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Vanguards of the Apocalypse: How Christian Eschatology Shaped Early Spanish and English Empire in the New World

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VANGUARDS OF THE APOCALYPSE: HOW CHRISTIAN ESCHATOLOGY SHAPED

EARLY SPANISH AND ENGLISH EMPIRE IN THE NEW WORLD

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This thesis explores the role of eschatology in shaping early Spanish and English colonial empire in the Americas. Historians of this period have been divided in acknowledging the role of religion, and by proxy eschatology, in the development of colonialism in the New World. By examining the way eschatology influenced colonial actors through tangible ways in how they conducted themselves or dictated policy, a narrative emerges that challenges the historiography that dismisses or downplays the spiritual in favor of solely the material. Individuals representing the Spanish and English empires were fervent believers that the end times were fast approaching, and in turn acted in ways that corresponded with their eschatological viewpoints. People waged war, imposed labor systems, established colonies, and more, all for the ultimate purpose of bringing about the second coming of Jesus Christ. Reframing the narrative of the earliest two centuries following Columbus's discovery of the New World to incorporate eschatology has major ramifications, complicating the picture of colonialism in the Americas.

KEYWORDS: Americas; colonialism; England; eschatology; religious history; Spain

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B.D.

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CHAPTER I: THE DOOM AND BUST CYCLE

The morning of October 12th, 1492 was the start of what is undoubtably one of the watershed moments in the history of mankind. A crewman on the deck of *La Pinta*, one of the three vessels that had set sail from Spain as part of Columbus's voyage to find a route to Asia, spotted land on the horizon. The European "discovery", also known as the Encounter out of respect for the indigenous inhabitants that had long existed on the Americas before Europeans arrived, ushered in a time of extraordinary change and cross-ocean exchange that shook and shaped the entire world. New crops from the Americas meant a healthier and more diverse diet for Europeans across the Atlantic at the same time as diseases ranging from smallpox from European and syphilis from the New World spread to inhabitants of continents never previously exposed to such illnesses. Guns and tobacco, slaves and food, Columbus's arrival in the Americas heralded a time of transformation for millions of individuals across the globe as European empires arose from seizing new territories.

The change that Columbus's landfall on the sandy beaches of the Bahamas was not just in the transfer of physical items, the movement of people, or the geopolitics of empire. The discovery of the New World shook intellectual thought across the Atlantic to the very core. An entire new continent, inhabited by prior existing people, was something that was cataclysmic in its effect of shaking up the intellectual world, especially with regard to religion. Christians throughout Europe were confounded at this new discovery, and many strived to figure out what the New World meant in the context of God's overarching plan and Christian cosmology. For many Christians, the New World was a sign of the approaching end times as foretold in the Book

of Revelations in the Bible, an impending apocalypse that would see Christ return once again to Earth to reign over a kingdom that would last a millennium.

In many ways, the Encounter and the spread of colonial empire following it has confounded historians and various other academics much as it did the intellectual thinkers of the 16th and 17th centuries. Differing historical narratives have emerged in an attempt to make sense of such a cataclysmic and impactful period that encompassed historical actors, states, and entire populations across the breadth of the Atlantic. Discussions of colonial empire postulate differing motivations of both the state and of state actors, some of which have unfortunately engaged in downplaying the importance of religiosity in favor of a mostly secular accounting.

Traditionally, Marxist historians have presented a historical narrative of the colonization of the New World and the role of European empire within it with a strong emphasis on materialism and class. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the authors of *The Communist Manifesto*, wrote in the third volume of the Marxist foundational text *Das Kapital* that it was in "the 16th and 17th centuries" that saw the increased "development of merchant's capital…[which furthered] the transition from feudal to capitalist mode of production." Furthermore, *Das Kapital* made the claim that "the colonial system…contributed materially toward destroying the feudal fetters on production."[1] Colonial history as put forward by both Marx and Engels, the original Marxist historians, was deterministic; the merchant class and the system of colonial empire were the chief drivers that inevitably ushered Europeans and their colonial possessions from medieval feudalism towards modern capitalism.

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[1] Fredrich Engels and Karl Marx, *On Colonialism* 2nd Edition (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1923), 303.

Marxist historians have nuanced the topic of early European colonial empire with religion since the work of Marx and Engels. The late Christopher Hill wrote extensively on topics surrounding England in the 17th century such as the English Civil War, which inevitably impacted colonial empire. Hill, as a Marxist historian, didn't neglect class, but instead he mixed the idea of class with the importance of religion. Puritanism and various radical Protestant sects became connected to an emergent middle-class in both England and its colonies. Hill also notably gave eschatology its fair due in examining England and its territories in the context of the 17th-century. In Hill's work *Antichrist in Seventeenth Century England*, the idea that Englishmen believed in an imminent apocalypse and that the antichrist walked among them on Earth played a pivotal role in the revolutionary landscape that colored England, which in turn led to an outright millennialist revolutionary state.

A more recent school of historians that has also approached history through a critical lens of capitalism has been dubbed "the new historians of capitalism". Generally comprised of economic historians, the likes of which including Sven Beckert and Edward Baptist, the new historians of capitalism have tried to pinpoint the emergence of a nascent capitalism as stemming from early English colonial empire in the Americas and later from the newly independent United States, typically with a focus on slavery. In these narratives, spirituality is neglected in its entirety, the intellectual realm in which apocalypticism was running rampant left by the wayside. The religious beliefs and fervor of the men that made up Jamestown's board of investors disappears from the telling, as does the purpose of the colonists that crossed the Atlantic to establish a colony in Virginia. Instead, the story becomes one merely of joint-stock companies, dividends, the trade in spices, and finding land for a growing population. Even more cynically,

when religion does come up, it's in the form of implying religion as a cover when Edward Baptist asked "what do the settlers claim as their purpose(s) in establishing [New Plymouth]?"[2]

Some historians of the English-controlled Caribbean have also leaned in the direction of English colonial imperialism in the Americas being a primarily material endeavor. Matthew Mulcahy, in his 2014 book *The Hubs of Empire,* portrayed the English acquisition of Jamaica in Cromwell's Western Design as being driven in large part by English colonists already in the Caribbean being interested in plunder or the acquisition of an island wherein they could develop a sugar plantation economy such as they attempted in Suriname.[3] Providence Island and the religious motivations behind its privateering raids upon the Spanish are mentioned, but are secondary to the acquiring of profits.

Outside of the English colonies that sprung up in the New World from the late 16th century onwards, some historians have also tried to tie the Spanish Americas to a protean form of capitalism as early as the 1500's. John Tutino in his 2011 book *Making a New World* rejected the assertions made by other scholarship which rightly attributed early colonial Spanish society as being imbedded in a deeply medieval mindset steeped in religiosity and honor-bound tradition. Instead, Tutino boldly stated that these "[scholars'] understandings cannot stand."[4] *Making a New World* makes the claim that the Spanish monarchy was of little importance in comparison to its agents of empire on the ground, profit-seeking proto-capitalists mostly focused on naked resource consumption and material acquisition.

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[2] Edward E. Baptist and Louis Hyman, *American Capitalism: A Reader* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017), 33-34, 42.

[3] Matthew Mulcahy, *Hubs of Empire: The Southeastern Lowcountry and British Caribbean* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014)*,* 63

[4] John Tutino, *Making a New World*: *Founding Capitalism in the Bajío and Spanish North America* (Duke University Press, 2011), 3

Tutino hasn't been the one historian to have asserted that the agents of Spanish colonialism were mostly consumed with the idea of personal profit and the material enrichment of Spain. Howard Zinn, in his *A People's History of the United States*, had postulated that as early as Columbus, the agents of colonial imperialism were after their bottom-line rather than any metaphysical concerns or religiosity. Spain's relationship in conjunction to the Islamic lands to its south and to its east is portrayed as one of spice routes and land access rather than one of an intense religious hatred, inspired by both Spain's Catholic faith and Spain's claim as a successor to the Byzantine Empire after its collapse. Zinn also characterizes early English colonialism in a similar fashion. The growing of tobacco and finding a source of labor becomes primary, with religion portrayed as little more than shallow justification for what the settlers of the Virginia colony were undertaking. This narrative has propagated throughout school rooms and the libraries of college campuses; *A People's History of the United States* has been massively successful, having millions of copies sold worldwide.

Yet some historians are not in agreement on the characterization of European colonialism in the New World as primarily a profit-seeking affair. David Hall has discussed at length in his books *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* and *Worlds of Wonder*, published in 2017 and 1990 respectively, about the centrality of religion in English society during the period of early colonization. Puritanism managed to work its way from the margins of society in England to playing a crucial role in both the New World and in the British Isles as moved from opposition to the state church to taking root within the state church. Additionally, Hall pointed out that popular religion, which merged with the idea of an imminent eschatology as the printing press provided more access to apocalyptic literature, was prevalent in the time of the 16th and 17th centuries. Religion is not to be so easily dismissed as mere superstition or shallow justification for empire.

David Hall's work is a continuation of older historical work. Perry Miller's *Errand Into the Wilderness*, written in the 1950s, pondered the question of what were the goals of the first English settlers in the New World. The conclusion Miller came to was that the first settlers, such as the men and women that comprised such ventures as the Massachusetts Bay Company or the Plymouth Colony, perceived themselves as having "a positive sense of mission."[5] Puritan colonists that crossed the Atlantic did not, as some popular narratives might suggest, do so out of fear of persecution at home so much as out of their own conceptualization of their deeply-felt religious faith. Using John Winthrop's sermons, Miller presents an early America built off the back of a form of covenant, wherein English Puritans had entered a compact with God that promised God's favor and providence upon them in exchange for a godly society. The foundations of this, in turn, created a form of proto-American identity.

Other historians have backed up Hall's assertations as well as those of Miller's, albeit with less focus on the formulation of a nascent American identity. Historian Carla Pestana went as far as to say that religion dictated colonial migration, spurred Europeans into conquest, and provided the framework for governance in the colonies. Religion, "more than any other cultural practice", shaped European colonization and "the world that resulted."[6] Karen Kupperman, another historian of colonialism and the Atlantic world in this period, pointed towards religious ideology in *The Atlantic: A World History* as informing the actions of European colonial actors and as shaping the world around them before and during the early colonial period.

In the case of the Spanish, historians have also pushed back against the idea that the Spaniards, and by proxy Columbus, went to the New World solely for the idea of profit-

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[5] Perry Miller, *Errand Into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 4
[6] Carla Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire*: *Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 6

accumulation. Anthony Pagden, writer of *The Lords of All the World,* argued Spanish Empire was thoroughly entrenched in the past, embedded in feudalistic values, and perceived itself as a continuation of a Roman Empire in the initial stages of colonization. Here, religion takes a central role; Spain is not looking for the wealth of the Americas solely out of the idea of enrichment, but its mission takes on divine purpose. The Spanish imperial project was one closely interlocked with the Catholic Church.

There is a clear division within the scholarship of the early colonial period of the Americas. Some historians have rightfully emphasized religion as a chief motivating factor for the Europeans, while others have disregarded religion as secondary, or more cynically, perhaps as shallow justification for an imperial project that negatively impacted millions of lives for the sake of material benefit. This divide sees no end and sight, despite the fact that when one examines the earliest steps of colonial empire by both the Spanish and the English in the Americas, it becomes apparent that religion, and more specifically eschatology, played a far bigger role than suggested by historians such as Baptist, Beckert, Tutino, and Marx.

Ultimately, the story of early colonization of the Americas by both Spanish and English empire is one shaped by the religiosity and eschatology of their participants. Individuals, medicant orders, religious sects, political factions, and indeed at times the state itself were all operating under the basic assumption of a looming apocalypse. These historical actors saw themselves as participating in the End of Days, one in which they all had roles to play in a grand Christian cosmology. The discovery of the New World exasperated this sentiment, and in turn, many agents of both the Spanish and English empires acted in the fashion of a vanguard intended to hasten the impending apocalypse. This is not to say that religion was the sole motivation; many individuals had financial ambitions and profited from the expansion of empire in the New

World. Rather, religion in addition to eschatology must be placed in a central role with these material motives when approaching the early history of Spanish and English colonialism in the Americas. By examining the intellectual world that imperial officials, colonists, and clergy were operating within, placed in conjunction with the work of other respected historians, a narrative becomes apparent. The tale of the beginning of colonial European empire is one paradoxically exceptionally preoccupied upon the end.

Some might question the utility of emphasizing the importance and impact of eschatology. Yet eschatology is in some ways tied to the human psyche. Eschatology is at its core a belief in progression, a belief that time is moving in a direction that will have a clear end. Eschatology is history. A belief in progress, whether political or temporal, is inherently eschatological, even if it loses the outward trappings of religiosity. Readers would do well to not so easily dismiss the idea that eschatology could be so impactful as to shape one of the biggest watershed moments in history. It might be easy to treat the thoughts and motives of European colonial actors as merely the delusions of a people that have been proven wrong by the mere fact that people are still walking on this Earth at present. This is a massive disservice to the historical field. Serious intellectuals ranging from John Milton to Isaac Newton were firm believers of an impending doomsday, and as the evidence and the work of many historians show, these beliefs had consequences as Europeans took their first steps in the Americas.

Eschatological thinking driving individuals to do what might otherwise be regarded as irrational action isn't merely a remnant of a bygone age, an ideology that modernity has snuffed as some might be inclined to believe. One only needs to take a look at examples in modern geopolitics. Islamist groups in the Middle East such as ISIS have come forward with outwardly eschatological ideology, claiming the need to establish a caliphate for the imminent arrival of the

Madhi, or Islamic messiah.[7] In Israel, much of the ideology behind the settlements in the

occupied zones following the Six-Day War of 1967 have stemmed from the idea of the covenant

with God.[8] This covenant is perceived to involve the eventual return of the Jewish people to all

the lands of historic Judea as a pre-requisite for the end times in Jewish eschatology.

Evangelicals within the United States have been noted as being "premillenarians", who believe

that events across the globe will only get worse before the end times and the "elect [are removed]

from this world" to eventually help build Jesus's kingdom on Earth.[9] American evangelicals

have held great political influence as of late. Evangelicals played a pivotal role in getting Ronald

Reagan into the White House in the 1980s, or more presently, opposing what they have seen as

social ills, such as abortion.

The purpose of the historian is to examine the past so that we might better understand the

present. The impact of eschatology in the past is an avenue towards understanding events in the

concurrent, and to neglect the impact or diminish the importance of religiosity is to do the entire

field a disservice. French political scientist Gilles Kepel was astute in his observation that the

rise in extreme religious movements that he noted in his book *The Revenge of God* came with a

"worldwide discrediting of modernism."[10] Religiosity, and by extension eschatology, surge in

times of rapid change. In the present, which has seen the spread of globalization,

industrialization, and increased access to information far beyond what individuals had once

dreamed possible, has left segments of the world as feeling disconnected or left out. Turning to

religion is comforting, eschatology cathartic. Similarly, the individuals that drove the imperial

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[7] William Faizi McCants, *ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 2015), 32

[8] Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the Modern World* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1994), 6

[9] Ibid 121

[10] Ibid 3

expansion of colonies in the Americas lived in a similar realm of extraordinary change and turmoil. The discovery of the New World, the Protestant Reformation, its counterpart the Catholic Reformation, the Columbian Exchange, and a myriad of wars made for a swiftly shifting world, and eschatology a heady tonic. In such conditions, it is not unfathomable that individuals would seek to spearhead an apocalypse that promised them paradise.

CHAPTER II: THE SWORD OF CHRISTENDOM

Spain in the 15th century, much like its European rivals of France and England, was shaped by the trends of Christian eschatological thought. This ended up crafting the very way in which the Spanish administered and perceived their own empire. Papal bulls of the time gave Spain the unique right amongst Catholic kingdoms to administer the faith within their own borders, and with the recent expulsion of the Muslim and Jewish populations from the Iberian Peninsula, the Spanish Empire found itself as being at the forefront of Christendom. With the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, that ancient vestigial dominion that had traditionally served as the "bulwark" against Islamic spread into Europe, Spain saw for itself a grand destiny to take central stage in Christian cosmology. Mostly notably, Spain saw itself as the Great Catholic Monarchy, the Christian kingdom that would unite the whole world whilst spreading the faith to finally bring about the second coming of Christ, and with it the end of the world.[11]

Meanwhile, a new interpretation of Christian eschatology was taking root within Spain, most notably amongst the Franciscans. The Franciscans, also known as the Order of Friars Minor, rejected an eschatology that was solely concerned with the theological world and had instead embraced an eschatology that centered around the temporal. This eschatology had deep roots in apocalyptic thinking of the past. Joachim of Fiore, an Italian theologian of the 12th-century, played a pivotal role in the shaping of some of the most important eschatological thought that was circulating throughout Europe shortly before the European discovery of the New World. Joachim's writings supported two key central beliefs: first, that the apocalyptic end

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[11] Alan Mikhail, *God's Shadow: The Ottoman Sultan Who Shaped the Modern World* (London: Faber & Faber, 2020), 111-122

times as described in various books within the New Testament was imminent, and second, that a

1000-year utopian paradise on Earth under Christ as king awaited the aftermath. The Franciscan

Order, already an organization that concerned itself with esoteric mysticism in the form of divine

visions and prophesy, was more than willing to absorb these ideas into their own theology

centuries later, around the same time that the Franciscan order gained increasing influence within

the Spanish world.[12] This combination of eschatological factors proved decisive in the way in

which Spain approached empire in the Spanish New World, in ways that shaped policy,

administration, and the very nature of imperial expansion.

Both before and after the Spanish reached the New World, eschatology drove the actions

of the Crown's chosen representatives. Christopher Columbus's purpose in sailing across the

Atlantic was not merely the search of a new route to Asia for spices, but as Columbus wrote in

his own personal journal entries, was also a search for riches in order to fuel the Spanish Empire.

The hope Columbus held, as he wrote in his diary on December 26th of 1492 while exploring the

Caribbean for the first time, was earning revenue from the spice trade or from the procurement of

resources such as gold. Following up on this hope, Columbus explicitly voiced support for the

Spanish Empire to utilize "all the profits of this my enterprise" to finance and lead a crusade that

would reclaim Jerusalem from the Ottoman Empire.[13] Fulfilling this condition, Columbus

believed that the end of the world and the second coming of Christ would come with it. Thusly,

Columbus characterized himself a "messenger" of God who was spearheading the beginning of

the Christian end times.[14] The Genoese explorer's eschatological leanings were not simply the

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[12] John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1970), 12-15

[13] Christopher Columbus, *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America 1492−1493*, translated by Oliver Dunn and James E. Kelley (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 291

[14] Christopher Columbus and G.B. Spotorno, *Memorials of Columbus,* translated by G.B. Spotorno (London: Treuttel & Wurtz, Treuttel, Jun and Richter, 1823), 224

writings of a self-important avaricious marauder. They were also not merely justifying the actions he later undertook throughout his four voyages and later governorship of the Caribbean, but were also the natural consequence of developments in Christian theology that had been stirring within Europe for centuries. This in turn played a critical role in shaping the framework of understanding that Columbus was operating on once he stumbled across the islands of the Caribbean.

The eschatology that was being spread throughout the Western Christian world was a key influencer in shaping the world view of Christopher Columbus, the first agent of the Spanish Crown to contact the New World. Columbus set the example for Spanish administration of the Americas incorporating a blend of empire and eschatology. In his compilation of religious prophesies and viewpoints, entitled *The Book of Prophesies*, Columbus wrote in 1505 that "only 155 years remain [until the world ends]"[15]. With such little time remaining in the mind of Columbus, he approached the New World with haste in order to ensure Spain was in place to fulfill the eschatological prophesies he had compiled.

Columbus was largely influenced by the eschatology propagated by the Franciscan Order, who by this point in time had largely adopted Joachim of Fiore's brand of theology. The Genoeses sailor wrote in his *Book of Prophesies* about how "the Calabrian abbot Joachim said that whoever was to rebuild the temple on Mount Zion would come from Spain."[16] Columbus was obsessed with the need for Spain to retake Jerusalem from Muslim hands before the end times could occur, his writings discussing at length "the need to recover the holy city and Mount Zion, and the discovery and conversion of the islands of the Indies and all peoples and nations,

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[15] Christopher Columbus and Roberto Rusconi, *The Book of Prophesies, Edited by Christopher Columbus,* translated by Sullivan, Blair (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 71
[16] Ibid 77

for the Ferdinand and Isabella, our Spanish rulers."[17] With the blessing of the Crown at hand, Columbus saw the actions he enacted for the sake of the Spanish Empire as eschatologically driven as foretold by the past apocalyptic theologian Joachim of Fiore.

Columbus's mission to the Americas also had an explicit military component. Columbus had managed to convince Queen Isabelle that the Khanate that ruled over China was sympathetic to Christianity and was amenable to an alliance to retake Jerusalem, ushering in the second coming of Christ. After all, the Mongolians had suggested such a thing only a couple of centuries earlier, in the 1280s, when a Mongolian emissary and active practitioner of Nestorian Christianity arrived in Rome proclaiming "many Mongols are Christian…And as the King is united in friendship with the Catholics and proposes to take possession of Syria and Palestine, he asks your aid for the conquest of Jerusalem."[18]

To that end, when Columbus sailed to the Americas, he sailed with the explicit intent to forge a military alliance between Spain and the Eastern Khanate in China. The plan, as Columbus had discussed with Queen Isabella in their personal meetings, was to find the Khan and convert him to the Christianity his predecessors had clearly shown sympathy towards. From there, Columbus could entreat upon the Khan an agreement to have the forces of the Muslim Ottomans encircled in Jerusalem, crushed between a joint pincer movement by the forces of the Mongolians and the Spaniards. With Jerusalem secured and in the hands of the Catholic Spaniards, Christ himself could walk amongst the Earth once more.[19]

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[17] Ibid 59

[18] Alan Mikhail, *God's Shadow: The Ottoman Sultan Who Shaped the Modern World* (London: Faber & Faber, 2020), 93-94

[19] Ibid 102, 114-122

Another central interest to Columbus in his mission to help fuel another apocalyptic crusade to place Jerusalem back into the hands of Christendom was the pursuit of gold. Gold, more than any other resource, was what Columbus saw as being of vital importance, as it is with gold that Columbus saw power[20]. Utilizing this power to expand armies, to enhance the reach of the Great Catholic Monarchy to the corners of the Earth, was the final step to ensuring eternal paradise. It was thus this bond between Columbus's own eschatological beliefs and gold that became a chief concern to the man and served as a central motive to the various exploitive and cruel practices Columbus employed as an agent of the Spanish Crown, and later as an actual administrator for the greater Spanish Empire. These very same practices were later adopted by the Spanish Empire as a whole and in turn dictated the way they administrated their possessions in America.

When Columbus first landed in the Caribbean, the sight of natives in possession of golden adornments immediately grabbed his eye. A great deal of the Genoese's first journey revolved around the exploration of the surrounding islands to find the source of this precious metal, often with disastrous results for the indigenous people of the islands. The natives, who had so generously greeted Columbus and his crew upon their arrival to the New World, suffered great inhumanities and torment in Columbus's apocalyptically driven hunt for a source of gold. The explorer reported to Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand having seized by force various individuals amongst the native inhabitant of San Salvador in order to interrogate them for

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[20] Leonard I. Sweet, "Christopher Columbus and the Millennial Vision of the New World", *The Catholic Historical Review* Vol. 72, No.3 (Ann Arbor: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 370

information about the surrounding islands, and most especially, for the source of the gold that they possessed.[21]

Columbus's search and desire for gold to fill the Spanish Crown's coffers in order to launch a crusade to bring about the end times translated into the way in which he administrated the islands as well. With a deadline of less than 200 years till the prophesized end would come, Columbus imposed harsh policies upon the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean in his role as Governor of the Indies. The Dominican friar Bartolome de las Casas, who personally witnessed the events occurring on the island of Hispaniola following Columbus's arrival, lambasted the Spaniards in his account *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies.*

Las Casas was concerned with the treatment of the indigenous population, noting that Spanish brutality was killing them off before they received "knowledge of God and without the benefit of the Sacraments", an impediment to the eschatological mission of Christian missionaries to spread God's gospel across the world.[22] Columbus had enacted a tributary system in Hispaniola wherein indigenous peoples were to collect a certain amount of gold every few months. Failure to do so was punished harshly, and natives who refused or failed to collect the gold in time had their hands amputated among other horrors.[23] The cruelty of the system the Genovese had put in place shocked las Casas to the point he later become known one of the biggest advocates for indigenous rights among the Spanish, later arguing against other theologians who believed the Native Americans were without a soul. As for Columbus's system

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[21] Christopher Columbus, *The Journal of Christopher Columbus During His First Voyage, 1492-93, and Documents Relating to the Voyages of John Cabot and Gaspar Corte Real*, translated by Clements R. Markham (London: Chas. J. Clark, 1893.), 37-42

[22] Bartolome de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, translated by Nigel Griffin (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 13

[23] Ibid, 11-25

of forced labor, no substantial quantity of gold was obtained for Spanish coffers no matter how much cruelty was inflicted upon the Taino population. Hispaniola, as well as many of the islands that Columbus has explored, were seemingly lacking in any substantial gold beyond small amounts found in riverbeds or gold dust remnants.

With this issue driving Columbus, who had believed that finding a source of wealth for the Spaniards was his divinely and eschatologically prophesized role, new sources of revenue had to be found. Columbus found it in the creation of a system of forced labor, which later formed the basis of the encomienda system. Forcibly conscripting indigenous labor, Columbus and later governors of Spanish controlled territories utilized native workers to mine for precious metals in hellish conditions.[24] This system existed in the Spanish New World long after Columbus's death, a symbol of the pivotal role this self-perceived herald of the apocalypse played in the formation of empire in the Americas under Spain.

It wasn't only the forcible conscription of the labor of the various native Caribbean peoples throughout these islands that Columbus and later Spanish administrators resorted to for the purposes of enriching the Spanish Empire. Columbus sold indigenous men, women, and children across the Atlantic to serve as laborers in the sugar fields off the coast of Africa. Disease, massacres, and being worked to death proceeded to decimate the Arawak population of Hispaniola, rendering the Arawak people from 250,000 at the time of Columbus's arrival to a scant 500 by 1550, just a little over 50 years after Europeans arrived in the Caribbean.[25]

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[24] Timothy J. Yeager, "Encomienda or Slavery? The Spanish Crown's Choice of Labor Organization in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America." *The Journal of Economic History* Vol. 55, No.4 (2009), 845
[25] Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990), 4-5

Columbus's administration as Governor of the Indies, utilizing the Arawak/Taino populations as forced labor, was clearly unsustainable.

Some historians have indicated that Columbus's ever-constant search for gold in the Americas was simply out of wanton greed. Howard Zinn, is his popular work *A People's History of the United States*, stated that Columbus was "driven by a frenzy for money that marked Western civilization."[26] There was no mention of Columbus's deeply felt religious beliefs, nor the fervor that drove him across the Atlantic in the first place. Instead, Zinn and historians that followed him have emphasized things like Columbus being promised 10% of the profits from the expedition, ignoring Columbus's very words wishing for the vast potential wealth of the expeditions to be spent on retaking Jerusalem.[27] Zinn's tirade against Columbus, which makes mention of his frequent cruelty as governor of the newly found islands, frames it solely as a result of avarice meeting brutality, rather than as the frighteningly apocalyptic fanaticism that it was.

Spain did not easily give up on Columbus's previously established work and organization of forced labor. Instead, with the indigenous population plummeting, Spain turned to an alternative source of labor to fulfill the requirement of men and women needed to work the mines of Hispaniola (the island that nowadays comprises modern-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic). In 1502, the first African slaves to ever cross the Atlantic disembarked from ships to satiate Spanish administrators' quotas on gold extraction.[28] While the importation of African slaves occurred a few years after Columbus's term as Governor of the Indies, Columbus's

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[26] Ibid 1

[27] Ibid 4

[28] Sylvia Wynter, "New Seville and the Conversion Experience of Bartolome de Las Casas: Part One", *Jamaica Journal* Vol. 17 No. 2 (1984), 25-32

eschatologically-fueled campaign to reap the harvest of gold he believed was secreted in the Caribbean islands due to the gold ornaments the natives possessed had tremendous influence in the way Spanish Empire formulated. Not only did it shape the system of forced labor that later was formally adopted as the encomienda system throughout the Spanish New World, Columbus's actions and administrative practices also created the conditions that necessitated the importation of African labor in order to satiate Spain's lust for precious metals and goods such as cane sugar.

Columbus was not a lone operative in his quest to help bring about the end times as foretold in the Book of Revelations. In fact, he was far from the only individual to see empire and eschatology as inherently linked, as the Spanish monarchs were more than willing to see in themselves as being the rulers who would unite the Earth to hasten Christ's second arrival. It was due to eschatological reasons, the necessary conversion of the indigenous population, that saw Columbus sacked as Governor of the Indies, as under his tenure native populations were being decimated too quickly to receive the gospel. It was these same reasons that refined the informal system of forced established by the Genoese into a more concrete system, called encomienda, which while coercive did not actively exterminate its indigenous laborers. In this way, the monarchs of the Spanish crown were key arbiters in the unique way eschatology shaped their empire, rather than merely passive benefactors.

In the discovery of the New World, it wasn't just the presence of a previously unknown landmass that had shocked Western Europe, but also the discovery of entire groups of people that had never been exposed to Christianity before. The Church and the Bible both affirmed that "this gospel [of Christianity] …will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all

nations, and then the end will come".[29] This implied eschatological mandate to convert the Native Americans was not lost upon Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, and consequently they proceeded to sack Columbus from his governorship post in 1499 owing to the excess cruelty to the native populace throughout the Caribbean.

Furthermore, they set in motion the refinement of the encomienda system when they ordered the third governor of the Indies, Nicolas de Ovando, to subsequently treat the native people he administered over as prospective Christians.[30] Accordingly, this meant that enslavement of American Indians was not allowed within the Spanish territories, as a Christian could not legally be owned as a slave. This changed the nature of the encomienda system; Spanish conquistadors and other individuals within the Spanish New World could not own Native Americans as slaves, rather, they were given effective monopolies on the labor and resources of organized communities of indigenous peoples in a way that resembled a mix of feudalism and tributary systems.

The Spanish monarchs took the conversion mission laid out before them very seriously. As historian Anthony Pagden noted in *Lords of All the World*, befitting Spain's self-perceived role as the Great Catholic Monarchy and successors of the Byzantine Empire as the vanguard of Christendom, they infused imperial administration with religion much as the Roman Empire had.[31] When Charles V ascended to the Spanish throne in 1516, one of his most pivotal actions regarding administration of the Spanish New World was the creation of the Council of the Indies.

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[29] Matt. 24:14 English Standard Version
[30] Robert G. Keith and John H. Parry, "Instructions to Commander Nicolas de Ovando, Third Governor of Hispaniola, from King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, 1501", *New Iberian World: A Documentary History of the Discovery and Settlement of Latin America to the Early 17th Century* Vol. 2 (New York: Times Books, 1984)
[31] Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 8

An advisory and administrative body in service to the Crown on all matters regarding the Spanish New World, the Council of the Indies made it explicit upon its foundation that its first concern regarding the Americas was to facilitate the conversion of the Native Americans to Catholicism, which as mentioned previously had at its core an eschatological reasoning.

The eschatological mission driving the conversion of native peoples translated into tangible policies implemented by the Council. Travel expenses, as well as the clothing and books that missionaries required, were all paid for by the Spanish government.[32] Additionally, the Council of the Indies had the power to screen and select the friars to be sent to the Spanish New World, while also being able to assign where they were sent. The Spanish Crown prior to the creation of the Council had already shown preference for the Franciscans as their agents of conversion. When Hernan Cortez asked King Charles to send priests to begin the process of converting the inhabitants of Mexico, it was twelve Franciscans who were ordered to answer Cortez's call. The Council frequently recruited from the Franciscan Order as their foremost emissary of Christendom during the first two centuries of Spanish dominion in the New World, in part owing to the Franciscans' loyalty to the Spanish monarchy due to the teachings of Joachim of Fiore. The monarchial and institutional favor given to the Franciscan Order further intertwined the development of Spanish administration of empire with eschatology. More than any other major Catholic order of the time, the Franciscans were deeply invested in the idea of a near-approaching apocalypse. Accordingly, the Order of Friars Minor proceeded to act with that mentality in their role as the vanguard of the Spanish Empire, in ways that affected the local administrative policies of various locations throughout the Americas.

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[32] Imp M. Carmona and Ernst Schafer, *El Consejo Real y Supremo de las Indias: Su historia, organizacion y labor administrativa hasta la termanacion de las casa de Austria* (Serville: 1936), 203

The Spanish Crown was quite open in its early favoritism of the Franciscan Order. The Spanish monarch were quite keen on utilizing the Franciscans as a result of the Franciscans having common ground with the aims of Spanish imperialism. The Order of Friars Minor promoted cultural assimilation of the native populations as much as they also strove for mass conversions. Franciscans themselves were more than willing to spread the Spanish Empire as far as possible as well, as Spain fit the role of successor of Byzantium in the theology of the various friars within the order. Thus, the monarchy made countless decisions that gave the Franciscans an early foothold in the Spanish Americas. During the conquest of the Aztecs, Hernan Cortez wrote to King Charles V complaining about the secular officials that were attached to his retinue. The secular officials, Cortez wrote, were not emphasizing the conversion of the natives enough, and thus beseeched Charles for members of the clergy to "be used in effecting the conversion of these people."[33] The Spanish monarch responded by sending twelve Franciscan friars, mirroring the twelve apostles of Jesus, to replace the officials, making the Franciscans the first Christian missionaries to reach Mexico. In different regions of Mexico such as the Yucatan, the Spanish government ended up providing the Franciscans with exclusive rights to religious policing and administration instead of allowing for other medicant orders to operate within these regions.

On the part of the Franciscans, they too favored the Spanish monarchy. The Spanish monarchs had shown that they could take the mantle of the Christian Monarchy in the way they had pushed out the Moors and expelled the Jews out of the Iberian Peninsula during the Reconquista. The Franciscan Order was so entwined with eschatology and the Spanish empire that when Pope Pius V tried to take way the near-absolute power Spain had to govern the faith

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[33] Hernan Cortes and Francis Augustus MacNutt. *Letters of Cortes*, translated by Francis Augustus MacNutt (New York: 1908), 165

within their territories during the 1560s, Franciscans such as Jeronimo de Mendieta complained that the papacy had no right to infringe on the Spanish Crown's Caesorpapism[34]. The favoritism of the Spanish monarchy had bought the loyalty of the Order of the Friars Minor, and from this upswelling of complaint among prominent Franciscan theologians, the Holy See realized that it could not so easy to revoke its prior empowerment of Spain.

The early favoritism of the Franciscans over any of the other evangelizing orders of the Catholic faith proved decisive. It stamped Spanish practices of empire in the Americas with an eschatological nature. While still undoubtably Catholic in nature, the theology of the Franciscans had elements to it that were thoroughly unique in comparison to other mendicant orders operating in the Spanish New World. By modern day standards, the Franciscan Order by the time of Columbus's discovery of the New World was a doomsday cult, an organization that believed in an impeding apocalypse and strove to bring about its coming.[35]

The Franciscans believed the world was separated into three ages, with the present currently in the third age. John Leddy Phelan, a late historian and expert on the Franciscan Order, noted that the coming of Christ and the End of Times was an ever-present element of Franciscan thought. in contrast, orders like the Dominicans relied on more conventional Christian theology and philosophies stemming from the Ancient Greeks.[36] When the Franciscans arrived in the New World, their apocalypticism led them to pay special focus upon the indigenous peoples of the Americas. In the Native Americans, the Franciscans saw the final

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[34] Ashley D. Ellington, *The Council of the Indies and Religion in the Spanish New World* (Statesboro: Georgia Southern University, 2014), 27-28

[35] Phillip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 224-225

[36] John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the* Franciscans (Berkely: University of California Press, 1970), 6-8

missing piece in which to hasten the coming of Christ, and it was under the Franciscans that much of Spanish imperial policy was crafted.

Theories abounded throughout the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of the Hispanic world regarding the origins of the Native Americans, with publications within the Spanish world such as Jewish scholar Menasseh ben Israel's 17th century *The Hope of Israel* concluding that the Native Americans came from or had their culture influenced by one of the Lost Tribes of Israel,.[37] The discovery of the New World and the findings of these publications rocked Christendom. If the indigenous inhabitants of the New World did in fact originate from the Israelites of Judea, then their conversion to the Christian faith was a necessity according to the Church for securing the second coming of Christ, whose arrival would be delayed until his recognition by "all [of] Israel".[38] This theory was embraced in earnest by Franciscans such as Friar Diego de Landa. Friar de Landa, upon his arrival back in Spain after a lengthy stint in New Spain, made the connection in his 1566 book the *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* accounts from native elders in the Yucatan that "this country [Mexico] was peopled by a certain race who come from the East" to the idea that the inhabitants of the Indies descended from one of the Lost Tribes.[39]

With the idea that conversion of the American Indians was a necessary step to fulfilling the prophesies of the Book of Revelations in hand, the Franciscans emphasized speed of conversion in the areas under their control. Throughout many local provinces in New Spain, Franciscan friars were the central administrators due to their empowerment by the Spanish

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[37] Menasseh ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel*, edited by Henry Mechoulan and Gerard Nahon (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1987), 67, 84-87
[38] Rom. 11:20-26, Matt. 23:39 ESV
[39] Diego de Landa, *Yucatan Before and After the Conquest,* translated by William Gates (New York: Dover Publications, 1978), 8

government, which had granted the mendicant order the right to police the faith of the inhabitants. Owing to this, a multitude of practices were implemented with the overall goal of speed of conversion, a tangible entanglement of Spanish imperialism and Franciscan eschatology. The Franciscan bishop Diego de Landa described how in the Yucatan, which was exclusively under the control of the Franciscans in the 16th century, the male children of what comprised former native nobility were forcibly taken as tribute by the Franciscans. From there, these children were instructed in the Catholic faith until deemed sufficient, upon which they were returned to their communities to help facilitate the spread of the faith.[40]

Spain had empowered the Franciscans very early on during the colonization of the Americas, turning the religious institution into an active arm of imperial power. The Spanish crown was granted all but complete power over the administration of the Christian faith within their borders under *patronato real* and affirmed by various papal bulls issued throughout the 15th- and 16th- centuries. Under such conditions, the Spanish Crown gave the Franciscans the power to police the faith throughout Mexico and much of the Spanish New World. Spain authorized the Franciscan friar Juan de Zumarraga to serve as Bishop of Mexico in 1536, only seventeen years after the fall of the Aztec Empire.

The Franciscan Order seized upon it readily, frequently using their powers to police the areas in which they held dominion. The order proceeded to apply punitive actions upon native populations deemed to have practice paganism or idolatry, with flogging and imprisonment being the norm. When it came to indigenous leaders, potential figureheads against the encroachment of Spanish imperialism and the Catholic faith, the Franciscans resorted to making

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[40] Diego de Landa, *Relacion de las Cosas de Yucatan*, translated by Alfred M. Tozzer (Boston: Periodicals Service Company, 1974), 73-75

an example, such as when they set Carlos Ometochtzin of the Acolhua alight at the stake in 1539 for bigamy and practicing the indigenous religion of his people.[41] The Spanish monarchy lightly reprimanded Bishop Zumarraga for his extreme method of execution, they did not take action to stop the Franciscans from continuing to prosecutive indigenous individuals under the mandate to police the faith in the Spanish Americas until 1571. Eventually the Franciscans' policing power over the faith diminished in 1571, when the Spanish Crown created an inquisitorial order that excluded indigenous peoples from its jurisdiction. Both the Franciscans' reign of terror and Spain's later revision of cultural policing was derived from a deep-seated eschatological belief in the need to convert the native populace.

The execution of Carlos Ometochtzin and other indigenous leaders was not an anomaly when it came to the willingness of the Franciscans to utilize violence as a means of forcing conversion or as a means of maintaining Spanish control of an area. In 1539, the Franciscan Bishop of Mexico Juan de Zumarraga met with other heads of medicant orders to discuss the use of punitive actions in the policing of the faith. The meeting concluded that punishment of natives was legally sound, so long as it was enacted to protect the faith in New Spain. The Mayan people in the areas that the Franciscans ruled over frequently rejected Spanish rule and the practices of the Franciscans, occasionally manifesting in the form of uprisings of Mayan communities. Bishop Diego de Landa described in detail in his writings upon arrival back in Spain of Spanish soldiers in the Yucatan under Franciscan leadership's brutal retributions against native rebellions or even potential rebellion involved everything from massacres, mutilation, imprisonment, arson, and hangings. The Spanish soldiers and their handlers justified their actions using religious

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[41] Patricia Lopes Don, "Franciscans, Indian Sorcerers, and the Inquisition in New Spain, 1536-1543", *Journal of World History* Vol.17, No. 1 (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 27-28

pretexts, such as citing that God also had ordered cruelties multiple times throughout the Old Testament.[42]

Some individual Franciscans such as Diego de Landa, or even Bishop Juan de Zumarraga who were witnesses to the bodily violence exercised by Spanish soldiers and Franciscan friars protested these actions. Slaughter and bloodshed were counter-productive to the end goal of converting the Native Americans to the Christian faith, they argued, and the violence was thoroughly unbecoming of Christian rule.[43] Administrators left behind after Hernan Cortez's conquest of Mexico, such as Juan Ortiz de Matienzo and Diego Delgadillo, were perceived as self-serving and overly cruel to the American Indians even when the indigenous communities weren't guilty of paganism or idolatry. Once again, the relationship of the Spanish Crown and the Franciscan Order in the early years of colonial Spain proved decisive, as Bishop Zumarraga's complaints to the Crown led to authorization of the arrest of the corrupt holdouts of Cortez's military governorship.

In a play entitled *The Conquest of Jerusalem*, performed in 1539 in Tlaxcala of New Spain, the Franciscans tell an epic tale wherein the Spanish Empire lays siege against the Muslim defenders of Jerusalem. Backing up the Spanish army are key reinforcements from the New World, represented by Native peoples in Spanish armament. In its conquest of Jerusalem, with the surrendering of the Islamic soldiers before the Spanish king, at long last the prophesized end as foretold in the Book of Revelations is completed as the Great Catholic Monarchy has at long

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[42] Diego de Landa, *Relacion de las Cosas de Yucatan*, translated by Alfred M. Tozzer (Boston: Periodicals Service Company, 1974), 59-62

[43] Joaquín García Icazbalceta, *Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga: Primer Obispo Y Arzobispo de México (*Sheridan: Creative Media Partners: 2014), 171

last brought Christendom to all corners of the Earth.[44] Although this play was, after all, an elaborate tale organized and performed by the Franciscans, it showcases the vision that the medicant order had for the inhabitants of the New World. This vision, tied intimately with the interplay of empire and eschatological theology, involved the cultural assimilation of native peoples under imperial Spanish rule for the purposes of serving an apocalyptic end goal as the second arm of the Great Catholic Monarchy.

Entailed in the process of the Franciscans' drive to assimilate the indigenous peoples under their control was the repression of native cultural practices. While Franciscans recorded the cultural practices or even religious traditions of the many cultures spread out throughout Mexico, these were largely for the purpose of helping the Franciscans understand the best way to go about converting native peoples into the Christian faith. Indigenous healers, called curanderos, were frequently targeted by religious authorities operating under Bishop Zumarraga, with the usage of hallucinogens such as peyote and other components of traditional medicine in Mexico being prosecuted in religious courts.[45] Exile, public humiliation, and imprisonment were all punishments that could be issued for the crime of practicing methods of healing that had been ingrained into native culture for centuries.

The curanderos were not the only indigenous cultural pillar that the Franciscans sought to destroy. The Franciscan Diego de Landa utilized the authority granted to the Franciscans to enact a widespread campaign of cultural genocide, burning countless cultural artifacts pertaining to

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[44] Max Harris. "Disguised Reconciliations: Indigenous Voices in Early Franciscan Missionary Drama in Mexico", *Radical History* Vol. 53 (1992), 15-16

[45] Anne J. Cruz and Mary Elizabeth Perry, *The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 42

Mayan religion, which de Landa dismissed as "superstition".[46] Thousands of carvings, statues, and codices authored by the Mayans were annihilated in de Landa's campaign of cultural and religious assimilation. To this day, studies of Mayan culture have been hampered by the sheer scale and scope of the Franciscan Order's crusade against what they saw as indigenous paganism.

Eschatological thinking was instrumental in shaping early expansion and administration throughout the Spanish New World in the first 100 years following Christopher Columbus's discovery. People within the Spanish world, already in the throes of developments in religious intellectualism, were looking for signs of the impeding end times as detailed in the Book of Revelations. The Spanish Crown was perceived by both Spanish monarchs and by Catholic intellectuals as the Great Catholic Monarchy that would spread Christianity around the globe and bring about the second coming of Christ. Central to the development of empire in the Spanish New World was the ideological adoption of Franciscan theology by important agents of Spain. This theology emphasized the eminent arrival of Christ within just a few generations and encouraged believers to hasten its arrival with the completion of certain goals.

Various officials working for the Spanish Crown used their role as administrators and bureaucrats to achieve these certain prophesized events, shaping the development of empire in the areas in which Spain held dominion throughout the Americas. Christopher Columbus, Spain's first emissary to the Americas, was effectively a noviate of this emergent apocalyptic eschatology. In his capacity as the vanguard of the Spanish monarchy, as well as later in his role as Governor of the Indies, Columbus prioritized the mining and seizure of gold. This translated

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[46] Diego de Landa, *Relacion de las Cosas de Yucatan*, translated by Alfred M. Tozzer (Boston: Periodicals Service Company, 1974), 169

to actions ranging from the kidnapping and enslavement of indigenous peoples throughout the Caribbean, to the development of a forced labor system with frequent tributary demands for the precious metal. These actions were enforced harshly, involving usage of extreme punitive action and armed forced, all with the initial backing of the Spanish Empire.

Eschatology influenced the Crown in increasingly tangible ways, as seen by Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand's eventual recall of Columbus as Governor of the Indies and the refinement of encomienda under the premise of an apocalyptic mandate to convert all the native peoples into the Christian faith. The creation of the Council of the Indies to help administer the Spanish Americas were explicitly created with the first prime purpose being to facilitate this conversion process. The Crown further entrenched its relationship with eschatological thinking in the ways in which increasingly, Spanish imperialism turned to the Franciscans to serve as the primary vanguard of empire and faith.

The Franciscan Order at the time of the discovery of the New World was by modern-day standards a doomsday cult, an order that saw the end times as coming. More importantly, the Franciscans strove to bring about the apocalyptic events of the Book of Revelations and saw plenty of opportunity to do so arising from the founding of the New World. The Spanish Crown was more than willing to serve as patrons to the medicant order, often favoring the Order of Friars Minor over other existing Catholic missionary societies that existed at the time. Empowering the Franciscans both to police the faith as they deemed necessary as well as giving them extremely broad oversight of the administration of locations throughout New Spain, the Spanish monarchs turned an apocalyptic cult into an exceptionally powerful cog in the colonial apparatus.

From sending twelve Franciscans as the first missionaries on the ground in Mexico upon Cortez's request, to granting the Franciscans exclusive rights over the Yucatan, the medicant order acted under the full authority of the Spanish crown. The Franciscans proceeded to forcibly assimilate indigenous children into Spanish culture, enact forced conversions, occasionally practice cultural genocide, and enact incredibly harsh punishments for theological dissent, all in the name of the Great Catholic Monarchy under Spain and to bring about the apocalypse. Yet paradoxically, eschatological reasonings also caused Franciscans to intervene on the behalf of American Indians to protect them from wanton violence, and desires to speedily convert the natives of the areas they governed over led to the preservation of indigenous culture.

Thus, Spanish empire in the first couple centuries of expansion in the New World was fundamentally shaped by shifts in intellectual concepts of eschatology. A change from concerning oneself about the second coming of Christ as a distant or symbolic abstract to the idea of an impeding end that had tangible steps leading to it took hold throughout the Spanish World. The Spanish monarchs saw the conversion of native indigenous peoples and imperial expansion throughout the New World as an eschatological mandate from God, with policy shifts and decisions being made along those lines.

Self-perceived vanguards of the apocalypse in the form of Columbus and the Franciscan Order were empowered by the Spanish Crown to administer different regions of the Americas, wherein an eschatological goal was at the forefront of imperial administration on the ground of these various locales, often with tragic consequences for the indigenous inhabitants. The primary organization of labor throughout the Spanish New World, encomienda, was reformed and shaped by eschatology. The chief administrative body of Spanish America, the Council of the Indies, listed mass religious conversion of the American Indians as their foremost concern regarding the

Americas, a goal that is explicitly eschatological in nature. Spanish empire in the first century following Columbus's first voyage to America involved mass exploitation and had implications in global power politics, much as the historical narrative typically states. It was upon the back of eschatology that the Spanish Empire shaped and conducted itself in early colonization of the New World.

The Spanish Empire was a colonial empire that was steeped in a both a thoroughly medieval framework striving towards the enactment of a renewed crusade to retake Jerusalem as well as an eschatology that informed how it proceeded in the Americas. When historian John Tutino argued in *Making a New World* that the Spanish Americas were "not led by men more interested in honor than profit", he was ignoring the mountain of evidence that representatives of the Spanish monarchy, ranging from Columbus to the Franciscans, were strongly motivated by eschatological ideas more than the mere promise of potential profit.[47] While his assertions that the Spanish Crown was unable to centralize rule over their colonial possessions in the Americas is true, his indication that this led to a form of proto-capitalist class ignores the fact on the ground that Franciscans, a medicant order seeking to hasten the end times, administrated swathes of territory inhabited by indigenous people that the Franciscans were primarily concerned with converting.

Attempts by historians like Tutino and Zinn to make sense of early Spanish colonial empire have failed to understand the importance of the apocalyptic intellectual movement that had gripped Spain in their attempt to emphasize profit and materialism as primary motivational factors for historical actors. This historical narrative, which omits or de-emphasizes the impact of

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[47] John Tutino, *Making a New World*: *Founding Capitalism in the Bajío and Spanish North America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 7

religion, is debunked by Columbus's writings, those of the Franciscans themselves, and the actions that both emissaries of Spanish colonialism undertook. Modern historians such as Anthony Pagden have noted the importance of religious ideologies in the formulation of Spanish empire, a continuation of the work of scholars in the past such as John Leddy Phelan, who wrote extensively on the apocalyptic nature of the Franciscan Order that dominated much of Spanish North America in the early years of colonial empire. Millennialism was a very real motivational factor for Spanish imperialism in the New World, to which historians should take care to not so easily dismiss.

CHAPTER III: THE BULWARK AGAINST THE ANTICHRIST

Spain was not the only kingdom in Europe that gazed across the Atlantic and saw in the Americas signs of a divine plan coming to its final chapter. England, at the time of America's discovery, was effectively a backwater to the main power players of the European mainland. England's territorial control over large tracts of France was largely ended at the end of the Hundred Years War in the mid-15th century. Beaten and humiliated, England suffered further losses to its prestige and influence on the European stage as it found itself embroiled in a decades-long succession crisis over the English throne, which came to be known as the War of the Roses.

Henry Tudor ascended as King Henry VII of England in 1485, and made great efforts to stabilize the kingdom after the turmoil of the previous century. Despite a handful of failed rebellions, Henry VII provided England with a firm and stable figurehead for a war-ravaged England. His heir and successor Henry VIII, by contrast, waged fruitless wars in the European mainland. Henry VIII irrevocably altered the course of English history when he rejected papal supremacy to approve a divorce from his Spanish wife in order to secure a male heir.[48]

Henry VIII's death was followed by the ascension of his 9-year old son Edward VI, who died only a mere 6 years later. Edward's death spiralled into another succession crisis, wherein Mary I, Henry VIII's daughter with Spanish wife Catherine, took the throne. Mary, an ardent Catholic, proceeded to crack down on the spread of Protestantism within England. Notably during Mary's campaign against Protestantism's rise in England, she reintroduced laws against

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[48] John Alexander Guy, *The Tudors: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3

heresy, which were used to convict roughly English Protestants, who were executed by being burnt alive at the stake.[49] Upon the end of Mary's hugely unpopular rule of England, Elizabeth I, Henry VIII's daughter with Anne Boleyn, ascended the throne and steer England back towards Protestantism.

Recovering from its losses on the European mainland sustained from both the end of Hundred Years War as well as under Mary I's reign, insular as a result of a prolonged civil war and suffering from internal divisions between Protestants and Catholic holdouts, it is little wonder that England lagged behind the Spanish. The Spanish spearheaded European exploration and colonization of the New Word so thoroughly that by the time the English disastrously attempted to establish Roanoke as its first permanent colony for settlement in 1585, Spain had already divided up the South American continent between itself and its fellow Iberian neighbor Portugal more than half a century earlier in the Treaty of Zaragoza of 1529. Large swathes of the Caribbean as well as that of the American continent were under the control of Catholic Spain, and in such a situation, the early visionaries behind the first English colonies had to make do with what little seemingly remained.

Prior to England's first attempts to establish colonies in the New World, while the English government was busy with domestic concerns, Englishmen were still interacting with the news of the discovery of a new land across the Atlantic. A concern that Englishmen had was where the discovery of the Americas placed English civilization? In the context of the emerging from losses on the European continent, devastation from civil war, and struggles between Catholicism and Protestantism within England, the discovery of the New World was a catalyst

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[49] Ibid 77

for the English to look outwardly; not just in the material sense, but on a level that carried with it divine purpose.

Historians would do well not to be dismissive of eschatology, or religion in general, as an important motivator for the English as they began looking across the Atlantic towards the New World. Eschatology was not merely in service to justify empire or material acquisition, rather eschatological ideas were fueling the people that made early colonial empire happen. The historians Carla Pestana and Karla Kupperman have both made the point that religion, and by extension eschatology, is impossible to dismiss from the understanding of early English colonization in the Americas. Pestana indicated an English desire to counter Catholicism (which the English perceived as compromised by the antichrist) as a driving force over simple material acquisition, to the point of English colonial promoters' objections to trade with the Spanish despite the lucrativeness such trade could bring.[50] Kupperman, similarly, indicated that the English had notions of being divinely appointed agents of God in the "latter days [of the world]" tasked with spreading throughout the New World as a part of their national identity as they carved out a colonial empire of their own.[51]

Opining a different narrative of the animus behind English colonialism are the 'new historians of capitalism'. Sven Beckert, in his work *Empire of Cotton*, stated that Europe's "explosive economic development…and the history of [empire]", cannot be accounted for by religious beliefs, among other factors.[52] Edward Baptist and Louis Hyman, fellow historians of the interlinking of empire and capitalism, put forward the idea that early English colonialism was

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[50] Carla Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire*: *Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 63

[51] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 14-15

[52] Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), xiv-xv

"for the goals of obtaining wealth and national glory" in their book *American Capitalism: A Reader*.[53] These narratives of mere exploitation and material gain discount or entirely overlook religion, to say nothing of eschatology. Yet religion and eschatology are paramount to understanding early English colonial empire in the New World, and more specifically, how apocalyptic fervor caused the first agents of English empire to operate in the New World.

Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, intellectuals throughout England were alike in pondering a most critical issue; the approach of the end of the world, and the role that the English would have in playing out God's final chapter before the second coming of Christ. These doomsayers were not raving lunatics on the street yelling about the impending end that passerby regarded queerly and avoided. Rather, academics ranging from mathematicians such as the creator of logarithms John Napier to Sir Isaac Newton himself all took the idea of the impending end very seriously, to the point of attempting to calculate a precise date in which one could pinpoint the arrival of Christ and the establishment of the final kingdom before the end of the earth.[54]

Eschatological panic was pervasive throughout English society beyond just the work of intellectuals that merged theology with science. Among the lower class citizenry of England, the resulting literacy that came about as a result of the Protestant Reformation and the creation of Bibles in English text meant that common Englishmen began to interact with the more apocalyptic passages of the Book of Revelations on their own, and in a rejection of previous

[53] Edward E. Baptist and Louis Hyman, *American Capitalism: A Reader* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017), 33
[54] Christopher Hill. "God and the English Revolution". *History Workshop* No. 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 22

Christian dogma that postulated the Book of Revelations in more figurative terms, instead took on a more literal Millennialism.[55]

Adding to the various sectarian conflicts that plagued England both internally and externally, anti-Catholic sentiment amongst the English at all levels of society was tinged with eschatological rhetoric and logic. The Papacy had been considered the antichrist as foretold in the Book of Revelations from the very start of the Protestant Reformation, when Martin Luther wrote in 1537 in his establishing text regarding Lutheranism that the "teaching [of papal supremacy] shows forcefully that the Pope is the very Antichrist."[56] John Calvin, too, pointed to the institution of the papacy as a whole as the antichrist when he wrote that the Papacy, just as the antichrist was foretold, had turned Rome into "a figure of Babylon rather than the holy city of God", and that "the antichrist reigns there."[57]

The antichrist, as foretold in the New Testament, is one of the required catalysts for the second coming of Christ to return. The antichrist, also known as the Beast, is said to arrive just shortly before the second coming of Christ. The antichrist will strive to spread deception, to try and usurp Christ as a false prophet. Critical to Reformation era English Protestantism of the 16th century, and throughout the 17th century, was the passage in the First Epistle of John, wherein it is declared that "[the] antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists."[58] The nature of the future false prophet as not being a singular entity, but rather multiple individuals, was

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[55] Ibid 20

[56] Martin Luther, "Smalcald Articles", *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,* translated by F. Bente and W.H.T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 462-465

[57] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: The First English Version of the 1541 French Edition*, translated by Elsie Anne McKee (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 256

[58] 1 John 2:18 ESV

interpreted in a way that corresponded with English spiritual and geopolitical struggles in the Reformation era and beyond.

It is then unsurprising that Protestant denominations in England, including Anglicanism and Puritanism both, in turn also adopted the idea that the papal throne constituted the Antichrist. The printing press and the expansion of mass literature played a pivotal role in this regard. Works such as the *Actes and Monuments* by the English historian John Foxe were in wide circulation throughout England, with *Actes and Monuments* in particular notable in its incendiary language such as asserting through various figures in the book that "the pope was antichrist, that mass was an abomination, that the host was an idol, and that purgatory was a fable", and "as for the pope, I decry him, as Christ's enemy and Antichrist, with all his false doctrine."[59]

Foxe's fiery rhetoric and presentation of history placed Spain as one of the chief agents of the Papacy and a brutal foe to Protestantism. On the Spanish inquisition, Foxe called it uniquely the "most powerful and monstrous of [the inqustions]."[60] Through acts in the past such as the attempt by the Spanish Armada to re-establish Catholicism on the English mainland, Foxe weaved a narrative placing Spain as a stooge of the Papacy, alongside subversive English Catholics, as it waged war against good, true English Protestantism.[61] English Protestantism was meanwhile portrayed as uniquely good, the true formulation of God's message, receiving such comparisons as to "the sun breaking forth in a dark night" and that the light of the English Reformation "began to illumine the darkest corners of popery and ignorance." [62]

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[59] John Foxe, *The Actes and Monuments of John Foxe* (New York: Hurst & Co., 1872), 87, 459
[60] Ibid 143
[61] Ibid 486-492
[62] Ibid 175, 218

The influence John Foxe derived from the popularity of *Actes and Monuments* would go beyond posturing the papacy as being Satanically influenced in the eyes of the English. It would, in fact, create an entire worldview for generations of English men and women to come, as in Foxe's telling of history, England was placed at the forefront of a "cosmic struggle between Christ and Antichrist, with God's Englishmen firmly on the side of right."[63] In an example of the role of the printing press merging with popular apocalypticism, copies of *Actes and Monuments* were the most second most prevalent book that families throughout England owned, coming behind only that of the Bible.[64] *Actes and Monuments* itself received governmental and theological endorsement from the English monarchy, as Elizabeth I mandated its presence in English churches throughout the country, placing John Foxe's positioning of England's role in history as official state dogma.

Important in the development of the consciousness of English civilization was the role of the New World as the 16th century emerged. English Protestants of the 16th century put forward that "God had kept America hidden until after the Reformation" in various writings, and postulate that it was time for the true church to flourish in this new land.[65] The true church, the title of which was inevitably claimed by a variety of different English Protestant denominations foremost of which were the Puritans, was a necessary precursor for the second coming of Christ to happen, the 'church age' as foretold by the Bible that would come just before the material kingdom of Jesus and the end times would arrive. America was to serve as the center stage of the

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[63] Christopher Hill. "God and the English Revolution". *History Workshop* No. 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 20

[64] David Loades, "Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Face of England", *History Today* Vol. 55 No. 12 (2005), 40-49

[65] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Harvard University Press, 2009), 13

end times in the view of English Protestants, a spiritual battleground between the forces of God and the antichrist to be enacted as written in the Book of Revelations.[66]

The uniquely English world view of the mid-16th-century and the 17th century, one apocalyptically predicated on the idea of the English as being God's chosen agents to wage war against the subversive forces of the antichrist to make way for Christ's second coming, was present in the minds of the Englishmen that first made their way towards the New World. The antichrist, finally identified as being the Papacy as an institution not only by influential Protestant theologians such as Martin Luther and John Calvin but by English historians with the English crown's endorsement such as John Foxe, had already spread its insidious influence into the New World.

The New World, which had received comparisons to the Garden of Eden, was seen by the English as having been finally revealed to them by God as part of his divine plan. Corrupting the 'garden', so to speak, was the papacy's forces embodied in tangible form by the empire of the Spanish, which had staked its claim as the 'sword of Christendom' by expelling the Moors out of its lands and had further legitimized itself throughout Catholic Europe with its dedication to spreading the word of God to the native peoples of the new lands they had just discovered.

England's first forays into the New World were characterized by its competitive, and indeed hostile, nature in opposition to the Spanish. Merchants with the blessing of Elizabeth I tried to cut into the New World slave trade, which both Spain and Portugal had started as a means of supplying their colonies with much needed labor in the face of mass native death due to disease and violence. John Hawkins and his younger cousin Francis Drake constituted some of

[66] Ibid 14

these early slave traders, transporting slaves to Spanish colonists in exchange for precious metals in defiance of the Spanish Crown's will.

However, Spain and England's relationship had been greatly strained due to religious differences that came with the Protestant Reformation and reinforced by geopolitical concerns as well as English rhetoric towards the Spanish. Spanish officials attacked English traders and merchants, such as John Hawkins and Francis Drake, as a result of these tensions. In return, the English crown began to commission private citizens against Papist forces in the Caribbean and throughout the rest of the New World.

English merchants were commissioned by letters of marque written by the English monarchs to continuously harry Spanish vessels across the Atlantic. These merchants, formally called 'privateers', functionally operated as state-sponsored pirates. Spain was seen as having caused "depredations" to Englishmen and English designs for the New World, and in turn armed merchant vessels were turned loose in the Caribbean. These efforts largely did not serve to greatly enrich most privateers outside a notable few, and "most privateers never made the big strike they hoped for."[67] It did, however, prove to be profitable to the English crown. The cut that the English monarchy received from the totality of privateer raids on Spanish ships laden with gold and silver ended up helping to fill up their coffers, as for each successful raid and sale of captured ships, the crown collected a hefty commission of approximately 20%. The privateers working under English employee, meanwhile, received no wages, but instead divvy up what remained of the proceeds from the sale of captured Spanish vessels.[68]

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[67] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Atlantic in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 42
[68] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Harvard University Press, 2009), 31

Privateering, attempts to muscle in on Spanish trade, and the attempt at staking a permanent colony in North America in Roanoke as a means of pushing back against Spanish dominion of the Americas characterized the first few attempts by the English to take the fight to the Papist forces of Spain. Francis Drake was commissioned by the English crown to spearhead privateering efforts in marauding the Spanish throughout the Caribbean, which he enthusiastically accepted, raiding and capturing territory on Hispaniola.[69] On his part, Drake saw the Americas as an important venture for Protestantism to flourish and infamously made reference to the role of the Americas as a "new earth" and a "new heaven" in a prayer he conducted amongst his crew in the midst of waging war on Spanish vessels during the Anglo-Spanish War.[70] Wealth, as well as the ideological mission of establishing the true church on American soil to defeat the forces of the antichrist and hasten Christ's arrival, jointly motivated the men that crewed hastily converted vessels into battle with the Spanish Navy.

Spain further retaliated against the English in response to England's privateering war against Catholic Spain. Tensions between the Catholic kingdom of Spain and the Protestant English ramped up in the Anglo-Spanish War that started in 1585, with the Spanish Armada launched in 1588 to conquer England as a "direct response to the stepped-up level of [English] privateering and the losses incurred."[71] Rough weather saw most of the mighty Spanish fleet drowned beneath the waves of stormy waters before it could do anything of note against the English. To the people of England, this was a sure sign of God's favor in their war against papal

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[69] Angus Konstam, *The Great Expedition: Sir Francis Drake on the Spanish Main 1585-86* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011), 13-27

[70] Francis Drake. *Cathedral Age* Vol. 60-62, (Washington, DC: Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation, 1985), 31

[71] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Atlantic in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 42

forces, as "nature was believed to be at God's command", and in turn he had "chastise[d] [the Spanish for] their malicious practices".[72]

When England finally began to establish colonies in the New World, it was met with floundering and failure. Roanake, established in the latter half of the 16th century and intended as a base of operations for English privateering operations, saw its inhabitants mysteriously disappear. The next of English attempts to establish a permanent settler-colony in the Americas came in the form of Jamestown, established off the banks of what we now know as the state of Virginia. Virginia, whilst outwardly a profit-motivated venture that did indeed rely upon financial backers who intended on making a profit on their investment, was also heavily influenced by eschatological threads present in the English collective mind.

Jamestown was founded in 1606 by a royal charter granted by Elizabeth I's successor, James I, to the Virginia Company. In comparison to the settlement of the New World by the Spanish, the English monarchy was much less involved in early colonial ventures; private companies with boards of investors such as the Virginia Company's instead played a greater role, wherein they expected frequent reports back from the governorship and the various captains that formulated Jamestown's government. Incessantly, the Virginia Company's board of investors wrote to Jamestown, inquiring about their progress or the development of a profitable crop, much to the exasperation of Jamestown's leaders.

In contrast to the hopes of its investors, Jamestown largely teetered on the brink of failure throughout the initial years of its establishment. Diseases such as the bloody flux plagued the

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[72] Robert E. Scully, "In the Confident Hope of a Miracle: The Spanish Armada and Religious Mentalities in the Late Sixteenth Century" *The Catholic Historical Review* Vol. 89, No. 4 (Ann Arbor: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 657-658

earliest settlers of the town. The winters of eastern Northern America proved colder than what

the settlers, familiar with England and mainland Europe's climate, had ever experienced before.

Furthermore, the English still viewed the Spanish as their divinely appointed enemy to combat in

the New World, and thus expended a significant amount of planning Jamestown's location based

upon its ability to defend itself against any potential Spanish northward movement rather than on

the viability of agriculture in its vicinity.[73]

Violent encounters with certain Native American groups kept the inhabitants of

Jamestown constantly on edge, even as they found themselves having to rely upon the generosity

of other tribes who found it within their best interest to keep the struggling colony alive in order

to access European goods.[74] Failures to adequately grow any sort of crop necessary to establish

food security for the settlers, worsened by environmental misfortunes in the form of drought and

the land around them being largely swampland, led men from Jamestown to engage in outright

theft and banditry to procure corn from indigenous groups in the region. Inevitably this led to

multiple attacks from both sides as hostilities reached a boiling point, in what is called the First

Anglo-Powhatan War. [75]

Yet the Powhatan Confederacy wasn't a unified bloc that rallied to land a decisive blow

against the starved and indeed ravenous colonists of Jamestown. English settlers also engaged in

trade and more mutually beneficial transactions with other Powhatan groups, who saw the

potential utility of long-term trade with Europeans. Additionally, the English made use of

regional rivalries to position themselves away from being outright subsumed by the Powhatan

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[73] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 159-161, 215
[74] Ibid, 213
[75] James D. Rice, "Indigenous Politics and the Jamestown Colony in 1619", *Virginia 1619: Slavery and Freedom in the Making of English America*, edited by James Horn, Peter C. Mancall, and Paul Musselwhite (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 216-217

Confederacy or turned into a tributary entity. Traveling by river to trade with the Accomacs, who were already familiar with English goods such as copper and beads due to the previously established Roanoke, Jamestown could play off pre-existing enmity between the Accomacs and the Powhatan Confederacy. [76]

With all the issues that the Jamestown colony faced, there is the question of just why the investors of the Virginia Company continued to pour in supplies, ships, manpower, and money into a venture that looked doomed early on. Afterall, the inhabitants of Jamestown were hanging on by a thread, reliant on the generosity of indigenous neighbors or the success of raids and hostage exchanges for their food. All the while, conflict with Indians as well as disease and brutal winters had consistently been whittling away at Jamestown's numbers. Jamestown's captains even wrote back to various members of the board, constantly asking for more time to find a profitable crop and of course, for more support and supplies. So why did these wealthy London-based urbanites refuse to let Jamestown go?

The answer lies in a mixture of the printing press and the English mindset around the New World. The issues plaguing the colony of Jamestown became public knowledge rather than the sole concern of private investors; Captain John Smith's reports back to the Virginia Company found themselves in circulation to the English public in the form of *The Discovery of a New World* by John Healey utilizing prior work by Joseph Hall. The publication depicting the 'besieged' and struggling Jamestown drummed up national interest from across all of England.[77] News back from the New World caused theologians and clergymen to merge colonization with eschatology as they sought to drum up support for the lone English colony remaining on the

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[76] Ibid, 217-221

[77] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 242-244

American continent. A minister of the Church of England as well as a resident of London, Robert Gray, preached to English masses in tracts that combined English imperial ambitions with eschatology that England had the divine right to conquer America and "[tear it] out of the hands of beasts and brutish savages." Gray continued to preach for an aggressive, expansionistic approach to the Americas, viewing colonization as no less than a war to waged against Satanic forces as was the divine commission given to the English by God. Addressed directly to the dismayed and demoralized investors of the Virginia Company itself, the Anglican priest William Symond boldly stated that the colonization of America as embodied by Jamestown was a powerful model for "religious migration" and a "[step] of God's providence, by which he would rule the Christian world."[78]

The spread of the news of Jamestown's misfortunes coupled with the rhetoric of an eschatological mission served its purpose. The Virginia Company proceeded to revise its charter; lower the price of its stock , and promised land to new investors. Revitalized by the mandate of their new divinely appointed mission and spurred further on by the promise of material benefits alongside with it, the Virginia Company proceeded to send a large fleet of supply ships and new colonists on its way to help relieve the early settlers of the beleaguered Jamestown.[79]

Other colonies that followed Jamestown were impacted by patterns of millennialist thinking to an even greater extent, as religious apocalyptic thought didn't just motivate backers and colonists, but actively shaped governance. Puritans, English Protestants who viewed Roman Catholic elements in the Anglican church as an impediment to the establishment of the "true church" that would usher in the reign of Christ, followed Jamestown in establishing their own

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[78] Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 103-104

[79] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 243-244

English colonies on the American continent. John Winthrop with his idea of the "city upon a hill" formulated the basis of the early Massachusetts colony in New England, wherein the foundation for the city of Boston was set. Set on establishing an example of a 'godly society' that serve as an example to the world of a civilization organized under the true faith, Winthrop and other Massachusetts leaders sought out to strictly regiment the New England colonies around a more collective effort by all members involved, manifesting itself as required oaths of loyalty from men sixteen years of age or older and the legal codification of dissent as punishable.[80]

Puritan colonies were not solely intended to be orderly locations meant to establish the necessary conditions for the flourishment and spread of what Puritans viewed as the true Christian faith, nor as a mere model to the rest of the Christian world, but also as active partakers against Satanic forces as a necessary step towards the end times. The establishment of colonies in the Americas was to be a "final flank attack on the forces of righteousness everywhere" in the eyes of Puritan leaders.[81] John Winthrop wrote in 1631 that the New England were to be a "bulwark against the kingdom of antichrist" and further pointed towards the antichrist's chosen agents: Native Americans and Papist forces both.[82] The New English colonies proceeded to treat indigenous enemies with particular brutality.

Similarly to the Spanish, many Englishmen came to the New World with the intent of converting the native populace as a means of hastening the end times. Yet the Puritan colonies frequently viewed the American Indians they interacted with as a strict counter to their own

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[80] David D. Hall, *A Reforming People: Puritanism & the Transformation of Public Life in New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 16-17
[81] Robert C. Fuller, *Naming the Antichrist*: *A History of an American Obsession* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 44-45
[82] John Winthrop and Robert C. Winthrop, *Life and Letters of John Winthrop* (Boston: Ticknob and Fields, 1864), 309-311

society. Whereas the Puritans saw the New England settlements as orderly, disciplined bastions of Christ, native populations were seen as wild, ignorant, and as the "first line of defense" for Satan. The consequences of these perceptions proved disastrous. In conflicts with the Pequot Indians, the unified militiamen of the New England colonies massacred and enslaved hundreds of indigenous men, women, and children in the late 1630's as a means of securing their newly founded 'godly societies.'[83]

As for the other half of the Satanic forces that the English Puritans viewed as being embodied by the Roman Catholic Spanish, the Puritans established a colony that would later become an outpost whose main purpose was to bring the fight to Spanish expansion in Central and South America. Far to the south of the New England and Virginia colonies, off the coast of what is now Colombia, a small uninhabited island became the site of an English outpost. Established in 1629, Providence was settled under the auspex of a group of investors, similarly to Jamestown, known as the Providence Island Company.

While spearheaded by a group of investors like what had occurred in Jamestown, the colonization effort of Providence and the ideas of the investors as it pertained to Providence's development strove to be in contrast to the floundering first efforts of the Virginia colony. The investors of the Providence Island Company laid the blame of Jamestown's early issues as the result of "divided councils" and "shortsighted greed". Instead, the investors and leadership of Providence encouraged a strict form of governance with emplaced hierarchy, much in the same vein as other Puritan colonies that had begun to spring up in the New England area. Instead of councils, the Providence colony was to be governed by the investors of the Company and hand-

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[83] Robert C. Fuller, *Naming the Antichrist*: *A History of an American Obsession* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 45-48

picked aristocrats, who thought that through the development of a godly Puritan society they were to achieve a "great cumulative unveiling of the light that they hoped and believed was imminent " to bring about the end of days.[84]

As part of their strict regimented society, the leadership of Providence colony regulated the activity of all colonists from economic to domestic. This proved to be economically detrimental; the strict control that the Providence aristocracy wished to maintain led to withholding land ownership to most other colonists. Without the incentive of land to draw many colonists in, the Puritan leaders of the island had to turn to slavery to supplement labor. Even then, with labor shortages, the colony of Providence could only rely upon two things for its economy: tobacco and privateering. Providence naturally became an outpost for English privateering efforts; with Providence's English population being largely made up of military men led by a government of highly religious aristocrats who viewed the Spanish as nothing less than agents of Satan, privateering quickly took its place as the leading industry of the small island. Despite its convenient location for English military interests and the convictions of its religiously motivated backers, Providence was not last, as agitated Spanish forces eventually discovered and drove out the English from Providence in 1641.[85]

The early colonial period was defined by Spanish dominance in the decades immediately following Columbus's discovery of the New World. Rapidly spreading throughout the Americas, the Spanish already claimed dominion over significant portions of both American continents as

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[84] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Providence Island, 1630-1641: The Other Puritan Colony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3, 51, 266

[85] Jon Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean: How Piracy Forged an Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 82-86

well as a variety of islands throughout the Caribbean. It was in this environment that England laggardly saw itself enter the scramble to claim dominion in the New World.

England going into the 16th century was itself delayed by a variety of issues. From the loss of territorial positions on the European mainland, to internal rebellion in addition to civil wars, to issues pertaining to succession or the legitimacy of the fledging English church in the face of the Protestant Reformation, England found itself occupied by more pressing concerns than the newly found land an entire ocean away. It took until the ascension of Elizabeth I for English involvement in the Americas to begin in earnest.

The time between Columbus's discovery of the New World and the start of English colonization did not entail an intellectual or theological vacuum for the English. Protestant thought combined with the geopolitical reality of Papal interests being largely opposed to those of England's culminated into the idea that the office of the Papacy represented the position of the antichrist as foretold in apocalyptic warnings throughout the New Testament. Nationalist sentiment also combined with eschatology; it was commonly thought by individuals throughout England that God had issued English civilization with a divine mandate to help pave the way for the return of Christ and had in his divine providence revealed the Americas to the English to play its part in the final chapter before Armageddon.

When the English would begin to venture into the Americas, its efforts were characterized by its clashes with the foremost agent of the antichrist Papacy, the Spanish. Privateers were commissioned via letters of marque by Elizabeth I to wage war on Spanish vessels, a task that helped fill the English crown's coffers with gold and silver even if it rarely enriched the crews of privateer vessels themselves. When the Spanish responded to the piracy that plaguing them by launching the Spanish Armada to reestablish Catholicism in England (with

the pope's blessing), the Armada's destruction via natural causes and being harried by English privateers served to embolden English onlookers; clearly the English had the divine favor of God on their side to carry out his design.

When England first established colonies, it didn't initially appear as though they had God's providence on their side. Roanoke was lost to unknown causes; and its successor of Jamestown in Virginia was seemingly approaching a similar fate as it was hampered by an unprepared labor force, devastating winters, vexing drought, and hostility with nearby indigenous tribes. Yet when the news of Jamestown's precarious situation made its way into national consciousness, English clergymen mobilized to rally aid, recruit new colonists, and inspire the Virginia Company that financed Jamestown using a brand of fiery apocalyptic rhetoric. In turn, the Virginia Company revised its charter and proceed to give Jamestown even greater aid in the form of a fleet of supplies larger than they had sent before, despite the lack of a sign of profitability from Jamestown.

With Jamestown's position now stabilized, Puritan colonies began to spring up throughout New England. Intending for America to be a new land wherein the 'true church' necessary for the second coming of Christ could be established, Puritan leaders strove to organize these colonies more strictly than what Jamestown had been, with everyone being expected to work towards the greater good of their 'godly societies'. Upon reaching the Americas, Puritans continued to espouse the same ideology popular throughout England of the role of the Spanish as agents of the antichrist, and additionally, of the way in which Satan had shaped Native American societies as a means of opposition to the divine mandate that God had bestowed upon the English. This played out with horrific results, with Puritan colonies engaging

in genocidal actions such as their attempts to wipe out the Perquot Indians during the Perquot War.

Puritans also established another colony, an island off the coast of South America that was named Providence after the divine favor that English Puritans believed God was providing them. Providence, like other Puritan colonies, rejected perceived failures in colonies such as Jamestown and implemented a stringently controlled society, with Providence being explicitly hierarchical. Yet despite the island's name, its fortunes did not prove to be divinely protected, as the island struggled to find a meaningfully profitable crop to sustain the island's economy and satisfy investors. Instead, the island briefly became an outpost for privateers to continue England's eschatologically fueled campaign against Spanish vessels, up until the Spaniards invaded the island.

The story of early English colonial efforts following Columbus's discovery of the New World is that of a prolonged effort by what was functionally a backwater to European power players clawing a place for itself in the Americas. Waylaid by domestic affairs and internal strife, England emerged during the reign of Elizabeth I as a rising player in the geopolitics of the Americas, driven by a national narrative that placed the entirety of English civilization as being divinely handpicked to be at the forefront of the final act before an impending apocalypse. Religious sentiment, particularly millennialist, was a strong ideological force for Englishmen, despite what some historians of colonialism have suggested in favor of a largely materialist, secular narrative.

Eschatology explains why the first agents of English empire in the New World, such as merchant crews, turned to risky ventures like raids on Spanish vessels instead of safer and potentially more lucrative opportunities such as peacefully trading with the colonists in the

Spanish Americas. Englishmen took the idea of fighting the forces of the Papist antichrist seriously, from the incessant raids of the privateers to genocidal military actions enacted upon indigenous tribes that were perceived as an impediment to the creation of the 'true church' on the American mainland. Eschatological fervor helped see colonies such as Jamestown narrowly etch out success, and even shaped the organization of future colonies such as in Massachusetts Bay. By the time 1640 rolled around, England was just starting to come into its own as a colonial power; conversely the Spanish were beginning to see their near-total dominion of the Americas slip through their fingers as the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and indeed English became increasing more involved in American affairs.

CHAPTER IV: THE KINGDOM BEFORE CHRIST

The English Civil War, and with it the rise of Cromwell, saw a shift in the role of eschatology in English empire. In the past, such as under Elizabeth I, eschatology played a role in driving and influencing agents of empire, such as the men behind the Virginia Company or the privateering crews that waged holy war upon the Spanish. Yet eschatology was not in itself a principal motivation for the direct rulers of England, despite the deeply felt religious faith that the Stuart monarchs possessed.

The English Civil War, itself driven by eschatological fears of a crown subverted by the Papal antichrist, shifted the dynamic. Not long after the war's end, Oliver Cromwell, a radical Protestant Independent, became England's figurehead. Eschatologically driven and a fervent believer in millennialism, Cromwell courted various factions of radical Protestantism that had served on the side of the parliamentarians in the English Civil War. In turn, these factions occupied important sections of the Cromwellian English government. With the Lord Protector at its head and with his agents fervently awaiting, or indeed seeking to hasten, the end times, England acted increasingly in the interest of accelerating the second coming of Christ domestically and in the New World.

As the 17th century dawned, Spanish influence in the greater Atlantic world began to wane, an effect of successful maneuvering by its other European rivals as well as Spain's own domestic troubles. England, meanwhile, found its fortunes had reversed course from the past century or two of strife. Its American colonies had finally been secured, and better yet were expanding. Its perceived archenemy, the Papist Spanish, had lost dominion over large swathes of the European mainland in a series of mainland wars in Central Europe. The French, another

Catholic rival to Protestant England, had only established small colonies in the far north of the Americas. Spanish territories, in the Caribbean and in the southern Americas both, were plagued by attacks by English privateers.

Across the Atlantic, back in England proper, things seemed fine domestically for the English in the first few decades of the 17th century. Avoiding the "horrors" of the Thirty Years War that started in 1618, England was perceived by its citizenry as a "haven of security and tranquility."[86] Yet despite this perception, a multitude of issues were rotting the foundations of the institution of the English crown, exemplified in the form of the reign of King Charles I of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Factionalism, particularly of a religious variety, was prominent in England. King Charles I ascended the throne in 1624 to rule not only England, but also Scotland and Ireland, as separate entities. Under such conditions, individuals amongst the English questioned Charles' loyalty to England. With a Catholic Ireland and a Presbyterian Scotland, certain Protestants within England questioned whether a king that consorted with Papists and the Church of Scotland could prove a faithful leader to both England and its church.

Puritans in the English Parliament in particular voiced distrust for the King, who consorted with Catholics in his court in Ireland and with his French Catholic wife. In the 1620s and beyond during the religiously and politically fraught atmosphere that pervaded King Charles I's reign, Englishmen of all stripes had an eye towards an impending clash of apocalyptic proportions that many believed was imminent. English Protestants, and especially Puritans, were fearful that both English Protestantism and the monarchy itself were "under assault from a

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[86] Peter Gaunt, *The English Civil War: A Military History* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 18

power-hungry 'Popish and malignant' faction" that were serving as the principal agents of the antichrist.[87]

John Pym, a Puritan member of Parliament who had also served as a board-member of the Providence Island Company, wrote in 1641 his concerns regarding King Charles and his fears of conspiratorial Papism. In Pym's view, Charles was at risk of bringing England into a lawless animalistic state as exemplified by Catholic Ireland. Worse still, that there was a possibility that Charles's toleration of certain Catholic practices could potentially encourage subversive Papist elements to exercise the Catholic doctrine of *fides non est servanda cum haereticis* ("faith is not to be kept with heretics"), allowing for Catholics to ignore oaths of loyalty to Protestants such as those in English government. [88]

Charles also faced an issue of Puritan millennialist fanaticism from the ranks of the aristocracy. The 2nd Earl of Warwick, Robert Rich, was involved in a multitude of colonial projects, ranging from councils in the New England colonies to being an investor in the Providence Island Company and the Somers Isle (Bermuda) Company. A fervent Puritan, Robert Rich was a stringent believer in the millennialist world view propagated by the likes of John Foxe, with Robert Rich waging an extensive private holy war against the Catholic Spanish throughout the New World. Rich's anti-Spanish brand of Puritanism caused the aristocrat to act in a way many could deem irrational. The Earl waged war against the Spanish flagrantly even in

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[87] Michael P. Winship, "Freeborn (Puritan) Englishmen and Slavish Subjugation: Popish Tyranny and Puritan Constitutionalism, c. 1570-1606", *The English Historical Review*, Vol. CXXIV, No. 510 (2009), 1050
[88] John Pym, *The Speech or Declaration of John Pym, Esq & c.* (London, 1641), 3-9

times of peace, and risked reprisal from Charles I, who was more sympathetic to Catholic interests than his Elizabethan predecessors.[89]

The degree in which Rich waged his personal holy war against the Catholic Spanish cannot be understated. In the late 1620s alone, it is known that Rich had at the very least 11 armed vessels commissioned to serve as privateers under his name, effectively a fleet.[90] Warwick's vendetta against the Papist Spanish is a showcase of the weakness of the crown even before the English Civil War: English aristocrats, radicalized by Puritan millennialism, were largely setting an individual "foreign policy" in the Americas, even against the wishes of the Crown, with relative impunity.

Beyond religious mistrust from among the ranks of parliament, and a radicalized aristocracy waging private holy war in the Americas, King Charles I also faced conflicts pertaining to the right of kingship. Charles I, a strong believer in the divine right of kings, often clashed with parliament over his royal prerogative. The king imposed tax levies upon his English subjects without approval from parliament to fund a treasury depleted from prior wars against France and Spain, and to further pay for the costs necessary to maintain the 'high church' Protestantism of a Church of England that rejected the humbler Calvinist elements that many English Protestants wanted. To this end, there was a period that would last over a decade, from 1629 to 1640, wherein parliament did not meet. This period, called in more recent times as the 'Personal Rule', exasperated tensions between parliamentary members and the crown.[91]

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[89] W. Frank Craven, "The Earl of Warwick, A Spectator in Piracy", *The Hispanic American Historical Review* Vol. 10, No. 4 (1930), 468-473
[90] Ibid 468
[91] Peter Gaunt, *The English Civil War: A Military History* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 26-28

Matters came to a head for Charles and parliament. Charles, who had sought to impose a more centralized church system to Presbyterian Scotland through force of arms, tried to secure funds from an unwilling parliament. In turn, this agitatede an increasingly hostile Parliament, with figures such as John Pym leading the charge in asserting that many of the king's officials were Papal agents. Parliament proceeded to execute the deputy Lord Strafford Thomas Wentworth, who was viewed as an agent of the Papacy. Growing increasingly paranoid as to his own safety as well as that of his immediate family, King Charles attempted to charge several members of Parliament with treason. [92]

Storming Parliament in January of 1642 with a contingent of men-at-arms brandishing swords and pistols, Charles was dismayed to find that the parliamentary members he wanted arrested had fled at the word of his impending arrival. London, meanwhile, was in an uproar at what was perceived as a flagrantly tyrannical and heavy-handed maneuver by the King. With the support of the people of London on the side of the parliamentarians, King Charles fled the capital. Both the parliamentarian and royalist forces began to build up military forces, and before long, the English Civil War was underway.

The English Civil Wars were itself part of a larger war, the War of the Three Kingdoms, that engulfed England, Scotland, and Ireland in a flurry of civil and sectarian violence. The parliamentarian side proved victorious, albeit plagued by competing factions internally. Many parliamentarians did not wish to see the king deposed, even some of his harshest critics such as John Pym. Instead, these parliamentarians viewed the English Civil War as being "waged to protect king and parliament from treacherous evil counselors." The members of parliament that

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[92] Ibid, 33-40

belonged in this faction sticked to this justification, which was itself rooted in decades of English identity and eschatology, that of a divinely appointed England beset by the nefarious agents of the antichrist.[93]

A more radical side also formed inside of parliament. While they didn't reject the idea that the king had been compromised by Catholic ideas and advisors, they took a much firmer stance against the king as both an individual and as an office of power. These parliamentarians, belonging to a variety of Protestant sects, perceived the waging of war against the royalists as "the only way to secure more sweeping changes to the mechanics of church and state."[94] Through the use of military force, the radical parliamentarians saw a divinely opportune time to implement drastic religious and political changes to England.

The English Civil War, also known as the English Revolution, ended in 1649 with the execution of King Charles I by the radical faction of parliamentarians backed with the force of the New Model Army, the army of the parliamentarians. Parliament had been purged of elements that the radical faction and officers in the New Model Army had deemed as too sympathetic to the king. England became the Commonwealth of England, first with a council and then later directly with the Lord-Protector Oliver Cromwell at its head. Scotland and Ireland both were subsumed into this new polity. Scotland, with its Presbyterian church that Oliver Cromwell personally admired aspects of, saw England treat it with a degree of reconciliation in mind. Catholic Ireland, however, was devastated by the New Model Army under Cromwell's

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[93] David R. Como, *Radical Parliamentarians and the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 132
[94] Ibid, 132-133

command. Resettlement and dispossession awaited the survivors of Cromwell's brutal military campaign to break the back of Catholicism in the region.[95]

It is important to not underestimate the degree in which eschatology played a pivotal role in driving England's change from a semi-constitutional monarchy with immense power invested in its kings and queens to a republic, albeit one effectively under military control by Oliver Cromwell. The late Marxist historian Christopher Hill pushed back against the idea of the English Revolution as merely being a materialist and politically expedient way for English landowners to secure their status and wrestle power from a central authority that came into conflict with their self-interests. Puritanism, at its core, was the ideology of the English Revolution. As part of England's national image, which was rooted in eschatology derived from Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, the prevailing idea was that God "punished individuals and societies for their misdeeds."[96] Therefore, God had clearly marked the reign of Charles I as wicked, and the radical revolutionaries' success was the work of divine providence as part of a greater plan.

Emergent ideologies had their part to play in the English Civil War. A "crude republicanism" certainly took root during and following the English Revolution, and could be seen in individuals such as John Milton, the famous author behind *Paradise Lost* who supported the parliamentarians during the English Civil War and Oliver Cromwell's reign after. This 'crude republicanism' appears in cases such as when John Milton outlined in his poem *Areopagitica*, written in 1644, an argument opposing government censorship of speech in the form of

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[95] Peter Gaunt, *The English Civil War: A Military History* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 244-246

[96] Christopher Hill. "God and the English Revolution". *History Workshop* No. 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 19-21

government licensure.[97] Yet Milton, as strong a believer in a nascent English republicanism as he was, was still perceiving the events unfolding around him in apocalyptic terms. Only a scant two years prior to outlining an argument against government censorship, Milton wrote in his tract *The Reason of Church-Government* his vision of "Parliament as an apocalyptic 'punishing force'", which empowered through God's providence, could enact "the furious and relentless judgement of divine vengeance." Nascent English republicanism was infused with apocalypticism.[98][99]

The newly founded English Commonwealth was at first led by a group appointed by what remained of Parliament (which became known as the Rump Parliament), labeled as the Council of State. Yet the Council of State's reign hardly lasted, as perceived failures of the Rump ultimately displeased Oliver Cromwell, who proceeded to dissolve the Rump with the backing of the New Model Army. In its place, Cromwell and select army officials designated individuals to form the basis of a new parliament formulated in the summer of 1653, which became known as the Barebone's Parliament, after one of its appointed members Praisegod Barebone.[100]

Praisegod Barebone was a Fifth Monarchist. The Fifth Monarchist movement emerged as a radical joint religious-political sect during the time of the English Revolution, wherein many of the chaplains of the New Model Army had become Fifth Monarchists and preached its millennialist vision. Central to the belief of the Fifth Monarchists was the concept that there were to be four great kingdoms before the emergence of the fifth and final great monarchy on Earth:

[97] John Milton, *Areopagitica; A Speech of John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, to the Parliament of England* (London: Percy Lund, Humphries, & Co., 1926), 1-4

[98] David A. Loewenstein, "Areopagitica and the Dynamics of History", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* Vol.28, No. 1 (1998), 78-79

[99] David R. Como, *Radical Parliamentarians and the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 428

[100] Peter C. Herman, *A Short History of Early Modern England: British Literature in Context* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 228-236

that of the kingdom of Jesus Christ upon his second coming. The reign of Christ's dominion over the world would last a thousand years, but in order to secure his arrival, the Fifth Monarchists believed that earthly actions needed to occur. The fourth and final kingdom before the arrival of Christ was that of the English Stuart monarchy. By toppling the Stuart regime, the Fifth Monarchists imagined the creation of a saintly society out of England as a means of bringing about the end times.[101]

The exact degree of influence that the Fifth Monarchists possessed in the Barebone's Parliament has been debated by historians and scholars of the period. Dr. Leo F. Solt of Indiana University wrote in the 1960s that the Fifth Monarchists were not a majority group within the Parliament, that it did have a "radical group" representing it in Parliament, attempting to push through reforms.[102] More recent academics of late have been far more generous in their interpretation of the impact of this apocalyptic faction with statements such as that a "small minority [in the Barebone's Parliament] belonged to the Fifth Monarchist sect, yet they set the tone", or that even the "[Fifth Monarchists] controlled parliament."[103][104] No matter how historians have wished to characterize the Fifth Monarchists in both the past and in more recent times, it is undeniable that they possessed far greater influence than their numbers suggested.

Cromwell disbanded the Barebone's Parliament at the very end of 1653, motivated by discontentment at some of the more radical social reforms that the Fifth Monarchist-dominated parliamentary body supported. In turn, elements of the Fifth Monarchists later revolted against

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[101] Leo F. Solt, "The Fifth Monarchy Men: Politics and the Millennium", *Church History* Vol. 30, No. 3 (1961), 314-316

[102] Ibid 314

[103] Peter C. Herman, *A Short History of Early Modern England: British Literature in Context* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 235

[104] Benjamin W. D. Redding, "The Western Design Revisited: Death, Dissent, and Discontent on the Glouchester, 1654-1656", *The Historical Journal* Vol. 66, No. 5 (2023), 966

Cromwell's reign as Lord Protector in both 1657 and 1661, perceiving the dismissal of parliament and the Stuart Restoration as a betrayal to the Fifth Monarchist goal of bringing about the Kingdom of Christ. Yet before the relationship between Cromwell and the Fifth Monarchists soured, Cromwell voiced open support for them in parliament in "fervently religious terms."[105] In turn, before and during their short time in the Barebone's Parliament, Fifth Monarchists implored Cromwell to wage war upon the enemies of 'saintly' Christendom as embodied by the Commonwealth.

Christopher Feake, one of the leading Fifth Monarchist members of the time, wrote a pamphlet in 1659 while under imprisonment for seditious comments made against the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. In it, he detailed an accounting of the (at-the time) recent political history of the Fifth Monarchists, discussing the principals that guided the Fifth Monarchists in their public manifesto the *Six General Heads of Prayer*, published in 1651. As one of the tenants, the Fifth Monarchists boldly stated that "the Kingdom of Our Lord Jesus Christ [must] be exalted speedily…and that whatever stood in the way of it, might be utterly pulled down, and brought to nothing."[106] Feake noted that Oliver Cromwell was "willing to hear" these words, among the others in the Fifth Monarchists' manifesto, and that Cromwell personally attended two meetings of the Fifth Monarchists.[107]

Cromwell took the idea of tearing down those who stood in the way of the second coming of Christ seriously. Taking the "anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish" sentiments that had characterized both English eschatology and national identity, the Lord Protector incorporated

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[105] Peter C. Herman, *A Short History of Early Modern England: British Literature in Context* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 235

[106] Feake, Christopher, *A Beam of Light, Shining in the Midst of Much Darkness and Confusion* (London: J.C. for Livewell Chapman, 1659), 41

[107] Ibid. 39-40

them into official state policy. Cromwell ordered the enactment of his 'Western Design', a plan to drive the Catholic Spanish out of the Caribbean, only a scant few months following the dissolvement of the Barebone's Parliament.[108]

The enactment of the Western Design entailed immense military buildup. As the historians Carla Pestana and N.A.M. Rodger noted, "[the Commonwealth of England] built the same tonnage of warships in four years (1651-1655) as the [Stuart] monarchs had built in over half a century between 1588 and 1642."[109] The enterprise of the Western Design had wide reaching-ramifications when examining empire. The Western Design became the "first [English] state-backed grab for colonies in the New World."[110] Prior English efforts to colonize the New World had been the work of highly driven individuals or private enterprises rubberstamped by the crown. Cromwell's plans of conquest, to defang a Spanish dominion in the Caribbean that threatened the whole of Protestantism, proved to be a drastic shift. English empire was evolving from moving along the periphery. Now England was moving from staking colonies in areas not yet claimed by the Spanish and harrying Spanish ships with privateers, to open warfare against the Spanish to lay claim to a geographic area, carving out a sizable chunk of land for itself. State involvement in matters of colonial expansion now saw the state lead the charge in the Caribbean, which saw England drastically increase its land ownership with the acquisition of Jamaica via conquest.

Some historians have tried to frame the Western Design as being concerned with plunder or the ability to carve into the sugar economies of the Caribbean, such as Matthew Mulcahy in

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[108] Carla Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire*: *Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 122
[109] Carla Gardina Pestana, *The English Conquest of Jamaica: Oliver Cromwell's Bid for Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 6
[110] Ibid, 11

his work *Hubs of Empire*.[111] Such a narrative is flawed, however. Despite the Caribbean islands having been economically profitable ventures from sugar plantations, it ignores the rhetoric and ideas propagated by those that took part in the Design personally, from Cromwell to its officers, many of whom belonged to radical millennialist sects like the Fifth Monarchists. The basis of Cromwell targeting the Spanish Caribbean, including the heavily fortified island of Cuba, was not for easy money, rather a long-standing continuation of English national identity being tied up with an anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish eschatological mission.

As the English fleet made its way across the Atlantic towards the Caribbean in the December of 1654, the composition of the men in the military expedition were quite religiously diverse, albeit unified by a strong sense of Protestant belief. Despite a widespread conviction in the cause of fighting the Papist Spaniards, these varying radical denominations among the number of soldiers that comprised the sum of the Western Design's fleet proved disastrous for Cromwell's aims in the Caribbean. Commander Benjamin Blake, a naval officer, was venomously anti-Fifth Monarchist in outlook, and took measures to contain Puritanical extremism aboard his vessel. Conversely, Vice-Admiral John Lawson, another naval officer that took part in the Western Design, was a "known sympathizer of the Fifth Monarchists", and religious extremism, including strains of Puritanism, "permeated the naval ranks."[112] This combination of varying religious ideologies led to 'maritime radicalism', wherein disobedience, stirrings of mutiny, and tensions ran rampant throughout the ranks as sailors, officers, and soldiers clashed with one another as a result.[113]

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[111] Matthew Mulcahy, *Hubs of Empire: The Southeastern Lowcountry and British Caribbean* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014), 63
[112] Benjamin W. D. Redding, "The Western Design Revisited: Death, Dissent, and Discontent on the Glouchester, 1654-1656", *The Historical Journal* Vol. 66, No. 5 (2023), 966-968
[113] Ibid 947, 967

When the English fleet would reach the Caribbean, the results proved to largely be a

disaster. Launching their invasion from Barbados, the English attempt to capture Santo

Domingo, the colonial administrative center of the Spanish-controlled island of Hispaniola, was

an abject failure in contrast to the success of the privateer Sir Francis Drake a century prior.[114]

Cuba, as well, proceeded to repel English attempts at conquest. It was only in the colony of

Santiago, now known as Jamaica, that proved successful to a certain degree. Rapidly seizing the

administrative capital Villa de la Vega, which had been abandoned by the Spanish, England took

Jamaica in the summer of 1655, albeit at great cost and while engaging in hostilities against

Spanish guerilla forces. The hostile conditions and atmosphere present aboard the various ships

of Cromwell's military expedition was only a precursor to further issues on the field during the

English invasion of the Spanish Caribbean. Poor supplies prevented soldiers from aggressively

pursuing Spanish forces, as they were ordered to instead grow crops to use as provisions. Disease

and the tropical climate further doubled down on extracting a terrible toll upon the beleaguered

English troops, who made for a thoroughly demoralized force on land due to the myriad

conditions that they faced.[115]

Back in England, the failure of the Western Design faced significant backlash from

detractors of Cromwell's Protectorate, such as the Fifth Monarchists, as well as those within the

Protectorate government. Failing to successfully expel the antichrist-following Spanish from the

Caribbean raised trifold doubts; did God truly back the radical revolutionary politics of the

Commonwealth, the Lord Protector alongside his associated officials, and indeed, even the

character of the English itself? Cromwell himself was deeply troubled by the failure of the

[114] S. A. G. Taylor, *The Western Design: An Account of Cromwell's Expedition to the Caribbean* (London: Solstice Productions, 1969), 20-22
[115] Ibid 87-89

Western Design and spent several days in deep prayer to attempt to ascertain the nature of God's will.[116]

The conclusion that the Lord Protector and his detractors alike came to was that the lack of God's providence in securing an English victory throughout the Caribbean was a sign of "something fundamentally wrong and disordered at home."[117] Cromwell ordered days of solemn fasting and prayer. Furthermore, orders were sent to officers in the English military to crack down upon sin, and for the promotion of virtue. Yet perhaps the most and long-lasting consequence of the Western Design's failure was in the actions that the Protectorate took towards the Jewish people, inspired by both eschatological goals and the lack of godly providence seen in the crusade that the English attempted to wage in the Caribbean.[118]

Jews had been banned from England and its territories since the end of the 13th century, yet the Englishmen themselves had a mixed relationship with the Judaic faith and its people. English Christians believed that Jews would need to be converted in order to usher in the end times and the second coming of Christ. To that end, despite the ban, many Jews had managed to migrate and live inside of England and its territories, albeit with the stipulation that they kept their faith private. The Reconquista had expelled many Sephardic Jews out of Spain, many of whom found themselves seeking refuge in locations such as England or colonies in the New World. The English state post-Columbus was aware of the presence of their small, hidden Jewish

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[116] Carla Gardina Pestana, "English Character and the Fiasco of the Western Design", *Early American Studies* Vol. 3, No. 1 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 7-8, 19

[117] David L. Smith "The Western Design and the Spiritual Geopolitics of Cromwellian Foreign Policy", *Itinerario* Vol. 40, No. 2 (Leiden: Leiden University, 2016), 289

[118] Ibid, 284-286

populace; in 1524, England permited the publishing of materials written in Hebrew. A scant two and a half decades later, in 1549, Hebrew was permitted for private prayer.[119]

Cromwell took the step towards open toleration of the Jewish population, both already present in England and some of its colonies as well as towards those abroad. The Lord Protector was of the opinion that the English were in fact one of the Lost Tribes of Israel, and that due to the English's separation from involvement in the crucifixion of Christ, the English were entitled to the same covenant and inheritance of the Old Testament.[120] Cromwell held multiple conference towards the end of 1655 to resolve the matter of the Jewish population, of whom Cromwell held much sympathy towards out of a mixture of distaste at Spanish prosecution as well as due to eschatological matters. In December of 1655, Cromwell quietly rescinded the ban on Jews living in England and its territories.[121]

Cromwell's decision to show legal toleration and sympathy towards Jews out of a sense of millennialism and disapproval of Spanish cruelty provided to be a beneficial one to English empire. Many Jewish migrants made their way to Jamaica. In turn, the island became a haven of privateering against the Spanish following its conquest during the Western Design, with the development of the town of Port Royal playing a pivotal role. Among those privateers were many Sephardic Jews, looking to strike at Spanish ships in retaliation for years of intense prosecution at the hands of Spanish religious and civil authorities. Additionally, Jewish merchants in Port Royal played their part, facilitating the sale and unloading of Spanish goods captured in naval raids. Jamaica became a veritable fortress against Spanish interests, the

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[119] Pinchas E. Lapide, *Hebrew in the Church: The Foundations of Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985), 72-74

[120] Ibid, 73

[121] David L. Smith "The Western Design and the Spiritual Geopolitics of Cromwellian Foreign Policy", *Itinerario* Vol. 40, No. 2 (Leiden: Leiden University, 2016), 285-286

concentration of privateering vessels forming a formidable defense against Spanish attempts to retake the island.[122]

With the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660, Cromwell's Commonwealth ended. The ascension of King Charles II to the throne signaled the beginning of the end of the impact of eschatology upon state policy and English empire. The Stuart Restoration saw a crackdown on radical strains of Protestantism in a series of acts passed by Parliament.[123] Eschatologically fueled anti-Catholicism managed to persist, as seen in the later Glorious Revolution which closed the 17th century. Anti-Catholic sentiment saw uprisings in both England and in the New World that replaced King James II with Queen Mary II and the Dutch prince turned English king William the Orange.[124]

The middle of the 17th-century saw eschatology at its most influential upon English empire in the New World. Paranoia among parliamentary members regarding officials surrounding King Charles I as well as doubts surrounding the king's own loyalties to Protestantism was fueled by English eschatological ideas of a war playing out on a divine scale between the Antichrist/Papacy and that of the Godly and specially appointed Protestant English. Tensions between the crown and parliament proceeded to escalate up until war, which would engulf not only England, but Scotland and Ireland as well. Inside of parliament, two distinct factions emerged: one more moderated in its approach to the monarchy, the other more radical

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[122] Edward Kritzler, *Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean*: *How a Generation of Swashbuckling Jews Carved Out an Empire in the New World in Their Quest for Treasure, Religious Freedom and Revenge* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing, 2009), 9-10

[123] Peter C. Herman, *A Short History of Early Modern England: British Literature in Context* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 243

[124] Ibid 245-246

which saw the war as a means of pushing forward changes to both church and state it never otherwise could have been able to do.

The parliamentarian faction proved victorious, executing Charles II and ushering in the English Commonwealth, a nominal republic effectively under military control by Oliver Cromwell, a talented army officer who crushed Catholic Ireland in addition to showing exemplary ability to command on the field. Cromwell was a firm believer in millennialism and the idea of an impending apocalypse as ordained in the Bible. Additionally, he and other officers under his command appointed governmental officials that shared similar millennialists ideas as them, such as the radical Fifth Monarchists that proved highly influential for a time such as in Barebone's Parliament. Idealogues that worked with the Cromwellian government, such as John Milton, perceived parliament as an agent of divine purpose, extracting holy vengeance upon those who incurred God's ire.

The apocalyptic ideology that had seized the reins of state would turn eschatology into material practice. Cromwell's Western Design was the culmination of this, effectively a holy war waged against Spanish Catholic holdings in the Caribbean with the belief that through God's providence, England would prevail, and that the world would be one step closer to the second coming of Christ. However, the radical nature of the various Protestant groups that had sprung up and flourished served to cause division among the English ranks so far away from home, a factor that contributed to the failure of the Western Design outside of the conquest of Jamaica.

In response to the failure of the Western Design, which Cromwell perceived as God denying England providence and the delaying of the impending apocalypse due to internal moral issues within England, Cromwell initiated days of prayer and fasting. Furthermore, Cromwell showed a remarkable degree of religious toleration towards the Jewish people for his time. The

Lord Protector rescinded the ban on Jews in England as well as its territories by the end of 1655, following military failures in the Caribbean. Cromwell's reasons for doing so stemmed from a joint mixture of a desire to fulfill the eschatological mandate of converting the Jewish people to Christianity, as well as an anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish outlook that perceived the treatment of Jewish people by the Spanish state as extraordinarily cruel.

In turn, Cromwell's show of tolerance towards Jews was rewarded. Sephardic Jews from both Spain and Portugal immigrated to England and its Caribbean possessions such as Jamaica and Barbados. Those in the Caribbean turned decades of resentment at persecution into retaliation, with Jewish privateers and merchants targeting Spanish naval vessels and helping to fortify England's position in the Caribbean.

Eschatology's importance diminished with the end of the Cromwellian Protectorate and with the restoration of the Stuart monarchs in 1660. The Stuart monarchs took efforts to diminish the power and influence of the more radical sects of Protestantism that had sprung up out of the English Revolution. Despite the waning influence of eschatology on English empire as the dawn of the 18th century approached, anti-Catholicism fueled the Glorious Revolution, which saw popular uprisings in both England and its colonies in the New World to overthrow James II, who was perceived as too sympathetic with Catholicism.

CHAPTER V: MAKING SENSE OF THE END

When the work of prior historians is placed in conjunction with the writings of those driving European colonization or in control of certain levers of imperial power in the early colonial period, it becomes abundantly clear that eschatology is a massive contributor to the story of empire in the Americas. The agents of empire on the ground in the New World were greatly inspired by the fact that it was common belief throughout Western Europe that the end times were at hand. Through the fulfillment of only a few objectives outlined in certain books of the Bible, paradise in the form of Christ's kingdom on Earth for a millennium would be at hand.

Eschatology was involved in European colonial empire as early as Christopher Columbus. Columbus was not merely a man seeking profit and financial reward for his endeavors in the West such as historians like Howard Zinn have suggested. The Genovese perceived himself as a vanguard for Christ. With the blessing of Queen Isabella of Spain, Columbus had intended to entreat upon the Chinese Khanate to request their assistance in a military pincer maneuver to seize Jerusalem from the hands of the Muslim Ottomans and place it back into Catholic control, harkening the end times.

Yet Columbus did not find the Khanate in his travels west, instead stumbling upon the Americas. Even then, the pursuit of hastening the apocalypse did not escape Columbus's mind. Columbus sought out gold, which he believed was critical for financing, supplying, and reinforcing the armies of Christendom under the head of the Spanish monarchy as they marched on Jerusalem. To this end, under Columbus's governorship, the indigenous Taino were worked exceptionally harshly, with high quotas of gold expected. Inspired by feudalist systems back home, the system of encomienda was emplaced upon the native populace. Columbus and the

Spaniards under him punished failures to meet these quotas with extreme cruelty to motivate the Taino to work harder, a policy that did no favors for Columbus himself. These harsh punitive measures in conjunction with the mass depopulation of the indigenous population through diseases and violence saw Columbus punished and stripped of titles, hauled back to Spain in chains to be replaced as governor of the island of Hispaniola.

The Spanish monarchy, too, was heavily motivated by eschatology when it came to the New World, despite historians like John Tutino's attempts to diminish the relevance of religiosity from the narrative of colonial Spain. With the fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Ottomans and coming out of the Reconquista which pushed the Muslim Moors out of Spain, the Spanish saw themselves as the natural successor of Rome as the new 'sword of Christendom'. Coinciding with that was the eschatological mission set out before the Spanish Crown with the Americas; an entire continent of people, unexposed to the Gospel, when the Bible mandates the spreading of the word to all people before the end times. Further impressing the issue upon the monarchy was a Spanish belief that there was a possibility of the indigenous population of the Americas as having descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel when the Bible also prophesies that conversion of the world's Jews as a necessity for the second coming of Christ. To this end, the Spanish Crown invested a great deal of political power into the hands of mendicant orders.

Chief among the mendicant orders that the Spanish empowered in the early stages of colonial empire in the Americas was that of the Franciscans. The Franciscan Order had been practicing eschatology crafted by a theologian centuries prior to the discovery of the Americas. This theologian, by the name of Joachim of Fiore, believed that history was divided into three ages, with the third and final age imminently at hand. The Franciscans took this theology and

merged it with their mission, handed to them in the wake of the Spanish conquest; their duty was to convert the indigenous population in order to bring about this third, final age.

The power that the Spanish Crown bestowed upon the Franciscans was immense, with the Spanish monarchs exercising their right to regulate the faith how they saw fit within their borders as dictated by papal bulls leading to the Franciscans being the ones who regulated it in practice in areas such as New Spain. In charge of the administration, education, and faith of entire indigenous communities, the Franciscans paradoxically practiced a considerable measure of cultural toleration for the purposes of hastening conversion while at the same time engaging in cultural genocide in the destruction of certain native items as well as harsh punitive measures against the converted for backsliding in their Catholic faith.

One of Spain's European rivals was also motivated by eschatological reasons to expand its empire into the Americas, albeit later than the Spanish had. England, which was awash in eschatological ideas of an imminent apocalypse, saw the New World as a sign from God. The Protestant Reformation, the increase in literature and literacy to the masses, an eschatology from firebrands within the Church of England that portrayed the Englishmen as divine agents of God and the Papacy as the antichrist – these elements all combined to form an ideology that was militantly hostile to Catholically Spanish interests in the Americas. This ideology proved crucial to the decision-making process of English colonial actors, rather than something to simply vindicate the early accumulation of capital as the 'new historians of capitalism' have suggested.

English merchants turned to privateering for the English Crown to harry and capture Spanish vessels laden with goods from the New World. Yet this endeavor was hardly a pathway to wealth for most who partook in privateering; the English government took a substantial cut, and privateering itself was less profitable than trading with the Spanish. Privateering, inspired by

an eschatological ideology that framed armed English merchants as soldiers in a holy war against the forces of the antichrist itself, proceeded to take a central role that defined the much of what English colonial empire looked like in the New World.

England's first successful colony in the New World, Jamestown, was founded by the investors of the Virigina Company, devout men who were strong believers of an impending apocalypse like many of their contemporaries. Jamestown was plagued early on by a wide variety of problems, the starving survivors forced to resort to outright banditry rather than the development of a profitable venture. Despite the set-back and the large expense already spent on the endeavor of Jamestown, the investors doubled down on their investment, spurred on by the fiery speeches given by pastors and clergy that dwelled heavily upon the people of England.

English colonies following Jamestown were similarly shaped by eschatological trends. Colonies in the Massachusetts Bay, founded by Puritans, were formed under the basis of the creation of the 'true church' separated from the Catholic influences Puritans saw in English Protestantism back home. The establishment of a proper church, in addition to a well-ordered society, would help hasten the second coming of Jesus on Earth. Additionally, the colonies saw themselves as a direct bulwark against the forces of Satan, which included in the colonists' eyes the indigenous populations neighboring them. The colonial militias brutally fought native peoples, all the while perceiving themselves as fighting at the forefront of a grand cosmic struggle between the forces of light and dark in the end times.

Another colony that emerged in the early 17th century, Providence, was situated off the coast of South America. A strategic location that enabled England to continue its holy privateering war against Catholic Spain, the men behind the Providence Island Company were devout Puritans, who similarly to the colonies of Massachusetts Bay sought the creation of an

orderly, hierarchical society that reflected God's wishes. Providence became a hub of privateering activity for the short duration it lasted from 1631 to 1641. Englishmen harried and attacked Spanish vessels and ports from the island, which had failed to find a cash crop that could make colonization of Providence a profitable agricultural venture. Privateering suited the men of the Providence Island Company as well as individual English aristocrats fine, as it fit into their beliefs of fighting a war on Earth against the agents of the antichrist, chief among them the Spanish.

Back home, England was facing discontent between its reigning monarch, Charles I, and parliament. Charles was king of three different kingdoms, one of them Catholic, and was married to a foreign Catholic wife. This, in addition to advisors to the king that parliamentarians viewed as overly sympathetic to Catholic sentiments, made many within parliament perceive Charles as compromised by the forces of the Papist antichrist.

These tensions grew, exasperated by Charles pushing back against parliamentary power. Eventually tensions came to a boiling point, when following the execution of advisors perceived as loyal to the Papacy, Charles attempted to arrest the loudest agitators against his rule within parliament. Such actions exploded into a torrent of sectarian violence that stretched from England to Scotland and Ireland. In England, a civil war broke out, pitting the royalist loyalists against a parliamentarian faction increasingly comprised of radical Protestant sects, many of whom held millennialist beliefs.

By the end of the English Civil War, England found itself under the control of the radical component of the parliamentarian faction, reorganized into the Commonwealth of England. One such parliament held within the Commonwealth came to be known as Barebone's Parliament, a parliament wherein the Fifth Monarchists possessed immense influence. The Fifth Monarchists

were a radical religious sect that believed four earthly kingdoms would proceed the arrival of Christ's kingdom on Earth, with the English monarchy representing the fourth. To that end, now in the halls of power, the Fifth Monarchists advocated militancy against all those who opposed the rule of Christ in preparation for his imminent arrival.

Among those who heard the Fifth Monarchists' calls for holy war was the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth, Oliver Cromwell. A fervent millennialist, Cromwell wholeheartedly accepted the idea that England had a mandate from God to fight the Papist Spanish as a preclude to the apocalypse, and so ordered the enactment of the Western Design. The Western Design was both inspired and hampered by the eschatology prevalent in the ranks of Cromwell's military. In turn, England failed to capture the prize of Cuba from Spain, albeit managing to conquer Jamaica as a consolation.

The failure of the Western Design prompted Cromwell to reconsider God's providence for the English people. Believing that its failure was the result of wickedness and a failure to achieve God's will back home, Cromwell turned towards another aspect of eschatology in the aftermath of the Western Design: that of the conversion of the Jews. Prior to Cromwell, Jewish individuals were banned from England and its possessions, yet a secret population remained. The English state was vaguely aware of their presence, and enacted laws intended to help with the conversion of the Jews hiding in their midst. Cromwell took another step in this progression towards religious toleration of Judaism and rescinded the ban on Jewish individuals residing in England. Cromwell did this out of an eschatological sense of mission, as the conversion of the Jewish people is a requirement for the end times as foretold in the Bible to happen. As a consequence of the ban being rescinded, Sephardic Jews with grudges against the intolerant

Spanish rallied to England's side in the Caribbean, bolstering the defenses of islands such as Jamaica with pirate fleets and facilitating privateering raids on Spanish vessels.

Eschatology played a pivotal role in shaping the actions of key players in the story of early European colonial empire in the Americas. Religion, and by extension eschatology, did not serve as a secondary concern or as shallow justification for the actions Europeans committed in their conquest of the Americas as some historians have implied. The belief in an imminent apocalypse was very much felt by several Europeans, both Spanish and English, who took tangible efforts to serve as a vanguard hastening its arrival. This accounts for actions that would otherwise be irrational if viewed through a materialist perspective. Columbus's frenzied attempts to extract gold for the inhabitants of Hispaniola contributed to decimating the native labor force on hand, forcing the need for the import of African slaves. It caused him to be stripped of his station and sent back to Spain humiliated. Those were the actions of a man of fervent belief that overlooked long-term impacts in the face of forcing an imminent second coming of Christ by retaking Jerusalem. Most English privateer crews, endangering their lives fighting against the Spanish, did not become fabulously wealthy from their plunder; in fact, trade with the Spanish was frequently more profitable and less immediately hazardous to one's health. In the context of eschatology, actions such as these suddenly become clearer to understand to a modern scholar.

To this very day eschatology should be taken seriously by historians. The divide in the historiography of early European colonial empire in the Americas must be closed, the older works of historians such as Perry Miller and Chritopher Hill providing a shining example alongside more recent works done by the likes of Karen Kupperman, Carla Pestana, and Anthony Pagden. The traditional Marxist interpretation and the narrative of more recent historians like the 'new historians of capitalism' have gotten the story wrong.

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Millennialism and apocalypticism are not removed from the context of modernity. Despite wishful thinking from some that the world is becoming an increasingly secular one, concurrent events inform us that this sentiment is ill-informed. Non-state actors in the form of ISIS have been open about how eschatology has informed their efforts to carve out a caliphate in preparation for the arrival of the Madhi. Political sects with an openly eschatological outlook have formed in states across the world, from the US to Israel and beyond. The trend has not changed; in times of rapid change, there will be those who will turn to eschatology for comfort. An imminent end that leads to better conditions for oneself is cathartic. It is by understanding the way in which eschatology has influenced the past that will allow historians to understand the context in which events of the present influenced by religious apocalypticism unfold.

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