



**UNIVERSITÉ  
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FACULTÉ AUTONOME DE  
THÉOLOGIE PROTESTANTE



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## **‘Game Over’ – Good or Bad News?**

### **Making Sense of Eschatology**

An international conference sponsored by the University of Geneva’s Theological Faculty,  
in collaboration with the Swiss Society for Theology

University of Geneva, October 22-24, 2015

In the West as well as in other parts of the world, the common understanding of History and time, even in its most secularized forms, remains shaped by the Jewish and Christian traditions: it resembles a dynamic line anchored in an absolute origin and tending toward an ultimate horizon. Humanity finds its place and time in-between these two limits. Early Christianity took over Jewish apocalyptic thought – the end of the world is near and will be terrible, a new world will then come in which “God shall wipe away all tears” (Rev 21:4) – but also modified, complexified and subverted its temporal parameters.

Modern theology has often wondered about the validity of such a worldview. The rediscovery, at the turn of the 20th century, of the apocalyptic dimension of Jesus’ (as well as Paul’s) message, raised anew the question of its reinterpretation and has given rise to theological proposals as varied as Jürgen Moltmann’s theology of hope and certain trends within Process thought.

Complex questions related to eschatology abound. What kind of ‘end’ are we talking about and hoping for? Are we talking about an end for each individual human life, or, as the apocalyptic tradition suggests, the end of the world? Does attention toward the end turn us away from present reality, or does it send us back to it, and what are the mechanisms which are at play in these different outcomes? What should contemporary theology do with topics such as the “parousia” and the “last judgment”, two ideas which to some have been invalidated for the simple reason that the world continues to exist as if nothing had happened? What is the importance of such topoi for the Christian faith? How should we interpret them today? Or, to put the question differently: what kind of ‘end’ are we expecting? Are we moving toward it, or is it coming to us? Is the notion of ‘end’ vanishing in a world in which transhuman ideals and other substitutes to traditional eschatological hopes fascinate many of our contemporaries? Moreover, scientific discourses concerning the end of the cosmos compel us to ponder the relation between such discourses and Christian visions of ‘the end’. Finally, how is it that the growing damage done to the environment and the disastrous conditions in which so many people live across the globe do not necessarily lead us to an eschatology of despair, to the vision of an apocalypse in which humans, not God, are the main or the only actors? How does theology position itself in relation to these visions of humanity and of ‘the end’?

In organizing this conference, the University of Geneva’s Faculty of Theology invites scholars to think anew about ‘the end’, in an interdisciplinary perspective. Biblical scholars, intellectual historians, philosophers, scientists and theologians are invited to explore these questions.

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