**Western Apocalyptic Time and Personal Authentic Time**

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The concept of time is culturally dependent. During different periods in the history of Western culture, differing conceptions of times competed for primacy, sometimes contradicting one another, sometimes complementing each other. Modern Westerners, I will claim, live on two timelines—a linear, historical, and cultural timeline directed to the “end of days” and a personal, authentic timeline.

The Bible is a central cultural source for the linear conception of time: In the entrenched Judeo-Christian Western conception, time has a beginning, “In the beginning,” [[1]](#footnote-1) and an end “in the end of days.” [[2]](#footnote-2) Time is directed, in its entirety to this final event, to the establishment of God’s kingdom. The biblical timeline depends on the actions of people in history. Augustine identifies the past with historical memory, and the future with anticipation.[[3]](#footnote-3) This linear conception of history and its division into segments which accumulate and progress towards an end, became dominant in all cultural spheres which base their worldviews on the Bible, and even today it still serves as a basis for cultural, historical and ideological narratives.[[4]](#footnote-4)

As the processes of secularization grew stronger in Europe, the connection to mystic, eternal time was weakened, and people began to be more grounded in earthly time. This process of secularization allowed for the development of individualism in its modern iteration.[[5]](#footnote-5) In our modern consumer society, which is wholly concerned with personal time, collective time has lost its purpose and its reason for being preserved. The relationship to time started to gradually change from the general conceptions of linear, collective time which is external to us, to a more subjective, personal conception of time. In consumerist capitalism, time becomes a personal, authentic resource.

1. Genesis 1:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Isaiah 2:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Augustine (2001) *Confessions*, Book Eleven, 21: p. 302. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Joseph, Dan.  *Apocalypse, Then and* *Now*. Yediot Aharonot and Sifrei Chemed, 2000: pp. 265-308. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Daniel Shanahan, *Toward a Genealogy of Individualism*, University of Massachusetts, 1992: 56 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)