

(a) The Kingdom of God...futuristic...often no certain comment as to how it will be ordered. Papias, Hermas, et al, seem to show a chiliastic leaning.

(b) There is great emphasis on the ultimate judgement and the need for preparation on the part of men who will face it.

(2) Great stress was laid on the resurrection in all segments of the period. (Note the stree given to believer's graves...a practice that concorded with Hebrew sentiment but that would someday help in leading to the veneration of the saints.)

(3) The later fathers in this period divided the Kingdom somewhat. The western fathers were prone to see a literal kingdom coming at the close of the age after the man of sin had headed up the foremost sort of human apostasy. Martyr attributed to him a 3 1/2 year rule! But the eastern fathers tended to spiritualize the kingdom and even, in some cases, to make the resurrection less than literal.

(4) In both camps, the economy of "one day with the Lord is as a thousand years" was important to the end that the time of 6,000 AD seemed a likely point for God to bring things to a conclusion. Some favored 2,000, incidentally, for rather obvious reasons and we are fast approaching that day.

b. Observations:

(1) The specifics of many details were not harmonized but it is striking how similar to modern eschatology much of the thinking of the fathers was.

(2) It is also interesting that the early fathers, especially those of this period, did not expect to see a converted world before Christ would come the second time. You will discover that both a-millennialists and pre-millennialists try to use the fathers to their advantage...post-millennialists do not find a lot of comfort in them. And remember also that the mere fact a father may have taught something does not necessarily mean it is exegetically true.

Eschatology
Ecclesiology:

Observations

F. Theological Trends and Movements

Trends in
Theology
Church
Authority

1. There is a very pronounced trend towards a centralized ecclesiastical authority that increases with the passage of time and comes to maturity after the legalization of Christianity. We can see it in the ideas and works of Cyprian.