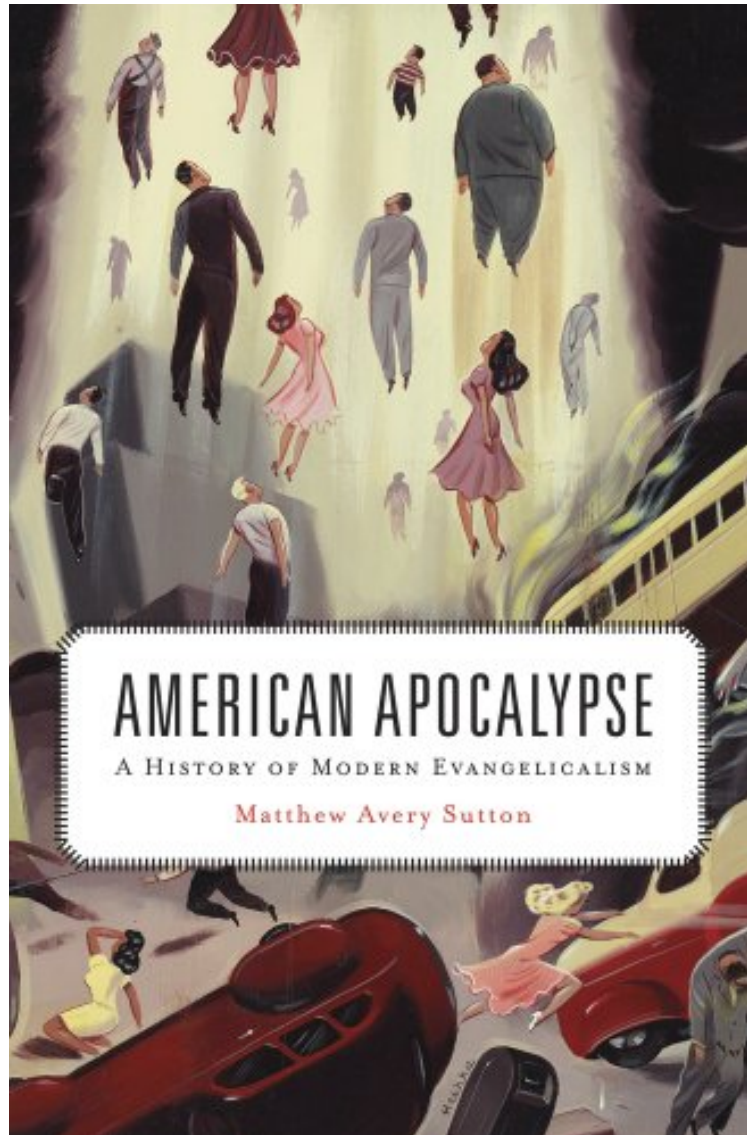


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American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism

Matthew Avery Sutton

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#171078 in Books Sutton Matthew Avery 2014-12-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.50 x 1.40 x 6.40l, .0 #File Name: 0674048369480 pages American Apocalypse A History of Modern Evangelicalism | File size: 63.Mb

Matthew Avery Sutton : American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The book gives good insight into the longer history of the so-called culture ...By Mark E. Sidney This is a well researched and written book on the history and role of pre-millennial

theology in the formation of "evangelical" Christianity in America. As far as I can see, it is balanced with no obvious bias one way or the other. The book gives good insight into the longer history of the so-called culture wars. I have been teaching an adult Sunday school class on Revelation for about a year and the book has given me more of a sense of context (especially American Protestant following the various "revivals") and how that influences readings of Revelation. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. The history of a religious movement in America that has its effects today. By Lewis T. Fitch Based on what is a series of mis-interpretations of the Book of Revelations in the bible, a certainty as to the exact nature of future events has been sold to the credible in America for over a century. Some of the major figures in this process are detailed here. The certainty that the literal battle of Armageddon will occur within the next year or so can not help but influence a person's decisions. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Really enjoyed this By EH Really enjoyed this. It is scholarly/skeptical without being offensive toward believers.

The first comprehensive history of modern American evangelicalism to appear in a generation, *American Apocalypse* shows how a group of radical Protestants, anticipating the end of the world, paradoxically transformed it. Matthew Avery Sutton draws on extensive archival research to document the ways an initially obscure network of charismatic preachers and their followers reshaped American religion, at home and abroad, for over a century. Perceiving the United States as besieged by Satanic forces, communism and secularism, family breakdown and government encroachment, Billy Sunday, Charles Fuller, Billy Graham, and others took to the pulpit and airwaves to explain how Biblical end-times prophecy made sense of a world ravaged by global wars, genocide, and the threat of nuclear extinction. Believing Armageddon was nigh, these preachers used what little time was left to warn of the coming Antichrist, save souls, and prepare the nation for God's final judgment. By the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan and conservative Republicans appropriated evangelical ideas to create a morally infused political agenda that challenged the pragmatic tradition of governance through compromise and consensus. Following 9/11, the politics of apocalypse continued to resonate with an anxious populace seeking a roadmap through a world spinning out of control. Premillennialist evangelicals have erected mega-churches, shaped the culture wars, made and destroyed presidential hopefuls, and brought meaning to millions of believers. Narrating the story of modern evangelicalism from the perspective of the faithful, Sutton demonstrates how apocalyptic thinking continues to exert enormous influence over the American mainstream today.

It is to the great credit of Matthew Avery Sutton, an American historian who has spent the past seven years thinking about the end of the world, that we now have a concise, convincing and eminently readable account of the rise of the US evangelical movement, from what he describes as provocative outsiders to consummate insiders ... A valuable, timely and often entertaining account. (Tony Allen-Mills Sunday Times 2014-12-21) The best history of American evangelicalism I've read in some time. Sutton strews his chronicle with little pleasures. . . Wonderfully provocative. If you want to understand why compromise has become a dirty word in the GOP today and how cultural politics is splitting the nation apart, *American Apocalypse* is an excellent place to start. (Stephen Prothero Bookforum Feb/Mar 2015) Matthew Avery Sutton read just about everything that fundamentalists and evangelicals had to offer in preparation for his pointed argument in *American Apocalypse*: premillennial dispensationalism pushed conservative Protestants into public, political, national, and international action. If you want to wrestle with evangelicals, read this book. (Edward J. Blum Christian Century 2014-11-25) Gives us our first good account of how and why evangelical political views developed the way they did. (Michael S. Hamilton Christian Century 2014-10-15) In this sweeping history, Sutton (a historian and biographer of Pentecostal evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson) argues that apocalyptic fervor exercised an underappreciated influence on believers, churches, and institutions, helping to propel the evangelical resurgence after World War II and continuing to shape the movement ever since. (Matt Reynolds Christianity Today 2014-12-01) An important story, and it is exceedingly well told. (Christopher McConnell Booklist 2014-11-15) [A] valuable account of American premillennial evangelicalism Sutton provides a wealth of documentation on premillennialists prophetic speculation, self-presentation, and increasing importance over the last century. (Steve Young Library Journal 2014-11-01) [Sutton] challenges the now-accepted accounts of Christian fundamentalism that attribute its rise to conflicts with evolution and modernist theories of biblical interpretation. Rather, he argues in this elegant, judicious, and thoughtful new history, apocalypticism or the belief in an imminent end of the world shaped the development of fundamentalism and sustained it through generations, from the late nineteenth century to the present day. Thus, he contends, the anticipated end of the world provided an interpretation of natural disasters, geopolitical changes, and war. He deftly weaves this idea through political events from the New Deal through the Cold War and into fundamentalist response to 9/11, and he illustrates the singular power of individuals ranging from Charles Fuller and Billy Sunday to Billy Graham and Hal Lindsey to influence fundamentalist Christians to political action. Sutton's engaging book belongs next to classic texts on the subject. (Publishers Weekly 2014-11-24) Sutton's ambitious book refocuses the history of twentieth-century evangelicalism on apocalypticism, offering a vivid account of how preoccupation with the end times provided the conceptual framework for evangelical political

activism and stoked its emotional fervor. American Apocalypse shows brilliantly how a terror of impending doom was translated into politics on issues ranging from support for Israel to anti-abortion activism. (Robert A. Orsi, author of *Thank You, St. Jude and The Madonna of 115th Street*) American Apocalypse will quickly become the definitive general account of evangelicals' spectacular growth as a political and cultural force in the twentieth century. It is a brilliant book, sophisticated and compelling yet also lively and entertaining. With religion continuing to play a major role in American politics and culture, American Apocalypse is a must-read that will shed new light on the nation's past, present, and future. (Andrew Preston, author of *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy*) American Apocalypse is a work of impressive erudition as well as a work of beauty. Arguing for the centrality in the American evangelical tradition of ideas about how the world will end, Sutton embeds the narrative in twentieth-century U.S. and international political history in a way that few American religious historians have been able to do. (Grant Wacker, author of *America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation*) American Apocalypse relentlessly and impressively shows how evangelicals have interpreted almost every domestic or international crisis in relation to Christ's return and his judgment upon the wicked. Sutton sees one of the most troubling aspects of evangelical influence in the spread of the apocalyptic outlook among Republican politicians with the rise of the Religious Right. American Apocalypse clearly shows just how popular evangelical apocalypticism has been and, during the Cold War, how the combination of odd belief and political power could produce a sleepless night or two. (D. G. Hart *Wall Street Journal* 2015-01-20) Sutton [has] written [an] important book that deserves to be read by anyone seeking to understand not only American church history but contemporary American culture and politics. (Paul Richardson *Church of England Newspaper* 2015-02-06) Fascinating. Sutton has produced one of those rare books that is both academically rigorous and a very good read. Sutton explains how radical evangelical Christianity became associated with free market economics, an association now so established in the U.S. that it is difficult to imagine it could ever have been otherwise. He elucidates both how reliance on funding from wealthy business people has had a lot to do with this and how the theology led to it. The predominant view among pre-millennialists has always been that since the world is about to end there is no point in trying to improve it. The defining episode in the political orientation of the movement was the election of F. D. Roosevelt as president on a platform of extensive government intervention in the economy that seemed to most evangelical Christians far too similar to the atheistic communism of the USSR. Opposition to the New Deal became a rallying point of the movement, and indeed one of its most outspoken preachers came close to identifying FDR as the Anti-Christ. (The reader comes away from this book marvelling at the ability of believers in prophecy to perceive the Anti-Christ in just about anything or anybody.) Since then this type of American Christianity has become inextricably linked with opposition to big government, high taxes and trade unionism. Though, as Sutton points out, such people have never seen any contradiction in demanding that the government intervene vigorously in the private lives of its citizens, along the moral lines of which they approve. A central strength of the book is its careful analysis of racial differences and limitations within the radical evangelical movement. It was always dominated by white men and the racial divisions that became entrenched in the early part of the twentieth century are still present today. (Elaine Housby *LSE of Books* 2015-02-03) Sutton presents modern evangelicalism mainly through its most formidable preachers, the men who took full advantage of the media, especially radio and television when they became available, and books till then. Sutton brings to these strange episodes of American culture a proper degree of attentiveness and patience, with only a rare glint of irony breaking through. (Denis Donoghue *Irish Times* 2015-01-04) Sutton is interested in Christian apocalypticism not as a fringe movement but as a political and cultural force that transformed America. Sutton's book demonstrates that the history of evangelicalism, cynical and fatalistic as it may be, is very much our own. (Meghan O'Gieblyn *Boston* 2015-03-16) Sutton stitches together prophecy and politics in a compelling and original manner, adding a rich layer of original research. The result is a rich, amusing, and often sobering glimpse into the sometimes dark passions of American premillennialism. (John G. Turner *Books Culture* 2015-03-01) From the First World War through Cold War isolationism to the current culture wars, Sutton has charted the way radical evangelical beliefs in a premillennial return of Christ have influenced and been influenced by global events and American political culture. In this way, he serves students of history and religion seeking to reflect upon the social and political contribution of evangelical faith. (James Church *Reform* 2015-04-01) This history of the modern American evangelical movement argues that, for more than a century, its members have simultaneously embraced end-time prophecy--interpreting world events as signs of Jesus' imminent return--and politics. The apparent paradox in this engaged premillennialism (why bother with Congress if the rapture is near?) was, Sutton writes, answered with the Biblical injunction to occupy the world while waiting. Almost from the beginning, this meant support for conservative positions and for Israel. The history Sutton assembles is rich, and the connections are startling. (New Yorker 2015-04-13) About the Author: Matthew Avery Sutton is Edward R. Meyer Distinguished Professor of History at Washington State University.