

# Book Review: | The Church's Hope, Vol. 1 |

*Dr. Julian Kennedy*

***The Church's Hope: The Reformed Doctrine of the End,  
Volume 1: The Millennium***  
**David J. Engelsma**  
**Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2021**  
**350 pages, Paperback**

This eminently readable book has nice short chapters and is the most comprehensive, incisive and polemical explanation of the Bible teaching on the end times that I have ever read. Engelsma explains the controverted passages (e.g., Daniel 9, Romans 11 and Revelation 20), comparing Scripture with Scripture to build up a thoroughly accurate and Reformed amillennial view that presents the truth of the believer's hope. That hope is described on the back cover as "the visible, bodily, glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ on the clouds of heaven with the resurrection of the Christian's body, the public vindication of the Christian at the last judgment, and the enjoyment of the glories of the new creation." All erroneous millennial views render those who hold them totally unprepared for what is coming on the world. The thousand years of Revelation 20 are not literal!

With Prof. Engelsma's encyclopaedic knowledge of millennial heretics and the Reformed confessions, both of which he quotes repeatedly, he effectively refutes the errant millennial views: postmillennialism, premillennialism and dispensationalism, exposing them as heresy because they deny Jesus Christ (who is the end or goal of all things), the doctrine of election and the unity of the church in all ages. Any future earthly millennial golden age, be it a post-millennial Christianizing of the world or a prosperous earthly Jewish kingdom with a return to Old Testament sacrifices, is patently exposed as falsehood and a misinterpretation of God's Word. These views deliberately ignore many clear

opposing Scriptures. Jesus' plain word that His kingdom is not of this world should by itself explode all forms of millennialism. The chapters cover the intermediate state (of persons after death), what constitutes the real millennium, preterism in all its forms (placing all or most end time prophecy before AD 70), the identity of the true Israel of God, etc. The fact that Engelsma repeats assertions and comes against error from different perspectives brings home to the reader the truth in no uncertain terms and proves the maxim that we learn by repetition. Many, if not a majority, in Christendom today follow these erroneous views so this book is very necessary in countering them. It is also a thoroughly good and inspirational read!

The truth of the end of all things is fundamental to biblical eschatology. To ignore the end, or to mistake it, is to skew everything that the Bible teaches about the things that must shortly come to pass. As a result one cannot discern, or rightly interpret, the signs of the end, even though he sees them. One who mistakes the end very really runs the risk of seeking and working for a wrong end, both of his own life and of all things. He will be indifferent to, and may even resist, futilely, God's end.

It is necessary therefore, that the church and the believer know what the end is. We can and do know what the end, or goal, of God with all things is because God has made known to us in the gospel this "mystery of his will" [Eph. 1:9]. There is one end of all things. In this one goal, God accomplishes a number of related purposes, including the judgment of the ungodly world, the salvation of the godly, and the vindication of himself, but the end is one. As God is one and as his plan for all things is one, so is the end of all things one. God is not of two minds with creation and history. He does not have two different purposes with his world.

In verses 9–10 [of Ephesians 1] the apostle reminds the church of *the* mystery of the will of God, which is this one purpose of God: "In the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

David J. Engelsma, *The Church's Hope: The Reformed Doctrine of the End*, vol. 1: *The Millennium* (Jenison, MI: RFP, 2021), pp. 34-35; italics Engelsma's.