The Evil Empire of Jesuit Futurism

From Chapter 3 of The Left Behind Deception

Imagine a pair of supernatural, high-tech, Heaven-inspired eyeglasses that can give a Christian the instant ability to see one of Lucifer's greatest end-time deceptions. Such X-ray eyeglasses do exist. The purpose of this chapter is help you find them and put them on, and then you will be able to understand the almost unimaginable Evil Empire of Jesuit Futurism.

Modern Christianity has largely forgotten the importance of the Protestant Reformation, which took place during the 1500s. "The sixteenth century presents the spectacle of a stormy sunrise after a dismal night. Europe awoke from long sleep of superstition. The dead arose. The witnesses to truth who had been silenced and slain stood up once more and renewed their testimony. The martyred confessors reappeared in the Reformers. There was a cleansing of the spiritual sanctuary. Civil and religious liberty were inaugurated. The discovery of printing and revival of learning accelerated the movement. There was progress everywhere. Columbus struck across the ocean and opened a new hemisphere to view. Rome was shaken on her seven hills, and lost one-half of her dominions. Protestant nations were created. The modern world was called into existence" (H. Grattan Guinness, Romanism and the Reformation, p. 122).

For almost a thousand years, Europe had been ruled by the iron hand of Rome. Only a few Bibles existed then, and Christianity was largely permeated with superstition. Faith in Jesus

Christ, heart-felt appreciation for His love, and a simple trust in His death on the cross, were almost unknown. The New Testament truth about grace, full forgiveness, 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 "creature merits," or any human works (Romans 1:16; 3:26, 28; 5:1).

Eventually, Martin Luther turned to the prophecies. By candlelight, he read about the "little horn," the "man of sin," and "the beast," and he was shocked as the Holy Spirit spoke to his heart. Finally, he 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). And so, at the risk of losing his life, Martin Luther preached publicly and in print to an astonished people that Papal Rome was indeed 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 Europe and in England 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'" (Michael de Semlyen, All Roads Lead to Rome, Dorchester House Publications, Dorchester House, England, 1991, pp. 202, 203). 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 ” (H. Grattan Guinness, Romanism and the Reformation, pgs. 136, 137).

In 1545, the Catholic Church 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, ending in 1563. One of the main purposes of this Council was for Catholics to plan a counterattack against Martin Luther and the Protestants. Thus the Council of Trent became a center for Rome's Counter-Reformation. Up to this point, Rome's main method of attack had been largely frontal – the open burning of Bibles and of heretics. Yet 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 come in.

On August 15, 1534, Ignatius Loyola founded a secret Catholic order called the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits. Historically, we might compare this order to Darth Vader's Evil Empire in the classic Star Wars films. The Jesuits definitely have a dark history of intrigue and sedition, that's why they were expelled from Portugal (1759), France (1764), Spain (1767), Naples (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" (Seventy Weeks: The Historical Alternative, by Robert Caringola. Abundant Life Ministries Reformed Press, 1991, p. 31). 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 the Inquisition and through torture, but also through theology.

It's time to discover those X-ray eyeglasses. At the Council of Trent, the Jesuits were commissioned by the Pope to develop a new interpretation of Scripture that would counteract the Protestant application of the Bible's antichrist prophecies to

the Roman Catholic Church. 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 little horn, that man of sin, and the Beast. 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” (George Eldon Ladd, The Blessed Hope: A Biblical Study of the Second Advent and the Rapture. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1956, pp. 37-38). “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.” (Ralph Thompson, Champions of Christianity in Search of Truth, p. 89). “The result of his work [Ribera’s] was a twisting and maligning of prophetic truth” (Robert Caringola, Seventy Weeks: The Historical Alternative, p. 32).

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” (Great Prophecies of the Bible, by Ralph Woodrow, p. 198). 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.

Before we go much farther, let’s define some terms. 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 counter-attack 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 were being fulfilled during the Dark Ages? None. Zero.

For almost 300 years after the Council of Trent, this 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 fascinating and tragic. 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 Jesus Christ and the devil? 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 (16:15-17), and then, just a few minutes later, Peter yielded to temptation and Satan spoke through him (16:21-23)! This proves that a Christian can be used by both God and Lucifer, and all within a short space of time. I call this the Peter Principle.

"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" (Ralph Thompson, Champions of Christianity in Search of Truth, p. 91). Dr. Samuel Roffey Maitland (1792-1866), a lawyer and Bible scholar, 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 futuristic ideas of Maitland, publishing his own supportive pamphlets and books. 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 honored 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" (H. Grattan Guinness, History Unveiling Prophecy or Time as an Interpreter, New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1905, p. 289).

Then came the much-respected Scottish Presbyterian minister Edward Irving (1792-1834), the acknowledged forerunner of both the Pentecostal and Charismatic 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, yet 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 (The Incredible Cover-Up: Exposing the Origins of Rapture Theories,

by Dave MacPherson. Omega Publications, Medford Oregon. 1980). In any case, the fact is, 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). A brilliant lawyer, pastor, and theologian, 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 favor 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 favor of applying it to a future Tribulation after the Rapture. Thus, 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.

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, easy-to-read volume brought Futurism to the masses of American Christianity, and beyond. The New York Times labeled 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.

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" (Publishers Weekly). 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" (Entertainment Weekly). 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 New York Times and the Wall Street Journal, 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 producers 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."

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" (Robert Caringola, Seventy Weeks: The Historical

Alternative, p. 35).

(This chapter continues in The Left Behind Deception)

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Special Note

The Left Behind Deception is a smaller version of a larger book called, Truth Left Behind, which has 192 pages. Truth Left Behind continues a thoughtful analysis of Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins popular Left Behind novels, and reveals further misunderstood secrets about Earth’s final days. Power-packed chapters include: The Return of the Wounded Beast, The United States in Bible Prophecy, Talking Statues and the Image of the Beast, Microsoft and the Mark of the Beast, New Babylon and the Shepherd’s Call, The Flames of the Martyrs Still Speak.