# Futurism Bible Prophecy Truth

## THE PURPOSE AND ORIGINS OF FUTURISM

### Introduction

Today Christianity has largely forgotten the importance of the Protestant Reformation, which took place during the 1500s and very few understand the role futurism played in the Counter Reformation. The powerful impact that the Reformers made in identifying the Roman Catholic Church as the Antichrist can scarcely be imagined today. As millions of Christians joined the Reform movement, the Papal Roman Church used methodology that has proved successful for more than a thousand years in order to eliminate those whom it designated as heretics. With the exception of the isolated communities of faithful Christians (often hidden in the natural fortresses of the earth), the Church has been remarkably successful in its persecution. This success was achieved by the arm of the state, which ruthlessly eliminated millions that would not bow to the Church's authority.

Historians cannot agree on the number of people who were martyred and tortured for their efforts to uphold Bible truth, but estimates are around 50,000,000 Christian Saints. These men, women and children lost their lives during the period of Papal domination. Almost all this persecuting was done at the hand of secular governments which subserved the designs of the Papal Church.

The period of the sixteenth century proved different however. Sickened by the corruptions and excesses of the Papacy, many rulers and monarchs embraced the Protestant Reformation and were no longer vassals of the Papacy obeying its commands; thus in a number of European countries, the arm of flesh was not available to carry out the Roman Church's dictates. This

situation naturally alarmed the Roman Catholic Church. The Papacy was not accustomed to this circumstance; therefore, it discerned that a new methodology had to be devised in order to counter the rapid spread of the Reformation engulfing Europe. Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Scandinavia, Britain and other countries all generally accepted the messages of the Reformers.

Europe had been ruled by the iron hand of Rome for almost a thousand years. Only a few Bibles existed then and Christianity was largely permeated with superstition. Faith in Jesus Christ, heartfelt appreciation for His love and a simple trust in His death on the cross was almost unknown. The New Testament truth about full forgiveness, grace and the free gift of eternal life to believers in the Son of God (Romans 6:23), had been buried under a mass of tradition. Then Martin Luther arose like a lion in Germany. After a period of tremendous personal struggle, Martin Luther began teaching justification by faith in Jesus Christ (being declared "just" by God), rather than through reliance on any human works (Romans 1:16; 3:26, 28; 5:1).

**The Discovery of Luther**

Eventually, Martin Luther turned to the prophecies of the Bible. He read by candlelight about "*the beast,*" the "*little horn,*" and the "*man of sin*" and he was shocked as the Holy Spirit spoke to his heart. He finally saw the truth and said to himself, "*Why, these prophecies apply to the Roman Catholic Church!*" As he wrestled with this new insight, the voice of God echoed loudly in his soul, saying, "Preach the word!" (2 Timothy 4:2). So at the risk of losing his life, Martin Luther preached publicly and in print to an astonished people that Papal Rome was in fact the Antichrist of Bible prophecy. Because of this dual message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ apart from works *and* of Papal Rome being the

Antichrist, the river of history literally changed its course. Hundreds of thousands of people in England and Europe left the Catholic Church.

"'*There are two great truths that stand out in the preaching that brought about the Protestant Reformation,' American Bible Commentator, Ralph Woodrow, reminds us, 'The just shall live by faith, not by the works of Romanism and the Papacy is the Antichrist of Scripture.' It was a message for Christ and against Antichrist. The entire Reformation rests upon this twofold testimony.'*" [2] It has been said that the Reformation first discovered Jesus Christ, and then, in the blazing light of Christ, *it discovered the Antichrist.* This mighty Spirit filled movement *for* Christ and *against* the Antichrist shook the world.

H. Grattan Guinness wrote these memorable words: "*From the first, and throughout, that movement [the Reformation] was energized and guided by the prophetic word. Luther never felt strong and free to war against the Papal apostasy till he recognized the pope as antichrist. It was then that he burned the Papal bull. Knox's first sermon, the sermon that launched him on his mission as a reformer, was on the prophecies concerning the Papacy. The reformers embodied their interpretations of prophecy in their confessions of faith, and Calvin in his 'Institutes.' All of the reformers were unanimous in the matter, even the mild and cautious Melanchthon was as assured of the antipapal meaning of these prophecies as was Luther himself. And their interpretation of these prophecies determined their reforming action. It led them to protest against Rome with extraordinary strength and undaunted courage. It nerved them to resist the claims of the apostate Church to the utmost. It made them martyrs; it sustained them at the stake. And the views of the Reformers were shared by thousands, by hundreds of thousands. They were adopted by princes and peoples. Under their influence nations abjured their allegiance to the false priest of Rome. In the*

*reaction that followed, all the powers of hell seemed to be let loose upon the adherents of the Reformation. War followed war: tortures, burnings, and massacres were multiplied. Yet the Reformation stood undefeated and unconquerable. God's word upheld it, and the energies of His Almighty Spirit. It was the work of Christ as truly as the founding of the Church eighteen centuries ago; and the revelation of the future which he gave from heaven, that prophetic book with which the Scripture closes, was one of the mightiest instruments employed in its accomplishment.*" [3]

**The Counter Reformation**

The Catholic Church in 1545 convened one of its most famous councils in history, which took place north of Rome in a city called Trent. The Council of Trent actually continued for three sessions and ended in 1563. One of the main purposes of this Council was for Catholics to plan a counterattack against the Protestants and Martin Luther. Hence the Council of Trent became a centre for Rome's Counter Reformation. Rome's main method of attack up to this point had been largely frontal such as the open burning of heretics and Bibles. But this warfare only *confirmed* in the minds of Protestants the conviction that Papal Rome was indeed the Beast which would "*make war with the saints*" (Revelation 13:7). Therefore a new tactic was needed, something less obvious. *This is where the Jesuits and futurism come in.*

On August 15, 1534, Ignatius Loyola, a Spanish soldier, who had recovered from serious wounds sustained in war, established a new order of priests and brothers called *The Society of Jesus*, which is better known today as the Jesuits. Ignatius Loyola was born in 1491, just six years after Luther. After meditation in the famous monastery of Montserrat, in the north-eastern corner of Spain, he vowed to forsake his former ways and became "a soldier of God." He symbolized this vow by placing his weapons on the altar of the monastery.

He attempted a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1537 with six other

young men, but was unable to reach his desired destination because of war. As a result, in 1537 he spent time in Venice, Italy, where he seeked Papal approval to form his society. This new Catholic order was approved by the beleaguered Pope Paul III in September 27, 1540. The order was established under the strict organization of a medieval army. Loyola became the first general. Before his death in 1556, the Jesuit order had been established in Spain, Germany, Italy, Portugal, France, Asia and parts of South America. He was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church in 1622.

Loyola was an intelligent, persuasive leader with a remarkable inclination for clever scheming. His order (the Jesuits) arose during the excitement of the Reformation and soon attracted some of the most ingenious and intelligent youths of the Roman Catholic Church. This order quickly attained the reputation of containing the intelligentsia of the Church. The order's leader was referred to as the *black pope*, and the order became so powerful that there were times when it threatened the very Church that its members were pledged to defend. There was a time that the order was banned by the Church.

The Jesuits definitely have a dark history of sedition and intrigue, that's why they were expelled from Portugal (1759), France (1764), Naples (1767), Spain (1767) and Russia (1820). "*Jesuit priests have been known throughout history as the most wicked political arm of the Roman Catholic Church. Edmond Paris, in his scholarly work, The Secret History of the Jesuits, reveals and documents much of this information.*" [4] At the Council of Trent, the Catholic Church gave the Jesuits *the specific assignment of destroying Protestantism* and bringing people back to the Mother Church. This was to be done not only through torture and the Inquisition, *but also through theology.*

**The Jesuit Commission for Futurism and Preterism**

The Jesuits were commissioned by the Pope at the Council of Trent to develop a new interpretation of Scripture that would

counteract the Protestant application of the Bible's Antichrist prophecies to the Roman Catholic Church. There were two significant issues of paramount concern; justification by faith (with particular emphasis on its relationship to salvation) and the Protestant identification of the Papacy as the Antichrist of Scripture. In regards to the topic of justification by faith, the bishops, by majority vote, declared that the gospel incorporated both justification and sanctification. Sadly, they defined sanctification, not as mediated by faith alone, but according to the seven "sacred" sacraments (baptism, confirmation, Mass, extreme unction, penance, matrimony and holy orders); thus the pagan concept of salvation by works was retained.

The subject concerning the Antichrist was an altogether different challenge. The arguments of the Protestant Reformers had been so persuasive that even some loyal Roman Catholics were uneasy. It was perceived that debate and dialogue were unlikely to settle the issue; thus it became imperative that the Roman Catholic Church assert a different interpretation of the scriptural prophecy which pinpointed the identity of the Antichrist in order to remove attention from the Papacy. Realizing that the goal of the recently established Jesuits was to derail the Protestant Reformation by whatever means was possible, they directed their finest young scholars to the task of turning Protestant scholars away from their identification of the Papacy as the Antichrist.

Francisco Ribera (1537-1591), a brilliant Jesuit priest and doctor of theology from Spain, basically said, "*Here am I, send me.*" Like Martin Luther, Francisco Ribera also read by candlelight the prophecies about the Antichrist, the Beast, the little horn and that man of sin. But because the Pope was his boss, he came to conclusions vastly different from that of the Protestants. "*Why, these prophecies don't apply to the Catholic Church at all!*" Ribera said. Then to whom do they apply? Ribera proclaimed, "*To only one sinister man who will*

*rise up at the end of time!" "Fantastic!"* was the reply from Rome, and this viewpoint was quickly adopted as the official Roman Catholic position on the Antichrist.

"*In 1590, Ribera published a commentary on the Revelation as a counter-interpretation to the prevailing view among Protestants which identified the Papacy with the Antichrist. Ribera applied all of Revelation but the earliest chapters to the end time rather than to the history of the Church. Antichrist would be a single evil person who would be received by the Jews and would rebuild Jerusalem.*" [5] "*Ribera denied the Protestant Scriptural Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2) as seated in the church of God – asserted by Augustine, Jerome, Luther and many reformers. He set on an infidel Antichrist, outside the church of God.*" [6] "*The result of his work [Ribera's] was a twisting and maligning of prophetic truth.*" [7]

Following close behind Francisco Ribera was another brilliant Jesuit scholar, Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) of Rome. Between 1581 and 1593, Cardinal Bellarmine published his "*Polemic Lectures Concerning the Disputed Points of the Christian Belief Against the Heretics of this Time.*" In these lectures, he agreed with Ribera. "*The futurist teachings of Ribera were further popularized by an Italian cardinal and the most renowned of all Jesuit controversialists. His writings claimed that Paul, Daniel, and John had nothing whatsoever to say about the Papal power. The futurists' school won general acceptance among Catholics. They were taught that antichrist was a single individual who would not rule until the very end of time.*" [8] Through the work of these two tricky Jesuit scholars, we might say that *a brand new baby was born into the world.* Protestant historians have given this baby a name – *Jesuit Futurism.* In fact, Francisco Ribera has been called the Father of futurism.

According to Ribera's commentary which was finished in 1585 and published in 1590, Antichrist would be a single diabolical

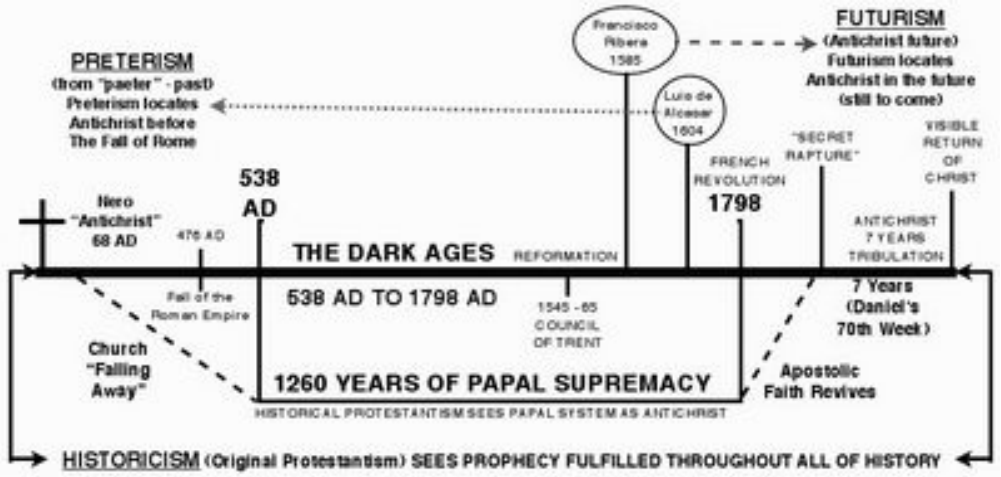
individual who would arise at the end of time. He would be received by the Jews, and would re-establish the temple and Jerusalem. He further wrote that Antichrist would abolish Christianity, revile Christ and terribly persecute all Christians during his three and a half year reign. The fact that the futurist view of prophecy was of Jesuit origin will be alarming to many Evangelical Protestants. It deeply concerns many Protestants that the thesis of Ribera is so closely aligned to the modern futurist view held by fundamentalist Protestants.

**Futurism and defining the Issue**

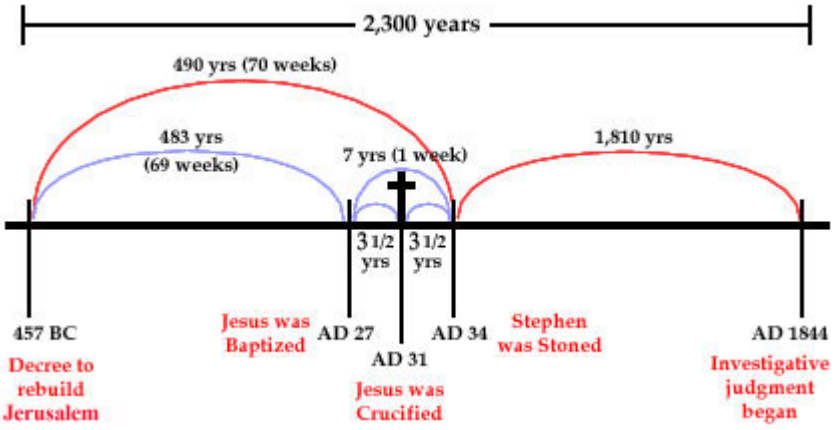
Before we go much farther, let's define some terms. *preterism* is the view that the majority of the prophecies of the book of Daniel have already been fulfilled and therefore have no significance for the present day. The origins of the preterist view of prophetic interpretation was from the Spanish Jesuit Luis De Alcazar. *Historicism* is the belief that Biblical prophecies about the little horn, the man of sin, the Antichrist, the Beast, and the Babylonian Harlot of Revelation 17, all apply to *the developing history of Christianity and to the ongoing struggle between Jesus Christ and Satan within the Christian Church*, culminating at the end of time. Historicism sees these prophecies as having a direct application to Papal Rome *as a system* whose doctrines are actually a denial of the New Testament message of free salvation by grace through simple faith in Jesus Christ, apart from works. Historicism was the primary prophetic viewpoint of the Protestant Reformers. In direct opposition to historicism, and rising up as a razor sharp counterattack on Protestantism, was the Evil Empire of the Jesuits with their viewpoint of *futurism*, which basically says, "The Antichrist prophecies have nothing to do with the history of Papal Rome, rather they apply to *only one sinister man* who comes at the end."

Thus Jesuit futurism sweeps 1,500 years of prophetic history under the proverbial rug by inserting its infamous GAP. The

GAP theory teaches that when Rome fell, prophecy stopped, only to continue again right around the time of the Rapture. Thus the ten horns, the little horn, the Beast, and the Antichrist *have nothing to do with Christians today.* According to this viewpoint, how many prophecies of the Bible were being fulfilled during the Dark Ages? Absolutely none!




The chart above illustrates the three schools of prophetic interpretation regarding Antichrist. The Spanish Jesuit Francisco Ribera puts the Antichrist into a future three and a half literal years while De Alcazar's preterism identifies the Antichrist as Nero. Both of them achieve their goal by placing the Antichrist outside of the Middle Ages and the Protestant reformation period that is identified by Protestant historicists as the Antichrist's reign of 1260 dark prophetic years.




**Inroads in Protestantism**

For almost 300 years after the Council of Trent, this Roman

Catholic baby (Jesuit futurism) remained largely inside the crib of Catholicism, but the plan of the Jesuits was that this baby would grow up and *finally be adopted by Protestants.* This adoption process actually began in the early 1800s in England, and from there it spread to America. The story of how this happened is both tragic and fascinating. As I briefly share some of the highlights, I want to clarify that many of those whom I will mention were (and are) genuine Christians. But is it possible for a Christian to unknowingly become a channel for error? In other words, can a sincere Christian be used by both the devil *and* Jesus Christ? At first we might say, "Never!" but consider this. In Matthew 16, Jesus told Peter that God was blessing him as he shared his faith in Christ (Matthew 16:15-17), and then just a few minutes later, Peter yielded to temptation and Satan spoke through him! (Matthew 16:21-23) This proves that a Christian *can* be used by both Lucifer and God, and all within a short space of time.

"*The futurism of Ribera never posed a positive threat to the Protestants for three centuries. It was virtually confined to the Roman Church. But early in the nineteenth century it sprang forth with vehemence and latched on to Protestants of the Established Church of England.*" [9] Dr. Samuel Roffey Maitland (1792-1866), a Bible scholar and lawyer, became a librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is very likely that one day he discovered Ribera's commentary in the library. In any event, in 1826 he published a widely read book attacking the Reformation and supporting Ribera's idea of a future one man Antichrist. For the next ten years, in tract after tract, he continued his anti-Reformation rhetoric. As a result of his zeal and strong attacks against the Reformation in England, the Protestantism of that very nation which produced the *King James Bible* (1611) received a crushing blow.

After Dr. Maitland came James H. Todd, a professor of Hebrew at the University of Dublin. Todd accepted the futurism ideas of Maitland, publishing his own supportive books and

pamphlets. Then came John Henry Newman (1801-1890), a member of the Church of England and a leader of the famous Oxford Movement (1833-1845). In 1850, Newman wrote his "*Letter on Anglican Difficulties*" revealing that one of the goals in the Oxford Movement was to finally absorb "*the various English denominations and parties*" back into the Church of Rome. After publishing a pamphlet endorsing Todd's futurism about a one man Antichrist, Newman soon became a full Roman Catholic and later even a highly honoured Cardinal. Through the influence of Maitland, Todd, Newman, and others, a definite "*Romeward movement was already arising, destined to sweep away the old Protestant landmarks, as with a flood.*" [10]

Then came the much respected Scottish Presbyterian minister Edward Irving (1792-1834), the acknowledged forerunner of both the Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements. Irving pastored the large Chalcedonian Chapel in London with over 1,000 members. When Irving turned to the prophecies, he eventually accepted the one man Antichrist idea of Todd, Maitland, Bellarmine and Ribera, but he went a step further. Somewhere around 1830, Edward Irving began to teach the unique idea of a two phase return of Christ, *the first phase being a secret rapture prior to the rise of the Antichrist.* Where he got this idea is a matter of much dispute. Journalist Dave MacPherson believes Irving accepted it is a result of a prophetic revelation given to a young Scottish girl named Margaret McDonald. [11] The fact is in any case that Irving *taught it!*

In the midst of this growing anti-Protestant climate in England, there arose a man by the name of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). As a brilliant lawyer, theologian and Pastor, he wrote more than 53 books on Bible subjects. A much respected Christian and a man of deep piety, Darby took a strong stand in favour of the infallibility of the Bible in contrast with the liberalism of his day. He became one of the leaders of a group in Plymouth, England, which became known as the Plymouth Brethren. Darby's contribution to the development of

evangelical theology has been so great that he has been called The Father of Modern Dispensationalism. Yet John Nelson Darby, like Edward Irving, also became a strong promoter of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture followed by a one man Antichrist. In fact, this teaching has become a hallmark of Dispensationalism.

Dispensationalism is the theory that God deals with mankind in major dispensations or periods. According to Darby, we are now in the "Church Age," that is, until the Rapture. After the Rapture, then the seven year period of Daniel 9:27 will supposedly kick in and this is when the Antichrist will rise up against the Jews. In fact, John Nelson Darby laid much of the foundation for the present popular removal of Daniel's 70th week away from history and from Jesus Christ in favour of applying it to a future Tribulation after the Rapture. Hence, in spite of all the positives of his ministry, Darby followed Maitland, Todd, Bellarmine, and Ribera *by incorporating the teachings of futurism into his theology.* This created a link between John Nelson Darby, the Father of Dispensationalism and the Jesuit Francisco Ribera, the Father of futurism. Darby visited America six times between 1859-1874, preaching in all of its major cities, during which time he definitely planted the seeds of futurism in American soil. The child of the Jesuits was growing up.

**America and Futurism**

One of the most important figures in this whole drama is Cyris Ingerson Scofield (1843-1921), a Kansas lawyer who was greatly influenced by the writings of Darby. In 1909, Scofield published the first edition of his famous *Scofield Reference Bible*. In the early 1900s, this Bible became so popular in American Protestant Bible Schools that it was necessary to print literally millions of copies. Yet, in the much respected footnotes of this very Bible, Scofield injected large doses of the fluid of futurism also found in the writings of Darby, Todd, Maitland, Bellarmine, and Ribera. Through the *Scofield Bible*, the Jesuit child reached young adulthood. The doctrine

of an Antichrist *still to come* was becoming firmly established inside 20th century American Protestantism.

The Moody Bible Institute and the Dallas Theological Seminary have strongly supported the teachings of John Nelson Darby, and this has continued to fuel futurism's growth. Then in the 1970s, Pastor Hal Lindsey, a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, released his blockbuster book *The Late Great Planet Earth.* This 177 page volume brought futurism to the masses of American Christianity and beyond. The *New York Times* labelled it "*The number one best-seller of the decade.*" Over 30 million copies have been sold, and it has been translated into over 30 languages. Through *The Late Great Planet Earth*, the child of Jesuit futurism became a man.

**Futurism and Left Behind**

Then came *Left Behind.* In the 1990s, Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins took the future one man Antichrist idea of Hal Lindsey, Scofield, Darby, Irving, Newman, Todd, Maitland, Bellarmine and Ribera and turned it into "*The most successful Christian-fiction series ever.*" [12] Hal Lindsey's book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, was largely theological, which limited its appeal, while *Left Behind* is a sequence of highly imaginative novels, "*overflowing with suspense, action, and adventure,*" a "*Christian thriller,*" with a "*label its creators could never have predicted: blockbuster success.*" [13] The much respected television ministries of Jack Van Impe, Peter and Paul Lalonde, and Pastor John Hagee have all worked together to produce *LEFT BEHIND: The Movie.* The entire project has even caught the attention of the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*, resulting in an interview of LaHaye and Jenkins on *Larry King Live.* The *Left Behind* books have been made available on displays at WalMart, Fry's Electronics, and inside countless other stores.

Again let me clarify, I believe the authors of *Left Behind* and the leaders of these television ministries are genuine Christians who are doing their best to influence people for

the Kingdom. God is using them, just like the Father spoke through Peter when he firmly confessed his faith in Christ (Matthew 16:15-17). Remember that Peter Principle. There is much that is good in *Left Behind* which God can use to influence people for Jesus Christ. But in the full light of Scripture, prophecy, and the Protestant Reformation, something is terribly wrong. *Left Behind* is now teaching the very same Jesuit futurism of Francisco Ribera which is *hiding the real truth about the Antichrist.* Through *Left Behind*, the floodgates of futurism have been opened, unleashing a massive tidal wave of false prophecy which is now sweeping over America. Sadly, it is a false "*idea whose time has come.*"

**The Prophetic Foundation**

As we have already seen, the theological *foundation* for the entire *Left Behind* series is the application of the "seven years" of Daniel 9:27 to a future period of Tribulation. Are you ready for this? Guess who was one of the very first scholars to slice Daniel's 70th week away from the first 69 weeks, sliding it down to the end of time? It was the Evil Empire's very own Francisco Ribera! "*Ribera's primary apparatus was the seventy weeks. He taught that Daniel's 70th week was still in the future… It was as though God put a giant rubber band on this Messianic time measure. Does this supposition sound familiar? This is exactly the scenario used by Hal Lindsey and a multitude of other current prophecy teachers.*" [14]

When most Christians look at the last 1,500 years, how much fulfilled prophecy do they see? None, because almost everything is now being applied to a future time period after the Rapture. As we have seen, this GAP idea originated with the Jesuits and its insertion into the majority of 21st century prophetic teaching is now blinding millions of hearts and eyes to what has gone before and to what is happening *right now inside the Church. "It is this GAP theory that permeates futurism's interpretation of all apocalyptic*

*prophecy.*" [15] In love and in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, someone should publicly appeal to the major prophetic television ministries of today to re-evaluate their positions. Hopefully, like noble ships with a new command from their captain, they will yet change their course.

Jesuit futurism has now become like a giant, seven foot, 400 pound boxer, with spiked gloves. With a seemingly all powerful punch, it has almost knocked Protestant historicism entirely out of the ring. "*The proper eschatological term for the view most taught today is futurism…which fuels the confusion of Dispensationalism. The futuristic school of Bible prophecy came from the Roman Catholic Church, specifically her Jesuit theologians.…However the alternative has been believed for centuries. It is known as historicism.*" [16] "*It is a matter for deep regret that those who hold and advocate the futurist system at the present day, Protestants as they are for the most part, are thus really playing into the hands of Rome, and helping to screen the Papacy from detection as the Antichrist.*" [17]

**So who Had It Right?**

So who had the correct theology? Those who were burned at the stake for Jesus Christ or those who lit the fires? Who had the true Bible doctrine? The martyrs or their persecutors? Who had the correct interpretation of the Antichrist? Those who died trusting in the blood of Christ, or those who shed the blood of God's dear saints? The Evil Empire of Jesuit futurism is now *at war* with the Protestant Reformation by denying its power packed application of prophecy to the Vatican. "*The futurist school of Bible prophecy was created for one reason, and one reason only: to counter the Protestant Reformation!*" [18] In fact, this Evil Empire of Jesuit futurism is at war with the prophecies of the Word of God itself! And if that's not enough, consider this. Jesuit futurism originated with the Roman Catholic Church, which makes it *the very doctrine of the Antichrist!* And when Christian ministries and movies like *Left*

*Behind, Revelation, A Thief in the Night, Tribulation, Apocalypse* and proclaim an Antichrist who comes only after the Rapture, what is it they are really doing? Are you ready for this? They are sincerely and yet unknowingly *teaching the doctrine of the Antichrist!*

It is time we realized that *futurism is a total failure.*

**A note about and for Catholics**
Our humble apologies to all Catholics but genuine love demands the identification of the Antichrist power so that no honest person will be deceived, for eternity is at stake. While identifying the Roman Catholic Church as the Antichrist power, we hasten to remind all sincere Christians that many of Christ's true followers are still members of this Church. They are unaware of the great deception under which they worship. The Saviour died for them as well as people of all other faiths. The present is surely the time for love to be expressed in sincere action as these precious saints are called out of apostasy into the light of God's saving truth.

# FUTURISM AND THE BIBLE

The word "futurism" may be unfamiliar to many Christians today, yet one hundred years ago it was well known among all Protestants. E.B. Elliott, in his classic commentary on the book of Revelation republished for the fifth time in 1862, called *Horae Apocalyptica*, gives this background and definition:

"The *futurist* scheme, as I have elsewhere stated, was first, or nearly first, propounded about the year 1585 by the Jesuit Ribera; as the fittest one to turn aside the Protestant application of the Apocalyptic prophecy from the Church of Rome. In England and Ireland of late years it has been brought into vogue chiefly by Mr. S.R. Maitland and Mr. Burgh; followed by the writer of four of the Oxford Tracts on *Antichrist.* Its general characteristic is to view the whole

Apocalypse, at least after the Epistles to the Seven Churches, as a representation of the events of *the consummation and second advent*, all still future: the Israel depicted in it being the *literal Israel;* the temple, Apoc. xi., a literal rebuilt Jewish temple at Jerusalem; and the Antichrist, or Apocalyptic Beast under his last head, *a personal infidel Antichrist*, fated to reign and triumph over the saints for 3 1/2 years, (the days in the chronological periods being all *literal days*) [rather than years], until Christ's coming shall destroy him" (*Horae*, Vol. 4, p. 597).

According to the futurist viewpoint, "*the whole 1800 years that have passed subsequently are to be viewed as a blank in prophecy; the period having been purposely skipped over by the Divine Spirit, in order at once to plunge the reader into the events and times of the consummation*" (ibid.).

In other words, when "futurists" look at the book of Revelation, they see little or no prophetic fulfilments during the entire course of Christian history. In its modern form, almost everything is predicted to be fulfilled after the Rapture, after we're gone, with two of its primary characteristics being: 1) The belief in a single, future evil Antichrist person, and 2) the belief that prophecy will then centre around the literal Jewish nation with its supposedly rebuilt temple.

Futurists often claim that Revelation 4:1 describes the Rapture and that everything beyond this will occur during a supposed seven years tribulation. Its modern advocates often claim that after Revelation 4, God's Church is not on earth because *it is not specifically mentioned.* Thus the absence of the word "Church" is used as proof of its removal.

It is hoped that the following points will reveal *the failure of Futurism:*

It doesn't make sense that God would pass over 2000 years of

Christian history in His prophecies, especially since the foundation prophecy of Daniel 2 reveals a straightforward historical succession from the days of Babylon all the way down to the end of time.

A little historical research will reveal that the majority of Christian commentators on the book of Revelation down throughout Christian history have definitely seen the Church as being on earth from Revelation 4-20.

Revelation 4:1 does not describe the Rapture of the Church. It simply portrays John alone being taken up to heaven *in a vision.* Calling this "the Rapture" is really stretching it! John did not actually go to heaven in Revelation 4:1. His toes were still firmly planted on Patmos.

Although the word "Church" is not used in Revelation 4-21, there are many prophecies and statements that clearly reveal that the Church is in fact on earth during those times.

The White Horse of the First Seal (Revelation 6:2): Although there are differences in the application of this symbol, a very large number have taken the same view as Pareus in his commentary (published in 1615). Elliott says, "In the four first seals he [Pareus] makes the horse the Church, Christ being its rider: — *first white*, with reference to its primitive purity; chiefly for the first 200 or 300 years: *next red*, with reference to its persecutions and blood-shedding of martyrs by the Pagan emperors …" (*Horae*, Vol. 4, p. 474).

The Fifth Trumpet (Revelation 9:4) does not hurt those who have "*the seal of God on their foreheads.*" This has often been applied to historical Christians in God's Church.

**The Time of the Sounding of the Seventh Angel (Revelation 10:7):**
During this time, "the mystery of God [will] be finished." This "mystery of God" involves *the preaching of Jesus Christ by His Church* (Ephesians 3:9-10; Colossians 4:3) and the

fullness of Christ in the hearts of His people (Colossians 1:26-27).

**The Pure Woman (Revelation 12:1, 6, 13, 17):**
Paul describes Christ's *Church* as a "chaste virgin" (2 Corinthians 11:2) and as a "her" (Ephesians 5:25). So does John in Revelation 19 which refers to Christ's "saints" as "His wife" (Revelation 19:7-8).

**The Faithful and Persecuted Saints against the Beast (Revelation 13-14):**
The Beast makes "*war with the saints*" (Revelation 13:7). "*Here is the patience and faith of the saints*" (Revelation 13:10). "*Here is the patience of the saints: Here are they who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*" (Revelation 14:12). Who are these "saints"? Paul speaks of "all the *churches* of the *saints*" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Thus wherever the saints are, *there is Christ's Church.*

**The Three Angel Messengers (Revelation 14:6-12, 14):**
Three final messages are represented as being given *by angels* right before the second coming of Jesus Christ. The first angel has the "everlasting gospel" to "preach" to all the world (Revelation 14:6 KJV). This doesn't mean that literal angels will shout from the skies. Not at all. Rather, these angels represent messages being given by *Christ's Church.* It is *the Church* that is to "preach" the gospel to all the world before the end comes. Matthew 24:14.

**The Faithful Garment Keepers before Armageddon (Revelation 16:15-16):**
Right before the battle of Armageddon, Jesus says, "Behold, I come as a thief, blessed is he that watches, and *keeps his garments*, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame … Armageddon." It is faithful Christians in *Christ's Church* who hold onto *the garments of His righteousness* before the end.

**The martyrs (Revelation 6:9; 12:11; 17:6):**

mystery Babylon is drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus Christ. These martyrs are faithful Christians in *God's Church* throughout history who have died for the truth of Christ.

**The Called Out ones (Revelation 18:4):**
Before the final plagues fall (Revelation 18:8), Jesus says, "Come out of her, *my people* …" His people are His saints in *His Church* who have become trapped inside of spiritual Babylon.

**The Voice of the Bride (Revelation 18:23):**
Jesus pleads through *His bride* (*His Church)* to His "other sheep" (John 10:16) who are yet trapped inside the deceptions of Mystery Babylon – before it's too late.

**The Bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7-8):**
Before Jesus returns, His wife makes "herself ready." This refers to Christ's Church.

**The martyrs who resist the Beast (Revelation 20:4):**
Many are killed for "*their witness to Jesus and for the word of God.*" During Earth's final crisis, true Christians in Christ's Church refuse to bow to the Beast, the Image, and their Mark, even until death.

Futurism views all of the above passages as applying only to the "tribulation saints" who are forced to face a future one-man Antichrist after the rapture. Yet this view ignores over a thousand years of Christian history and bloodshed during which *faithful martyrs in the Church of Jesus Christ* stood up against the real Beast and Harlot of Babylon.

Jesus Himself said, "On this rock I will build *my Church*, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). In Christian history, faithful souls have fought the Beast, Mystery Babylon, and the great Dragon himself. Yet "*they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the*

*death.*" (Revelation 12:11).

**Note from the webmaster:** For more excellent information on the above and many other related topics, *End Time Delusions* is a book you just must have and is available from whitehorsemedia. I cannot recommend it more highly. See also the related topics preterist and preterism Bible prophecy and historicist and historicism Bible prophecy.

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