <https://www.biblegateway.com/>.”



the life of the city is ended, its duration being limited to a certain number of years (the “mystic number” revealed by the twelve eagles seen by Romulus); and the Great Year will put an end to all history, hence to that of Rome, by a universal ekpyrosis. Roman history itself undertook to show the baselessness of these fears, down to a very late period.”

[25, pp. 133 – 134].

The Romans were obsessed with the idea of "the end of Rome". Rome was permeated with the eschatological character of the Sibylline Books, which were often called upon during times of trouble. The Sibylline Books contained the idea of an eschatological “Great Year”, as a result of which Rome should be destroyed. In addition to this, according to the legend of Romulus, the time of the existence of the city is not eternal and the city will stand for a certain number of years, which corresponds to the number of eagles that he saw. After that, hard times will come, which will bring signs of the coming end of Rome. In the end, there will be a worldwide fire and plague. However, the empire of Augustus, established after civil wars, established “Pax Aeterna”. The fears generated by two eschatological myths – the “Age of Rome” and the “Great Year” then seemed to be devoid of ground. Augustus, as it were, refounded Rome, so the Romans no longer needed to fear for its fate. The ground for faith in the eternity of Rome was laid in the first chapter of Aeneid. “In the Aeneid (I, 255 ff.) Jupiter, addressing Venus, assures her that he will lay no bounds of space or time upon the Romans” [25, p.135]: “I am imposing no bounds on his realm, no temporal limits. Empire that has no end is my gift.” (His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono: Imperium sine fine dedi) [26, p. 12]. Thus, Virgil removed the myth about the time frame of Rome and, accordingly, about cyclicity. Only “...after the publication of the Aeneid...Rome was called urbs aeterna...”, while “...Augustus proclaimed the second founder of the city.” [25, p. 135].

Although the idea of Eternal Rome existed in Rome, the idea of the end still took place. Especially loudly the idea of the end was postulated by the Stoics. According to the Stoics, things and events are repeated after each periodic ignition (ekpyrosis) and purification (catharsis) of the cosmos. Mircea Eliade wrote that “the myth of universal



conflagration achieved a marked success throughout the Greco-Oriental world. It appears more and more probable that the myth of an end of the world by fire, from which the good will escape unharmed, is of Iranian origin, at least in the form known to the “western mages” who, as Cumont has shown, disseminated it in the West.” [25, pp. 123 – 125].

10.2. Abrahamic eschatology and major eschatological components

The idea of a worldwide conflagration is of serious importance, since, in fact, it is precisely the idea that becomes the basis of the Judeo-Christian apocalyptic. The key difference between most of the ancient religious concepts is that the Judeo-Christian and Islamic systems are a strict linear concepts. “Israel breaks through the cycle of this endless repetition, opening up the world as history for the first time. History is for Israel the pivot around which everything revolves.” [20, p. 15]. According to the Bible, in the beginning, there was a certain Golden Age, which ended with the fall, through deviation from God's will. As a result, a long and difficult historical process unfolded, the goal of which, in the end, becomes a return to God. It should be noted that in the context of Abrahamic concepts, a lot of attention is paid to the value of human history and the relationship of person with God, which cyclic religions were deprived of, where the role of person is sometimes relegated to the background, while the emphasis is made on ontology. It can be noted that Abrahamic eschatology, in contrast to Indian and ancient ones, is based not on mythology or philosophy, but on historiosophy. But despite all the differences, the cyclical and Abrahamic religions have a certain continuity, which is expressed in sometimes similar descriptions of the end of the world. Mircea Eliade notes that in the context of Judeo-Christian eschatology:

The End of the world will occur only once, just as the cosmogony occurred only once. The Cosmos that will reappear after the catastrophe will be the same Cosmos that God created at the beginning of Time, but purified, regenerated, and restored to its original glory. This Earthly Paradise will not be destroyed again, will have no end.



Time is no longer the circular Time of the Eternal Return; it has become a linear and irreversible Time.” [18, pp. 64 – 65].

There are many variations on the beginning and end of the historical process in the context of Abrahamic religions, which includes mystical doctrines and apocryphal texts. If we consider all three Abrahamic religions, we can find many similarities as well as several connecting metanarrative elements that have found their unique expression in each of the religions, however, this does not mean identity. Abrahamic religions are not always similar to each other, as they have different contexts and some provisions, however, they also have some conceptual similarities, especially in the field of eschatology.

The period from the fall of humans to the revelations (the Sinai revelation in Judaism / the Old and New Testament in Christianity / the advent of Muhammad in Islam) is usually a time of a certain God-forsakenness, an era of evil. For example, the Egyptian slavery among the Jews, the era of Arabic paganism “Jahiliyyah” in Islam, and the era of the “Prince of this world”. The coming of a prophet, key for each religion, transfers time to an eschatological position. A short culminating period, like the gif of the Torah or the coming of the chief prophet, is a one-time triumph of the Golden Age, after which the end times begin. “Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury because he knows that his time is short.” (Revelation 12:12). The very end of time will mark the short-term triumph of evil and chaos over the world, the arrival of Armilus/Antichrist/Dajjal with whom the final battle will have to take place. At the very end, a prophet (Mashiach / Jesus Christ / Mahdi) should appear, who will destroy the false prophets and restore the Golden Age forever. Nevertheless, in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the last period is thought of differently.

We can find the formation of a complex of eschatological ideas of the Abrahamic tradition in the books of the Hebrew prophets, created in the period from the end of the First Temple to the beginning of the Second Temple. It was the prophecies reflected in the Hebrew prophetic books that became the main source for all subsequent forms of Abrahamic eschatology. Initially, the institution of prophecy originated in pre-state



times. Prophets and sons of prophets appear constantly in early history books such as Joshua, Judges, and Samuel. These prophets are called “early prophets”. Their books have not survived, as they preached orally, so we can only learn about their activities from the books mentioned. In the eighth century BC, the phenomenon of later prophets appears in Israel, who call people to repentance, predict disasters, and deliverance from them. The group of 15 (16) prophets was divided into 12 minor prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habacuc, Sophanias, Aggeus, Zacharias, Malachias) and 3 (4) major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, (Daniel in Christianity)). We will consider only a few of them, namely Amos, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

It is important to note that some of the Jewish prophets (for example Amos as opposed to Isaiah) focus primarily on futurology. If the particular prophet speaks of the intervention of God Himself, which leads to serious changes, this speech about the last thing could not be compared with Christian Apocalypse. Early Hebrew eschatology and apocalyptic are distinguished by their locality as well as usually material in nature, with the exception of some provisions. For example, the image of the end in Amos and Hosea refers primarily to the fate of Israel. Later, among the Jews of the Old Testament, eschatology is focused on universal eschatology, that is, on ideas about the final fate of Israel, the people of God, and, consequently, the work of God on earth. In the book of Isaiah, “the end” takes on a universal scale. In the book of Isaiah, we find such central concepts and images as the coming resurrection of the dead and the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah retains the general logic of his predecessors, who spoke of the sins of the people and their future redemption, but he gives this redemption the character of complete world renewal.

Many religions are characterized by the phenomenon of religious ecstasy, which takes possession of specially tuned natures. In the bible, there is often a phrase that God has taken possession of someone.

All the great prophets are sincerely and passionately convinced of the genuineness of their vocation and the urgency of their message. They do not doubt that they are proclaiming the very word of God, for they have felt Yahweh's hand, or his spirit, upon



them. Their divine possession is sometimes manifested by ecstasy, though exaltation or an ecstatic trance do not seem to be indispensable [24, p. 343].

Nevertheless, the strong tension of this side of religious life manifested itself precisely in moments of social disasters.

Jewish eschatology, as we will see, is directed at the fate of God's people, Israel, as a whole. The prophets were interested in what would happen to the earth, the chosen people, and the nations after the apocalypse. Examining the content of the selected books, one can identify common features characteristic of Jewish apocalyptic literature:

1. executions, catastrophes, disasters, victories of pagans and sinners, evil is at its apogee;
2. the coming of the Messiah, its struggle with the forces of evil.
3. eschatological peace on the new Earth, renewal of the entire universe
4. universal judgment and resurrection.

It should also be noted that the books of the great prophets contain other functions and plots, later somewhat modified and used in the context of Christianity and subsequently political theology and political discourse. These are the functions of the last Empire, of the Gog and Magog people, etc.

The first prophet which we will consider is Amos. Amos is almost certainly the earliest of the prophets in the collection of prophetic books. He was a resident of Tekoa in Judah (1:1), about sixteen kilometres south of Jerusalem. His Judean background is also mentioned in 7:12, by Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, who angrily tells him to go back there. We are told that he was a sheepbreeder (noqed) (1:1), and he describes himself in addition as a cattle-farmer (boqer) and a dresser of sycamore-figs (7:14). This information may indicate that he was independent and well off.” [28, p. 163].

Amos spoke out against the moral decay of society and warned of impending judicial punishment for injustice and lawlessness. He prophesied about the coming fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the captivity of its people by the Assyrians and also mentioned the coming of the Messiah, who would restore justice and peace on earth. Amos believes that God has abandoned the people of Israel: “Then the Lord said



to me, “The time is ripe for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.” (8:2). In chapters 3 and 6 we could see the military narrative: Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: “An enemy will overrun your land, pull down your strongholds and plunder your fortresses.” (3:11); For the Lord God Almighty declares, “I will stir up a nation against you, Israel, that will oppress you all the way from Lebo Hamath to the valley of the Arabah.” (6:14). In chapters 5, 6, and 7 we see mass migrations and expulsions: Therefore, you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end. (6:7), For this is what Amos is saying: “Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land.” (7:11) Therefore I will send you into exile beyond Damascus,” says the Lord, whose name is God Almighty. (5:27).

Amos predicts the deprivation and death of the inhabitants of the country, whom foreign invaders will inevitably drive out of their homes: This is what the Sovereign Lord says to Israel: “Your city that marches out a thousand strong will have only a hundred left; your town that marches out a hundred strong will have only ten left.” (5:3). “Therefore this is what the Lord says: “Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword. Your land will be measured and divided up, and you yourself will die in a pagan country. And Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land.” (7:17).

In the book of Isaiah, we observe the universal character of the apocalypses, concerning the whole world, and not just the fate of Israel. Isaiah uses a lot of symbols and very colorfully describes the end of the world. It is important to note that the Book of Isaiah was written in the context of the Assyrian expansion. In the context of the study, the book of Isaiah is one of the most important sources, as it describes, in essence, political events, while conveying them in eschatological colors, focusing on the fact that the root of the problem is on the other side of the material world, and appears rather as a payment for the spiritual apostasy. Thus, we have a scheme that wars and disasters are primarily the results of a lost “spiritual war”, followed by retribution in the form of worldly upheavals, which at the same time are part of the universal end described in eschatological colors. Isaiah is a prophetic work in which



eschatology is central. In Isaiah, the foreknowledge of the coming real-historical disasters of Israel, the Assyrian invasion threatening the country merges with descriptions of the eschatological future. The eschatological idea that in the last days, the order of the world will be destroyed by a catastrophe is characteristic of all apocalyptic books. Although Isaiah repeatedly writes that the earth will be destroyed and devastated, the revelation of this element can be found very clearly in the verses of chapter 24:

The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. The Lord has spoken this word. The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the heavens languish with the earth. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore, earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left. The new wine dries up and the vine withers; all the merry-makers groan. The joyful timbrels are stilled, the noise of the revelers has stopped, the joyful harp is silent. No longer do they drink wine with a song; the beer is bitter to its drinkers. The ruined city lies desolate; the entrance to every house is barred. In the streets they cry out for wine; all joy turns to gloom, and all joyful sounds are banished from the earth. The city is left in ruins, its gate is battered to pieces. So will it be on the earth and among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, or as when gleanings are left after the grape harvest (24:3 – 13).

Another element of apocalyptic literature, that has found a place in the book of the prophet Isaiah. is the complete victory of God over the evil and death of this world. “On this mountain, he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever (25:7 – 8).

Isaiah 26 deals with the resurrection, which is also a vivid eschatological narrative. “But your dead will live, Lord; their bodies will rise – let those who dwell in the dust wake up and shout for joy – your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.” (26:19).

Isaiah also uses several symbolic animals, which could be interpreted not only in religious sense but in political. For example, Franz Delitzsch believes that “No doubt



the three animals are emblems of three imperial powers.” [29, p. 453]. The beginning of Isaiah 27 is one of the brightest moments in the eschatology of this book. It tells about one of the animals and about the victory of God over a certain Leviathan. The appearance of such a symbolic animal is a very striking feature of Old Testament eschatology. “In that day, the Lord will punish with his sword – his fierce, great and powerful sword – Leviathan the gliding serpent, Leviathan the coiling serpent; he will slay the monster of the sea. (27:1).

Also, in the book of Isaiah there is a picture of the “judgment of the nations”, the Last Judgment: In the last days, the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore (2:2 – 4).

If we compare the images of “last day”, we see that in Amos it has a relatively local character, referring mainly to the fate of Israel, while in the book of Isaiah, it acquires a universal scale. It is in the book of Isaiah that we find such central images for eschatology as the coming resurrection of the dead and the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah retains the general logic of his predecessors, who spoke about the sins of the people and their future redemption, but he even more clearly gives this redemption the character of a complete renewal of the world.

The third prophetic book that we will consider was written by Ezekiel, who was among those deported to Babylon at the end of the 6th century BC. According to Taubes “Israel's history culminates in Ezekiel, he is both priest and prophet, a scribe and a bearer of apocalypticism.” [10, p. 25]. His style and imagery are distinguished by the vivid visuality of the image, and the narrative is replete with mythological images and mystical details. Eschatology also occupies an important place in the book of Ezekiel. It is Ezekiel who owns the description of the vision, which became one of



the sources of the idea of the resurrection of the dead. The prophet sees a field full of dead bones, which are covered with flesh and come to life at the word of the prophet:

Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord (37:12 – 14).

In the book of Ezekiel, we also find a key prophecy about eschatological warfare. The image of the eschatological invasion was also encountered in earlier prophetic books, but only in Ezekiel it turns into a clearly formulated and lengthy prediction that played a significant role in the future history of Abrahamic eschatology, strongly affected Christian apocalyptics, and also became an essential component of the teachings about the signs of the approaching last day. According to the book of Ezekiel, after the return of the Israelites to their land, they are expected to be invaded by the northern peoples, Gog and Magog: You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I am proved holy through you before their eyes (38:16).

In the context of the study, the narrative about Gog and Magog is one of the most important, since numerous attempts to identify, them have led to the emergence of many interpretations, some of which, have been formed on the principles of mythmaking and gained wide distribution, began to be used to discredit some peoples by representatives of others. At present, due to the active confrontation between states, this narrative, penetrating the centuries of history, continues to be relevant. For example, we can cite the myth that Gog from the land of Magog is the future military-political leader of Russia. In the X century. in the “History” of the Byzantine author Leo the Deacon, the Rus were presented as the people whose prince, according to the prophecy of Ezekiel, would be Gog [30].

There are many examples of attempts to correlate the peoples of Gog and Magog



with real peoples or countries. One of the most famous examples is André de Longjumeau's attempt to correlate Mongols with Gog and Magog [31]. There are a huge number of such examples of identification of different people:

Judaism, Christianity and Islam showed a tendency to equate, in times of danger, a fearsome enemy with the apocalyptical figures of Gog and Magog. For Ezekiel, they were still unnamed enemies from the north; for the Syrian Christians of the 6th to 8th centuries, they were concrete enemies from the north, namely the Huns and Hephthalites, and later the idea of Gog and Magog was associated with the Turks and Mongols. As expressed in early Islamic tradition and al-Qazwini, they likewise were the Turks: Gog and Magog are two mighty tribes of the Turks, descendants from the son of Japheth son of Noah [32, p. 82].

Except for Turks, Mongols, or Huns, sometimes European nations were also considered as Gog and Magog [32, p. 82]. The interpretation of any nation according to the idea of Gog and Magog is a demonization method that has not lost its relevance to this day. It is widely used in modern politics, political science, and journalism. In this case, instead of fantastic external signs of otherness, mental and physical deformities, moral deformity is attributed to the representatives of the demonized peoples:

Gog and Magog are short, bald, and broad-faced, while their size is that of an average man. At their hands they have claws instead of nails; they have molars and canines like those of wild cats, and they have large ears, one of which serves them as bed, the other as cover [32, p. 90].

For example, today we can meet such designations of some countries as “existential threat”, “empire of evil”, “axis of evil”, “global threat”, “rogue state”, and “terrorist state”. At the same time, the opposition of states continues to be carried out according to the principle of mythmaking, within the framework of binary oppositions: “friend-foe”, “light-darkness”, and “good-evil”. The key here lies in the fact that the “Gog and Magog” concept is the scheme and basis for mythmaking, representing something hostile and evil, thus in political discourse we can observe how the existential opposition friend/enemy is built, which has ontological and eschatological



roots.

Next, it is necessary to consider the book of Daniel. The prophet Daniel is a very important figure, since his prophecy, especially the part about the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, is a basis for the idea of an empire, which in turn has a purely eschatological character. The idol that Nebuchadnezzar sees consists of four metals and clay, which is mixed with iron in the legs. Daniel interprets this as describing of the Four Ages of the Universal Monarchy or the Four Universal Kingdoms. Daniel says:

Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold. “After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron – for iron breaks and smashes everything – and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay (2:37 – 41).

Based on the above part, we can detect some similarities with the theme of the change of centuries from gold to iron, which accompanies the symbolism of the Empire. We meet these four ages in Hesiod (with the addition of a special age between the copper and iron – the age of heroes). Similarly, the unfolding of the cycle is presented in the Indian teaching of the four Yugas, each of which, as in Hesiod or in Daniel's explanation of dream, becomes worse than the previous age. The degradation of eras and, accordingly, the separation of parts of the idol may correspond to the change of Empires in Antiquity – the first, Babylonian, is the heyday, the last, Roman, is the decline. At the same time, following the text, we see the idea of the last, eternal



empire, which will have no end, which can be interpreted not only as an empire of the spirit or the church, but also used in a political context, where this piece of text can be considered as basis to legitimize power and its activities: “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.” (2:44).

10.3. Christian apocalypse, millennialism, personal eschatology, and historical example of eschatological metanarration

Death, or the awareness of finitude, is a feeling which belong to every human being. Death is always unambiguous in its finiteness, always unambiguous in that it puts a limit or boundary to the ordinary. Finiteness is a universal attribute that has become the most important source for the formation of metaphysics and ideas about the world. Death as a concept is a specifically important aspect in the context of personal eschatology. In the context of Judaism and Christianity enough to remember Book of Sirach (7:36) – “In all you do, remember the end of your life, and then you will never sin”.

Within the framework of Christianity, eschatological ideas should be considered first at the individual and then at the global level of eschatology. First of all, they focus in detail on the theme of death and the posthumous existence of an individual person, and only then on the ultimate fate of the entire universe. The individual level of eschatology focuses on the finiteness of the existence of an individual, including ideas about immediate judgment and retribution. With regard to the finiteness of human existence in Orthodoxy and Catholicism, attention is focused on the existence of a personal judgment, concerning the fate of an individual and taking place immediately after his death, and a general (Last Judgment), which should take place at the end of time. The fundamental difference in understanding the essence of the personal judgment within the framework of Orthodox eschatology lies in the fact that the souls



of the righteous and sinners after it correspond to two locations – heaven and hell, in which they remain either in joy or in sorrow, but do not achieve either perfect bliss or perfect torment. Bliss and torment are the main possible states of the souls of the dead in Catholic eschatology, while in Orthodox eschatology they will become possible only after the Last Judgment. In Orthodoxy and Catholicism, the torments of sinners are of an initial nature until the Last Judgment and can be weakened and even removed thanks to the intercessory prayers of the Church.

Eschatology in a religious context is in most cases the sum of the teachings. Eschatological elements are present in almost every religion, but conceptually eschatology was defined as monotheism, which was opposed to the cyclism of polytheism. In most religions of the world, there is a concept of the coming end, the last thing or judgment. Eschaton can be both global and personal, it can be a universal court when all living things are killed by the trumpet voice of an angel, the world is cleansed, and then people are resurrected and subjected to righteous judgment, or it can simply be the closing of the eyes of the supreme deity in the endless cycle of the universe. Usually, the end of the world is presented as a final battle between the forces of good and evil, (e.g. book of Revelation 20:7 – 10) which is one of the most important eschatological archetypes.

The worldwide level of eschatology emphasizes the ultimate goal of the cosmos, history, humanity, and the end of the world in general. Within the framework of the final destiny of mankind and the world, in the majority directions of Christianity, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgment, and the coming of the Kingdom of God are recognized. Within the framework of Catholicism and Orthodoxy is the idea of the glorious second coming of Christ (For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Matt. 24:27) during which the resurrection of the dead and the Last Judgment will take place, which determines the final the fate of every person. In Protestantism, attention is focused on the idea of two resurrections during the second coming of Christ. First, there will be a resurrection of the righteous, who will reign with Christ for a thousand years on earth, after which sinners will be resurrected and the final fate



of people will be determined.

The main eschatological ideas, crucial for the study, are taken on the side of Christian theologians who consider the millennium kingdom of Christ mentioned in the book of Revelation of John the Beloved: “I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They[a] had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years (20:4-5). Millenarian ideas are very important in the context of the study since “together with Marxist chiliasm, they represent the only positive modern re-evaluations of the End of the World myth.” [18, p. 60]. There are several views on how the millennium will manifest itself. Within the framework of the Christian religion, millenarian ideas were spread very actively in a number of heresies and radical movements, the most significant of which is the trinitarian metaphysics and mysticism of Joachim of Fiore (the founder of medieval Chiliasm), about three eras of history: age of the Father (Old Testament), age of the Son (New Testament) and age of the Holy Spirit (Millennium).

This concept was developed in the corpus of his writings “*Liber de concordia Novi ac Veteris Testamenti*”(1983) and “*Expositio in Apocalypsim*” (2020) and was a mystical-dialectical conception of the historical process. Thus, Joachim of Fiore spoke of the progressive growth of the religious consciousness of mankind and the gradual self-disclosure of the Trinity. Chiliasm, by Joachim of Fiore, implies that the triumph of God and the triumph of the righteous in the end should appear not in a metaphysical sense, but right here, on earth with its historical existence and with all its laws of physics, among people. Thus, we see that the idea of a material utopia is not alien to Christian discourse, which is a precedent, in a way, of the Marxist view.

There are several main concepts of millennialism: “Premillennialism” or “Historical Premillennialism”, which emphasizes that at the end of history, there will be a visible millennium kingdom of Christ on earth, which will begin at the time of His second coming. The return of Christ to earth will be preceded by the apostasy of the



church and all sorts of disasters, and the second coming and resurrection of dead Christians will happen suddenly. The second concept “Amillennialism” or “Symbolic millenarianism” states that the Millennium Kingdom of Christ has already come and exists symbolically in the church in the form of church sacraments or only in heaven and in the souls of believers from the first to the second coming of Christ. According to this teaching, the real millennial Kingdom of God on earth will never come. “Postmillennialism” emphasizes the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the world through the activities of the church and the preaching of the gospel. As a result of the victory of the church, the era of the Millennium Kingdom begins, which will end with the second coming of Christ.

In any of the options, millennialism /chiliasm, except for Amillennialism, speaks of a golden age, a kind of utopia on earth that should come in the future, thereby unfolding the historical process into a strict line, at the end of which there is a goal for which it is necessary to prepare, somehow to participate through creativity to achieve it, or to be thrown out of history. As we will see later, millennialism is a very significant thing, not only in the context of premodernity but also in the context of modernity.

Eschatology is very closely related to time and history. M.H. Abrams writes that, biblical paradigm has survived the biblical myth in which it was incorporated and has deeply informed Western views of the shape of history and the destiny of mankind and the world, whether in simple or sophisticated, in religious or secular renderings. History it is said 'has meaning': by this is signified that it is not a play of blind contingencies but that it has a plot, and that this plot has a controller who orders it towards its outcome.” [33, p. 344].

The presence or absence of “time” implies an appreciation of the world. If time is still there, then the historical process is going on, there is still something that must happen. If time is not here then the world is already full, while time does not appear in accomplishment and dialectics, but simply as a segment during which nothing radically new can happen. The absence of time implies a rather primitive early Christian idea that the apocalypse has already happened, and there can be nothing new in principle, which smacks of some kind of passivity in anticipation of the end. This is a static look,



devoid of creativity.

For example, S.N. Bulgakov singles out these two interpretations of eschatology, but Ecclesiology becomes the selection criterion for him – “Now we experience the transcendent as a reality only in the depths of our spirit in communion with the Church, the “Kingdom not of this world”, a living organism of the transcendent, and on the basis of this living experience we try to comprehend and feel life religiously, to unravel the noumenon of history.” [33]. Thus, history for him is only the history of the church.

In his work “Apocalyptic and Socialism”, he writes that the Bible contains the apocalypse not only in the form of the Revelation of St. John but also in a number of apocalypses in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, in the Gospels, in the speeches of Christ and the writings of the apostles. These apocalypses speak not only of the final trials before the irreversible end of the world but also of the accomplishments of the Church in the Future, which is still waiting for its fulfillment. Bulgakov is interested in whether there is a Future in the life of the Church, i.e. really filled time containing new creativity. Or there can be nothing new in the history of the Church since it has already been internally fulfilled, although it may continue for some indefinite time. In early Christianity, the answer was that there is no future, because there is no time at all since the last hour of history has already come, and we must immediately wait for the Second Coming of the Lord. But the early Christian feeling of expectation of the end was replaced by a sense of the finiteness of personal life in death and the judgment following it. Another answer is that the history of the Church is internally finished, although outwardly it continues, for the Church already has within itself the fullness of its accomplishments. Therefore, in essence, nothing internally separates us from the end, and it is only a question of the length of time, but not of new achievements in it.

The book of Revelation describes the events that will take place before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to earth. Through visions, the forthcoming birth of the Antichrist on Earth, the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, and the Last Judgment were revealed to John. The book of Revelation ends with a prophecy about God's victory over sin. In the renewed creation, God will dwell among people in the



eternal Heavenly Jerusalem. The book ends with the words “Amen. Come”, Lord Jesus.”, which became an expression of the desire to bring this event closer. Revelation sums up everything that has been said about this in the biblical tradition. The theme of the second coming of Jesus Christ is devoted to many prophecies of the New Testament. Jesus Christ himself also repeatedly spoke about his second coming to earth. According to Jesus Christ, His second coming will be visible to everyone (Acts.1:11 “Men of Galilee”, they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”).

Jesus Christ and the apostles not only did not specifically indicate the day and hour of the second coming, but even speak directly about the impossibility of a person to know it. Nevertheless, they pointed out some signs of this time, such as: the spread of the gospel throughout the world, to all nations, the impoverishment of faith and love in people, and the appearance of the Antichrist. As in the prophecies of the Old Testament, the prophecies of the New Testament say that the second coming will be preceded by many cataclysms and signs in the sky (obscuration of the sun and moon, falling stars from the sky).

A very important concept in the context of the Christian apocalyptic is the Katechon. The katechon is what keeps the Antichrist from coming. We first meet this concept in the Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians. The term Katechon can be interpreted in different ways, but most likely it means the Empire, as John Chrysostom said:

Justly anyone can, firstly, ask what is “restraining” (τό κατέχον), and then discover a desire to know why Paul speaks so vaguely about this? What is it that “retains to appear to him”, that is, “hinders”? Some say that this is the grace of the Holy Spirit, while others say that it is the Roman state; I agree more with these latter. Why? Because if the apostle wanted to speak about the Spirit, he would not express himself vaguely about it, but would say definitely that now the grace of the Holy Spirit, i.e. extraordinary gifts, prevents him from appearing. Moreover, he would have to come already, if then he should come when extraordinary talents are scarce, because they



have long been scarce. But since (the apostle) says this about the Roman state, it is understandable why he only hints at this and speaks covertly for the time being. He did not want to incur undue enmity and useless danger. Indeed, if he had said that the Roman state would collapse in a short time, then immediately, as a rebel, they would have wiped off the face of the earth and (together with him) all the believers, as living and striving for this [34, pp. 597 – 598].

The katechon, being interpreted as the Empire, gives a serious impetus to the development of the political side of theology. The state, which has assumed the role of the time holder before the coming of the Antichrist, fully realizes and extrapolates the eschatological nature outside. Many historical states can serve as an example of this. Among all the examples of the past, in the context of modern political discourse, one should note the Moscow kingdom and the concept of the “Third Rome” which we could read not only in its geopolitical manifestation, but we could also observe a very strong religious and eschatological accent in it.

The Third Rome as a concept is not purely Russian and is based on the idea of “*Translatio imperii*”. [35, pp. 100 – 137] The idea of “*Translatio imperii*”, originates in the mentioned book of Daniel and in the Aeneid. This idea lies in the fact that the empire is, in a certain sense, a transcendent relay race, which is passed from hand to hand in the process of history, thereby marking both the succession of a certain tradition and setting a certain goal, which implies holding the order and historical time itself to prevent discord. The Third Rome is a way to demonstrate the continuity of the Byzantine Empire and thus get the opportunity to legitimize actions from a historical perspective, legitimize everything from the point of view of history and thus from the point of view of eschatology. An empire is always a state of emergency which in fact connects the state of empire with the eschatological time concept. “*Imperium* is the extraordinary, almost unlimited powers granted to the consul in time of war. The holder of such powers was called the emperor” [35, p. 101].

The example of Moscow as the Third Rome is of exceptional importance since the main body of texts where its roots come from can be read specifically from the point of view of religion, as opposed to other transfers of the Empire, such as the Holy



Roman Empire or Kaiser's Germany. It is believed that Slavophiles had a hand in the active development and popularization of this concept, nevertheless, the eschatological nature of the period of the Moscow kingdom takes place, which we can detect in the discourse of that time. Moscow as the third Rome continues to be relevant to this day. We can meet a lot of appeals to this idea not only in Russian political discourse but also in the West in the context of assessing the political decisions of the Russian Federation. In addition to this, the example of the Muscovite kingdom, in particular the example of the eschatological tension that reigned in this period of history, makes it possible to introduce the term “*metanarration*”, which will more clearly and accurately describe the phenomenon of the appeal of authority to the symbols of the metanarrative in order to legitimize decisions, mobilize, and justifications for violence.

In the middle of the 15th century, an event took place that was included in the Orthodox eschatological scenario, this is the fall of Constantinople (1453). A little earlier, the Union of Florence, rejected by Moscow, was concluded, which automatically transferred the Russian Church to an independent position with the conviction of exclusivity and authority in the matter of Orthodoxy. “Greek apostasy at this council gave grounds and occasion to proclaim Russian independence. It was a church-political act. But it had its reflections and consequences in cultural work as well.” [36, p. 14]. Thus, after the fall of Constantinople, the purpose of the Moscow kingdom was to be “the preservation of the true Christian faith” and “the salvation of the souls of the people” who lived there. After the fall of Byzantium, both politically and spiritually, Moscow turned out to be the largest and most powerful Orthodox kingdom. Eschatological roots about “Moscow – the Third Rome” can be found in works of well-known Elder Philotheus as well as in Nestor Iskander's “Tales of the Capture of Constantinople”, who, speaking about the capture of the city by the Turks, predicted the capture of the city by Russian troops [37].

Exactly in such perspectives of apocalyptic unrest the first outlines of the well-known “Third Rome theory” emerged. It was precisely an eschatological theory, which was already strictly sustained in eschatological tones and categories in ideas of Elder Philotheus [36, p. 14].



The Moscow kingdom has been in constant eschatological tension since the fall of Constantinople. For example, “in his first petition addressed to Ivan the Terrible, Peresvetov says that all Christians now place their hopes exclusively on the Moscow kingdom and its tsar, who must establish God’s truth in his kingdom and ensure the salvation of the people living in this kingdom.” [38, p. 134]. More than that, some researchers showed a link between eschatological texts and their symbolical implementation in the contest of punishment:

The well-known correspondence of the fleeing governor Kurbsky with Ivan the Terrible is replete with references to the Holy Scriptures and the certainty that the last times have come. Each of them has his own view on what methods should be used in the conduct of state policy in the context of the impending second coming. “A.L. Yurganov draws attention to the fact that in the perception of contemporaries, the actions of Ivan IV are very often associated with the Last Judgment. He also draws parallels between the executions and tortures that the king arranged, and Christian ideas about the hellish torment and punishment that sinners will undergo at the Last Judgment. For example, most oprichnina executions were somehow connected with water and fire (very often people were drowned in the river, set on fire, using boiling water), and images of a fiery river, lake or boiling cauldrons were traditional for ancient Russian descriptions of hellish torments. Also, the ordeal that the human soul goes through after death was associated with the image of the fiery river” [38, p. 136].

From the correspondence, you can be sure that Ivan the Terrible is sure that the Court can only be Terrible, so he does not scare Krubsky with reprisals but constantly mentions that he needs to think about saving his soul – “Why are you, oh prince, if you think you are pious, rejected your only begotten soul? What will you replace it with on the Day of Judgment?” [39].

The aggravation of eschatological tension in the context of the Muscovite kingdom was also played by the period of the “Troubles”. The Time of Troubles also had a huge impact on the eschatological conceptions of Moscow. The very threat of loss of national independence and the imposition of Catholicism was presented in the most negative and eschatological colors. The discourse of that period reflected



eschatological ideas that consult with Philotheus's idea of Moscow as the Third Rome, which meant that Moscow is the last Christian kingdom holding back time before the Last Judgment. For example, Avraamy Palitsyn in his essay “The Tale of Avraamy Palitsyn about the siege of the Trinity-Sergius Monastery ...” identified False Dmitry with the Antichrist [40, p. 24].

All this demonstrates a unique example of eschatological *metanarration*, when, over a fairly long historical period, the state and discourse as a whole were in constant eschatological tension and sometimes served as a source for legitimizing certain actions such as executions or introducing cruel repressive institutions and methods of government like the oprichnina.

Conclusion

Concluding the article, it is necessary to mention that we considered a variety of sources of eschatological cycle, therefore completing the basic task to create a map of crucial eschatological components, functions and ideas which could be enumerated in the following way:

1. Concept of the external danger of Gog and Magog people which could be used for identification of enemy as an eschatological treat for “good” people (Repetition could be found in Ezekiel (38-39) and in Book of Revelation (20:7 – 10)).

2. The idea of Empire, Millenium and Katechon, which could be used as the basis to show a specific mission and goal of the government which in fact lies beyond the given world, therefore legitimizing power and its decisions (Repetition could be found in Isaiah (2:2 – 4, 11:6), Ezekiel (40 – 48) and in Book of Revelation (20: 2 –6)).

3. The idea of a material golden age which could be found in the concept of Joachim of Fiore as well as in his trinitarian metaphysics, what in fact found its implementation in political religions of the 20th century (This concept being one of the



eschatological interpretations is intertwined in the context of Hegelian philosophy¹² and the totalitarian ideas of the twentieth century like Communism or National socialism).

4. The idea of an eternal fight between forces of good and forces of evil which has a connection to the Gog and Magog idea, but still deserves a separate note, since Gog and Magog could be considered as an event, while an eschatological war is, in fact, an attribute of world existence, which forces people to be in a constant state of clash whether it be a war or a struggle with sins (I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth. (Rev. 3:15 – 16).). This could be used, on par with the idea of the main goal and material golden age as the basis for the mobilization impulse of people for a specific governmental decision.

More than that, eschatological metanarrative has its specific aesthetic and atmosphere. All eschatological books, including even modern one, are written in a specific language, which strives to have an exciting impact on the reader. Inside the eschatological books, we can detect an aspect of irrationalism that affects the reader in one way or another, which in a certain sense can induce him to act. Eschatological books strive to build a great authority to which a continent, history, and the world itself is an object, which belittles the dignity of a person and makes him feel like only a grain of sand against the background of such categories. Such a captivating aspect of the eschatological metanarrative is a function in itself, that the state or authority can resort to legitimizing its actions and mobilize people to solve and achieve certain grandiose goals. Eschatology is always a point of view from eternity, which builds a certain moral system and a view of the world where the final goals are much more important than human life. Besides this, eschatology in a sense distorts time by claiming that the time before the end has a certain mysticism that consists in a permanent state of siege and

¹² "Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences"(2015). It consists of three parts: "Science of Logic", " Science of Nature" and " Science of Geist". According to Hegel, "Logic" is the "kingdom of the Father", or God before the creation of the world. The transition to the " Science of Nature" is a transition to creation, which ends immediately before the Incarnation, from which the " Science of Spirit" logically begins, which gives the opportunity of the onset of the "kingdom of the Spirit". This rings a bell with the trinitarian metaphysics of Joachim of Fiore, who's medieval chiliast concept became a kind of a template for a specific way of historical thinking, giving a readymade system for metanarratives of political religions. This positive, chiliast desire of achieving the established goal, perfectly serves as impetus for public myths.



in anticipation of the end. Any second can be the last one since every second and even the gap between seconds has the possibility of the beginning of the end, which must keep a person in constant eschatological tension, or, using the language of Baudrillard, in a state of suspense.

Thanks to the above example of the eschatological *metanarration* in the Muscovite kingdom, we see that eschatology can serve as a source of legitimation of certain actions, in particular, of a state of emergency, as well as of punishment, since in the state of the last times, emergency becomes a permanent state and, accordingly, human life and routine tend to zero against the backdrop of impending eternity. In such a case, the authority can punish according to the order of the apocalyptic times.