

**WHO OR WHAT IS THE ANTI-CHRIST? (IS IT A PERSON? A SYSTEM? OR AN OFFICE?)**

**By Nyron Medina**



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1. We are admonished in the scriptures to be diligent in the study of scriptures. 2 Tim. 2:15.
2. The study of prophecy is very sure in leading us into safe paths. 2 Pet. 1:19-21.
3. The book of Revelation begins and continues admonishing us to study it. Rev. 1:3; Rev. 13:18; Rev. 17:9; Rev. 22:6,7,9.
4. Even the Spirit of Prophecy admonishes us to study the book of Daniel and Revelation. Read the following quotation.
  - a. “The light that Daniel received from God was given especially for these last days. The visions he saw by the banks of the Ulai and the Hiddekel, the great rivers of Shinar, are now in process of fulfillment, and all the events foretold will soon come to pass.

Consider the circumstances of the Jewish nation when the prophecies of Daniel were given.

Let us give more time to the study of the Bible. We do not understand the word as we should. The book of Revelation opens with an injunction to us to understand the instruction that it contains. “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy,” God declares, “and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We do not understand fully the lessons that it teaches, notwithstanding the injunction given us to search and study it.

In the past teachers have declared Daniel and the Revelation to be sealed books, and the people have turned from them. The veil whose apparent mystery has kept many from lifting it, God's own hand has withdrawn from these portions of His word. The very name "Revelation" contradicts the statement that it is a sealed book. "Revelation" means that something of importance is revealed. The truths of this book are addressed to those living in these last days. We are standing with the veil removed in the holy place of sacred things. We are not to stand without. We are to enter, not with careless, irreverent thoughts, not with impetuous footsteps, but with reverence and godly fear. We are nearing the time when the prophecies of the book of Revelation are to be fulfilled. . . .

We have the commandment of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, which is the spirit of prophecy. Priceless gems are to be found in the word of God. Those who search this word should keep the mind clear. Never should they indulge perverted appetite in eating or drinking.

If they do this, the brain will be confused; they will be unable to bear the strain of digging deep to find out the meaning of those things which relate to the closing scenes of this earth's history.

When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart.

The Lord will bless all who will seek humbly and meekly to understand that which is revealed in the Revelation. This book contains so much that is large with immortality and full of glory that all who read and search it earnestly receive the blessing to those “that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.”

One thing will certainly be understood from the study of Revelation—that the connection between God and His people is close and decided.

A wonderful connection is seen between the universe of heaven and this world. The things revealed to Daniel were afterward complemented by the revelation made to John on the Isle of Patmos. These two books should be carefully studied. Twice Daniel inquired. How long shall it be to the end of time?

“And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And He said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and

the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”

It was the Lion of the tribe of Judah who unsealed the book and gave to John the revelation of what should be in these last days.

Daniel stood in his lot to bear his testimony which was sealed until the time of the end, when the first angel’s message should be proclaimed to our world. These matters are of infinite importance in the last days; but while “many shall be purified, and made white, and tried,” “the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand.” How true this is! Sin is the transgression of the law of God; and those who will not accept the light in regard to the law of God will not understand the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages. The book of Daniel is unsealed in the revelation to John, and carries us forward to the last scenes of this earth’s history.

Will our brethren bear in mind that we are living amid the perils of the last days? Read Revelation in connection with Daniel. Teach these things.” **Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 112-115.**

1. The main statement on Anti – Christ. 2 Thess. 2:3-12.

2. Here are examples of Evangelical teachings on the Anti – Christ.

a. This one says that it is a man who is yet to come.

“As we approach the year 2000 the world is desperately looking for a Messiah-figure to solve its huge and growing problems. The Buddhists and the Hindus are searching for the next Avatar. The Moslems are expecting the appearance of the Mahdi, a messiah-like figure mentioned by the Koran, to usher in the last days.” **Grant R. Jeffrey, Apocalypse, pg. 129.**

“The book of Daniel prophesied about the career of the Antichrist, including his meteoric rise to political and military power over the final worldwide empire. Daniel revealed that he will rise after the ten nations of the former Roman Empire confederate together into a massive political and military alliance dominating Europe and the Mediterranean.

The Scriptures described the revived Roman Empire as a “beast” with “ten horns” representing ten participating nation-states.

Instead of creating the revived Roman Empire, the Antichrist will only appear on the world scene after it has come into existence. Then, as Daniel 7:24 makes clear, he will seize power over three of the ten nations during a future crisis.” **Ibid, pg. 130.**

“The Antichrist will rule with absolute totalitarian power over the ten nations. He will use this power base to launch his campaign to rule the entire world. The secret to the Antichrist’s power is that he will sell his soul to Satan and receive satanic power to rule the nations. The prophet Daniel describes him as an evil master of occult power who will do anything to achieve his goal of world domination.” **Ibid, pg. 131.**

“Satan will totally possess him during the last three-and-a-half years leading up to the battle of Armageddon.” **Ibid, pg. 132.**

“Finally, the new dictator of Europe will offer the Jews a way out of this seemingly endless struggle. Israel will tragically make a seven-year treaty with the Antichrist.

Although he claims to be a friend of Israel, after the first three-and-a-half years of the seven-year treaty, the Jewish Antichrist will betray his brethren. As Daniel declared: “But in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering” (Daniel 9:27). Although the Antichrist will be an evil man as he works his way to power behind the scenes, he will undergo a radical spiritual transformation three-and-a-half years after he signs the seven-year treaty with Israel.” **Ibid, pg. 134-135.**

“The Antichrist will be totally possessed by Satan at this point as no other man in history.” **Ibid, pg. 136.**

“The last three-and-a-half years leading to the Battle of Armageddon will be characterized by supernatural satanic

power as the Antichrist is possessed as no other man in history.” **Ibid**, pg. 219.

- a. This writer says that Anti – Christ will be a man in the future, even Adolph Hitler resurrected in fact. **Robert Van Kampen, The Sign, pg. 135,201-209,212.**
- b. This writer denies that the Papacy is the Anti – Christ and claims it is a man, an actual incarnation of Satan himself. **Arthur W. Pink, The Antichrist, pg. 10-11,13,16,17-18,23-24,26,27-30,31,33,36,39,43,45,46,49,50,51,52,53.**

2. How did the Anti – Christ as a future personage come about?

- a. There are now different schools of the interpretation of the book Revelation especially chapters four to chapter twenty (4-20). They are:

1. Critical school:

“The critical approach denies either the inspiration or canonicity of the Book of Revelation and sees the writing as a purely human composition based on the historical situation at the end of the first century A.D. The Apocalypse is seen only to have utilized Jewish apocalyptic imagery in a fanciful style. Various historical and predictive errors are alleged by the critics. This view must be rejected completely by all who hold unreservedly to the inspiration and canonicity of Revelation. **Dr. Gary Cohen, Understanding Revelation, pg. 14.**

## 2. Allegorical school:

“The allegorical approach to the book denies the literal reality behind the descriptions of the narrated events, and takes the accounts to be solely allegories, parables, and metaphors which contain messages of spiritual encouragement. This view is contradicted by the first verse of the Revelation which states its purpose.”

Those who adhere to this allegorical view generally either (1) hold the antinatural presupposition that prophecy is an *a priori* impossibility, and therefore this book does not predict the future in detail, but rather in a general and mystical way; or (2) they look upon the book as an insoluble mystery, and despairing of learning the future from it, turn to the mediating view that it is simply a pious fiction telling of the triumph of good over evil.” **Ibid, pg. 14,15.**

## 3. Preterits (past) school:

“The preterits (“past”) approach, first advanced in modern times by the Jesuit Alcazar in 1614, looks upon the content of the book as factual, but believes that everything in it, except for the visions of the eternal state in Revelation 21-22 and perhaps chapter twenty, was already fulfilled at the time of John’s writing.

In this way he assigns Revelation 2-19 entirely to the vicinity of the tumultuous times from the beginning of the Neronian persecution in A.D. 64 to the ascension of Vespasian and the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. However, he sees the Beast, Nero, come alive again in Domitian (A.D. 81-96! Rev. 13:3,14). Farrar argues that the book must deal primarily with

events contemporary to John and those which occur *immediately* after on the ground that in Revelation 2:5,16; 3:2; 11:14 and 22:20, the word “speedily” (*en tachei*) is used and this cannot refer to any protracted period of centuries.” **Ibid**, **pg. 15,16.**

4. Historicist school:

“The historical approach, like the preterist, takes the events of the book to portray actual events in heaven and earth, but it affirms that Revelation 4-19 and chapter twenty find a progressive fulfillment during the course of this present church age, from the time that John wrote at ca. A.D. 95-96 unto the second coming of Christ. Revelation 21-22 are assigned to the eternal state. In other words, those who espouse this view hold that Revelation 4-20 narrates the course of *church history* from the cross to the Second Advent.” **Ibid**, **pg. 20.**

5. Topical school:

“The topical approach is also referred to as the cyclic or synchronous view. Although there are variations within this school, generally, it understands Revelation 4-19 or, according to some proponents, Revelation 4-20 to consist of *parallel* visions or cycles, each of which covers the present dispensation. Each cycle is taken to represent some phase of the church’s history. Hendriksen, for example, sees Revelation 1-3 as the Christ-indwelt church, Revelation 4-7 as the suffering church, Revelation 8-11 as the avenged and victorious church, Revelation 12-14 as the Dragon-opposed church, Revelation 15-16 as portraying final wrath upon the impenitent, Revelation 17-19 as showing the fall of the Beast

and of the Babylon which is present in every age, and Revelation 20-22 as the Dragon's doom and the victory of Christ and the church.

Like the historical approach, this view sees the body of the Apocalypse spanning all of church history, but this outlook differs in that instead of seeing a multitude of details foretold, it sees only a group of parallel trends prophesied. Thus it has two advantages over the historical school: (1) it avoids being attacked for arbitrary assignment of portions of Revelation to lone historical incidents; and (2) since almost every chapter in the Apocalypse reveals that God will triumph over evil in the end, by asserting the existence of a number of such trends this system makes a simple and plausible claim that opponents cannot easily set aside." **Ibid, pg. 24-25.**

#### 6. Futurist school:

"The futuristic approach takes Revelation 4-19 to refer to the yet future seven year period of Tribulation, the seventieth week of Daniel (Dan. 9:20-27). Revelation 1-3 only is seen to treat this present interadvent dispensation, while Revelation 20 speaks of the thousand-year millennial reign, and Revelation 21-22 deals with the eternal state.

**Ibid, pg. 29.**

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- a. The Anti – Christ as a future personage fits into a wrong way of interpreting the seventy (70) weeks of Daniel chapter nine. Read:
  - i. Before considering the relationship between the book of Revelation and Daniel's seventieth week, a few things should

be noted concerning this latter time span. It is a future seven year period which is divided into two clearly marked halves of 3 ½ years each (Dan. 9:27). It is a time when God again takes up His dealing with Israel as a nation (Dan. 9:20-27).

An arch-fiend of evil, a man called Antichrist, shall play the dominant role during these seven years (Dan. 7:27; 2 Thess. 2:3-12). He shall come out of the revived Roman Empire which will at this time be dominated by a confederation of ten kings, three of which he shall subdue forcibly (Dan. 9:26; 7:19-25). He shall inaugurate the period by making a covenant with the nation Israel for seven years, but at the middle of the period he shall break his covenant and enter into the rebuilt Temple and proclaim himself as God, committing what the Scriptures refer to as “the abomination of desolation” (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15; Jn. 5:43; 2 Thess. 2:3,4). From this time on, for the remaining 3 ½ year second half of this period, the Antichrist shall persecute Israel and the saints with the most severe persecution ever known to the world (Jer. 30:4-7; Dan. 7:21,25; 8:25; Matt. 24:15-22). Finally, at the end of this period God shall destroy the Antichrist, save Israel, and set up His millennial kingdom.” **Ibid**, pg. 29-30. (This is the Futurist school). Read also:

- ii. “Having presented what we believe to be the true interpretation of the 70<sup>th</sup> week prophecy, we will now examine the FUTURIST interpretation. In order for the 70<sup>th</sup> week to be future, those who hold this position insert a gigantic “gap” of about 2,000 years or so between the 69<sup>th</sup> and the 70<sup>th</sup> week. The confirming of the covenant for one “week” refers to a covenant the Antichrist will make with the Jews, a

seven year agreement to allow them to offer sacrifices in a rebuilt temple at Jerusalem. But then, according to this view, in the middle of the week, he will break this covenant and cause sacrifices to cease.” **Ralph Woodrow, Great Prophecies of the Bible, pg. 110.**

- a. Dan. 9:24-27 as illustrated in this evangelical chart. **See: Grant R. Jeffrey, Apocalypse, pg. 26.**
- b. Since the Church age is within the gap (this is known as the “gap Theory”), one author says that the “prophets did not see this” (the valley of the Church). See:
  - i. “On Chart No. 2 we see how it was that Old Testament Prophets failed to distinguish between the “First” and “Second” Comings. From the prophet’s “view-point” he saw the Birth of Jesus, the Crucifixion, the Outpouring of The Holy Spirit, the Antichrist, the Sun of Righteousness, the Millennial Kingdom, Ezekiel’s Temple and the New Heaven and the New Earth, as “Mountain Peaks” of one great mountain, but we standing off to the side see these peaks as belonging to two different mountains with the “Valley of the Church” in between. And more we see that there are two more valleys, one, the “Millennial Valley,” separates the “Second Coming” from the “Renovation of the Earth by Fire” (II Pet, 3:7-13), and the other is the Valley of the “Perfect Age.” ” **Clarence Larkin, The Second Coming of Christ, pg. 6-7. See also:**
  - ii. “...So understood, the Church age is to be regarded as a ‘parenthesis’ between the Old Testament kingdom of the past

and the Old Testament kingdom of the future, or in other words as constituting an ‘interruption’ in the fulfillment of the kingdom promises to Israel . . . Does the Christian Church fulfil, or does it interrupt the fulfillment of the Old Testament predictions concerning Israel? Is the Church age a mystery period unknown to the prophets, or did they foresee and predict it?” **Oswald T. Allis, Prophecy and the Church, pg. 10,55.**

- a. The separation of the last week from the previous 69 weeks in the futurist school is wrong because it makes the Church age unimportant in God’s scheme of things since He documents prophecy for the Jews ignoring the Church for almost 2000 years. This teaching is pro – Jewish and actually in its implications denies the death of Christ. See:
  - i. “Dispensational Teaching regarding the Kingdom and the Cross.

The answers, which Dispensationalists give to this question, illustrate the difficult situation in which their understanding of the nature of the promised “kingdom” and the meaning of the words “at hand” necessarily lands them.

- (1) This is illustrated by two brief quotations from Darby. On the one hand Darby tells us: “From Adam to the end of time no one was or will be saved but by the redemption and the work of the Spirit. No Evangelical Christian will deny this. Elsewhere Darby says: “Supposing for a moment that Christ had not been rejected, the kingdom would have been set up on earth. It could not be so, no doubt, but it shows the difference

between the kingdom and the Church.” What is the inference to be drawn from this statement if not this, that the difference between the kingdom and the Church is that the latter required the Cross, while the former did not?

(2) This implication is certainly stated by Scofield with sufficient clearness when he tells us: “The kingdom was promised to the Jews. Gentiles could be blessed only through Christ crucified and risen. The position to which the advocates of this teaching are practically driven is this, that if the Jews had not rejected Christ and caused Him to be put to death, His death would not; have been necessary for their salvation. Or, to put it somewhat differently, it was the crucifixion; which made the Cross necessary. If man had stopped short of the utmost enormity of shedding the blood of the Son of God, the blood of beasts would have sufficed for the Jew of the promised kingdom age as for the Jew of Old Testament times. Why not then also for the Gentile.

(3) This conclusion, which we find more or less obscurely stated by Brethren and Dispensational writers, has been clearly drawn by S. D. Gordon, the author of the “Quest Talks” books. Gordon took the position that the sacrifices required by the Mosaic Law were redemptive in themselves. He tells us: “It can be said at once that His dying was not God’s own plan. It was a plan conceived somewhere else and yielded to by God. God had a plan of atonement by which men who were willing could be saved from sin and its effects.” This plan was the Jewish system of sacrifice. The death of Christ was Roman. God did not intend the death of Christ. But when the hate of men brought about the death of

His Son, God by a “master-stroke” made His death the atonement for the sin of man . . . And God’s master-stroke was that He turned the death of Christ which had been brought about by the hate of man into an “enrichment” of His plan. For the death of Christ prepared the way for the mystery of the church which is founded on the Cross. But this enrichment, he tells us, is only temporary. For, “The Church goes up and out. The kingdom comes in and down.” ”  
**Oswald T. Allis, Prophecy and the Church, pg. 75-76.**

- a. The futurist interpretation of Daniel’s 70 weeks (490 years) makes God give a direction of 490 yrs. Plus 2000 years (2490 yrs.). For the folly of this see:

“Probably the glaring discrepancy to the futurist interpretation of the 70<sup>th</sup> week is the way it requires a huge “gap” between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week. With all due kindness to those who have taught and believed this, we feel that such a gap is unscriptural, unfounded, and contradictory. There are three basic periods contained within the seventy weeks prophecy. The first segment of seven “weeks” (49 years) was taken up with the work of rebuilding Jerusalem; the next segment of time, 62 “weeks” (434 years), was to reach unto Messiah; and the final period was one “week” (7 years). Even the strongest advocates of a gap between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks, such as Kelly, say that the first sixty-nine weeks ran *without a break*...uninterrupted. If no gap is allowed between the 49<sup>th</sup> years and the 434 years, why should a gap of 2,000 years or more be placed between the 434 years and the 7 years?

The term “seventy weeks” is plural, but the Hebrew verb, which is translated “determined” is *singular*. The actual wording (though it would be awkward to translate it this way into English) is: “Seventy weeks IS determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city.” Barnes says: “In regard to the construction here—the singular verb with a plural noun.... The true meaning seems to be, that the seventy weeks are spoken of collectively as denoting a period of time; that is, a period of seventy weeks is determined. The prophecy, in the use of the singular verb, seems to have contemplated the time, not as separate weeks, or as particular portions, but as *one* period. The *Lange Commentary* says: “The verb being in the singular number indicates the *unity* or *singleness* of this entire period.”

The idea that an arbitrary gap can be placed in a time prophecy such as this, has been likened to a man with a yardstick who cut off the last inch and attached a piece of elastic between the 35<sup>th</sup> and 36 inches. Then he could stretch the 36<sup>th</sup> inch out as far as he wanted from the 35<sup>th</sup> inch. But in so doing, he defeated the very purpose for which the yardstick was intended! We believe the same inconsistency is involved in the futurist practice of separating the 70<sup>th</sup> week from the 69<sup>th</sup> week by a gap of 2,000 years or so.

Or the idea of a 2,000 year gap might be likened unto a man who plans a trip to Chicago. As he leaves Los Angeles, a sign tells him it is 70 miles!

After driving 69 miles, however, he is still in California, and Chicago is nowhere in view! A sign confirms that he has

indeed come 69 miles from Los Angeles. It is now only one mile to Chicago—PLUS 2,000 MILES—a *parenthesis the first sign did not mention!*” **Ralph Woodrow, Great Prophecies of the Bible, pg. 117-118.**

- a. The Protestant Reformation held to the Historical school identifying the Papacy as the Anti – Christ. See: **Louis F. Were, Futurism and the Antichrist of Scripture,**

“Incredible as it may seem, many Protestant preachers are now teaching that the God-inspired interpretations of prophecy, so forcefully presented by the early Reformers, and which were the bulwark of the great Protestant movement, are erroneous, and that hence the Reformers’ untruthful exegesis of Scripture was the mainstay, the foundation, of the great God-sent Reformation!”

## THE TRUE PROTESTANT POSITION

“The Reformers were unanimous in their interpretation that the antichrist of the Books of Daniel and the Revelation is the Papacy. The particular passages involved in this connection are those dealing with the “little horn” of Daniel 7, “the beast” of Revelation 13, and “the man of sin” of 2 Thessalonians 2, which the united voices of the fearless Reformers declared to be the Papacy. When James I asked Lord Bacon as to the person described under the title of “The Man of sin,” his answer represented the undivided testimony of the Reformation Protestants: “Please, your Majesty, if the prophecy in 2 Thessalonians 2 were inserted in a warrant, I should apprehend the pope.”

The Rev. Edward Nangle, of Ireland, wrote in 1866: “The identity of the pope with the predicted ‘man of sin’ is perfect. . . . This prophecy, rightly interpreted is, as Bishop Newton well observes, like a two-edged sword inflicting a deadly wound on popery on one side, and on the infidelity on the other. . . . The power of this weapon in the conflict with popery, was strongly felt by the Reformers and the Jesuits at the time of the Reformation. The former wielded it with terrible effect in their onslaught on the Papacy, and the Jesuits had no shield to avert the strokes but a *counter interpretation*. They [the Jesuits] contended . . . that it applied not to the pope, but to antichrist, who was to appear at the end of this dispensation. . . . The *whole body of the Reformers*, English and Continental, *without a single exception*, maintained that the pope was the ‘man of sin.’ *All the Reformed churches held the same view*, as did also *the most eminent Protestant authors*, with hardly an exception, up to the early part of the present century, when a Romanising High Church clergyman took up the Jesuit view. The evil leaven, thus introduced into the Protestant church soon worked through the mass to such an extent, that we believe at the present time the majority of the evangelical clergy as well as the whole Tractarian party, have gone over in this matter, from the Reformers to the Jesuits.” [Unfortunately an increasing number of Protestants, ignorant of the origin of this belief, are being taught that this is Protestantism. This teaching is perhaps as popular now as were the erroneous ideas concerning the Messiah in the days when Jesus was rejected.] “That interpretation includes a slander on the Reformers, and the whole Protestant world, for three centuries.”

“The Papists in Dr. Willett’s day (as represented by their Jesuit champion, Cardinal Bellarmine) contended that antichrist has not been yet revealed; that he is to be an individual who will make his appearance at the close of this dispensation for three years and a half; and that the prophecy of the ‘man of sin’ in 2 Thessalonians 2 has reference to this future antichrist, and not to the Pope of Rome: and these assertions . . . were attempted to be proved by their Jesuit advocate with the *same arguments which are now urged in their defence by the Protestant writers. . . who have adopted the Jesuit view.*”—“*The Man Of Sin,*” pages 2,64,252. (Italics mine.)

And then this writer of the last century presents the arguments used by those who hold the “Futurist” interpretation, showing how they are identical with, if not borrowed from, the pen of such Catholic writers as Cardinal Bellarmine.

The belief that the Papacy fulfils the prophecies relating to the antichrist, which was “the unanimous opinion of the whole body of the Reformers of the sixteenth century, and the unanimous judgment of every Protestant church for nearly three hundred years,” should be given first and most serious consideration before accepting a theory of a future antichrist which was invented by Rome in its controversy with the Reformers.

Dr. H. G. Guinness has warned us to be “on our guard against any system of prophetic interpretation which emanates from Rome. . . . We should lean to Protestant and not to papal interpretations.”—“*Light for the Last Days,*” page 8.

## WHY FUTURISM WAS INVENTED

The Rev. Joseph Tanner, B.A., in his book “Daniel and the Revelation,” pages 16,17, says: “So great a hold did the conviction that the Papacy was the antichrist gain upon the minds of men, that Rome at last saw she must bestir herself, and try, by putting forth other systems of interpretations, to counteract the identification of the Papacy with antichrist.

“Accordingly, towards the close of the century of the Reformation, two of the most learned doctors set themselves to the task, each endeavouring by different means to accomplish the same end, namely, that of diverting men’s minds from perceiving the fulfillment of the prophecies of the antichrist in the papal system. The Jesuit Alcasar devoted himself to bringing into prominence the preterist method of interpretation, . . . and thus endeavoured to show that the prophecies of antichrist were fulfilled before the popes ever ruled at Rome, and therefore could not apply to the Papacy. On the other hand, the Jesuit Ribera tried to set aside the application of these prophecies to the papal power by bringing out the futurist system, which asserts that these prophecies refer properly, not to the career of the Papacy but to that of some future supernatural individual, who is yet to appear, and to continue in power for three and a half years. Thus, as Alford says, the Jesuit Ribera, about A.D. 1580, may be regarded as the founder of the futurist system in modern times.

“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 playing into the hands of Rome, and helping to screen the Papacy from detection as the antichrist. It has been well said that ‘futurism tends to obliterate the brand put by the Holy Spirit upon popery.’ More especially is this to be deplored at a time when the papal antichrist seems to be making an expiring effort to regain his former hold on men’s minds.”

Another has written: “The futurist theory is simply one of the wiles of Satan to confuse the issue and divert the attention of the church of Christ from the real fulfillment. . . . Some Protestants have . . . laid hold of the interpretation invented after the Reformation by the Jesuit Ribera for the purpose of turning the edge of this truth from the Church of Rome. They, like him, are looking for a future literal antichrist. . . . Like all Jesuit interpretations, it has a clever semblance of truth, which often deceives the hurried or superficial reader.”—*Albert Close*.

### Unanimity of Early Protestantism

Dr. H. Grattan Guinness in his “Approaching End of the Age,” pages 99-101, writing of the “historic Protestant view” of the prophecies which points out the Papacy as antichrist, says: “This view originated about the eleventh century, with those who even then began to protest against the growing corruptions of Rome. It grew among the Waldenses, Wycliffites, and Hussites, into a consistent scheme of interpretation, and was embraced with enthusiasm, and held,

with intense conviction of its truth, by the Reformers of the sixteenth century. In their hands it became a powerful and formidable weapon, to attack and expose the mighty apostasy, with which they were called to do battle. From this time it spread with a rapidity that was astonishing, so that ere long it was received as a *self-evident and fundamental truth among Protestant churches everywhere*. [Italics mine.] It nerved the Reformers of England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, and Sweden, and the martyrs of Italy and Spain: it decided the conscientious and timid adherents of the Papacy to cross the Rubicon, and separate from the so-called Catholic Church: and it has kept all the Reformed churches since from attempted reunion with Rome.

“It was held and taught by Joachim Abbas, Walter Brute, Luther, Zwingle, Melanchthon, Calvin, and all the rest of the Reformers; by Bullinger, Bale, and Foxe; by Brightman and Mede, Sir Isaac and Bishop Newton, Vitringa, Daubuz, and Whiston, as well as by Faber, Cunningham, Frere, Birks, and Elliott. . . . It met, of course, with the intense and bitter opposition from the church it branded as Babylon, and the power it denounced as antichrist and to this day it is rejected by all who in any way maintain or defend them.”” **Pg. 2-4.**

“Dr. H. Grattan Guinness in his “Romanism and the reformation.” Pages 250-260, has irrefutable shown that futurism came from Rome to oppose the inspired declarations of the Reformers that the Papacy was the antichrist. Space will permit of but a few extracts from this masterly work. He writer of the Reformation: “From the first, and throughout, that movement was energised and guided by the prophetic

Word. Luther never felt strong and free to war against the papal apostasy till he recognised the pope as antichrist. It was then he burned the papal Bull. Knox's first sermon, the sermon which 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 the Reformers were *unanimous* in the matter. . . . And *their interpretation of these prophecies determined their reforming action*. . . . It nerved them to resist the claims of that apostate church to the uttermost. 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. . . .

“To resist the use to which Scripture prophecy was put by the Reformers is no light or unimportant matter. The system of prophetic interpretation, known as *futurism*, *does resist this use*. It condemns the interpretations of the Reformers. It condemns the views of all these men, and of all the martyrs, and of all the confessors and faithful witnesses of Christ for long centuries. It condemns the Albigenses, the Waldenses, and the wycliffites, and the Hussites, the Lollards, the Lutherans, the Calvinists; it condemns them all, and *upon a point on which they are all agreed*, an interpretation of Scripture which they embodied in their solemn confessions and sealed with their blood. It condemns the spring of their action, the foundation of the structure they erected. *How daring* is this act, and *how destitute* of justification! What an opposition to the *pillars* of a work most manifestly divine!

For it is no less than this for futurism asserts that Luther and all the Reformers were wrong in this fundamental point.

“*And whose interpretation of prophecy does it justify and approve? That of the Romanists. Let this be clearly seen. Rome felt the force of these prophecies, and sought to evade it. It had no way but to deny their applicability. It could not deny their existence in Scripture. They were there plainly enough. But it denied that these prophecies referred to the Roman Church and its head. It pushed them aside. It shifted them from the entire field of mediaeval and modern history. As to Babylon the Great, it asserted that it meant Rome pagan, not Rome papal. Rome pagan shed all the blood referred to in Revelation 17 and 18. Rome Christian had shed none of it. Prophecy was eloquent about the deeds of the Caesars, but silent as to those of the popes; and this though the persecution perpetrated by the popes far exceeded those of the Caesars. Prophecy expended its strength in warning the church of the perils from heathenism. Which it perfectly understood, and was speechless as to the far greater perils arising from the Christian apostasy on which it needed the fullest warning and instruction. It was eagle-eyed as to the dangers without, but blind to the dangers from within. It guarded and guided the church of the three first centuries, but left the church of the next thousand years and more without a lamp to light its footsteps.*

“As to the prophecies of the man of sin, or antichrist, these [they teach] had nothing to do with the Middle Ages, or with the Roman popes, or the long central centuries of the church’s sorest conflicts: they only referred to a diminutive interval in

the far-off future, at the end of the world. The man of sin was only an ephemeral persecutor. His whole power was to continue but three and a half years. He was to be a cunning Jew of the tribe of Dan; a clever infidel, who was to call himself God, and set himself up in a Jewish temple at Jerusalem. Christians have nothing to do with him as such. A Jew was to do all the mischief. The whole evil was but a Jewish infidel spasm in the very last hour of history before the second advent. Therefore the Reformers were all wrong in their denunciations of the Papacy. They were foolish, misguided, unreasonable, fanatical, and the popes were uncondemned by the voices of the prophets. Daniel and John said nothing about them. *They* were not predicted apostates. . . . The prophecies which those contemptible Reformers and miserable so-called martyrs said applied to them did nothing of the sort; it was folly to suppose they did. They applied to other people and to other circumstances. They only applied to paganism and infidelity: a past and bygone paganism, and a future shortlived infidelity, and nothing more. *Three centuries in the past, and three years in the future*, that was all they had anything to do with. As to the *fifteen centuries* which lay between, they had no bearing upon them whatever. . . . The thunders of prophecy were *not directed against them, but against those dead Caesars, and that unborn Jew. . . .*

“*Which think you were right in their interpretations of Scripture?* Those proud popes, those cruel inquisitors, those inhuman monsters who mangled the bodies of holy men and women in their torture chambers. . . . or those pure and persecuted saints . . . those noble confessors, Reformers, and martyrs? With one mind and mouth all these Protestants

agreed in the substances of their protests. To them Rome was Babylon, and its proud head antichrist. Were they all mistaken, deluded, and their cruel, tyrannical oppressors and persecutors correct? What think you? . . .

“Futurism has crept into the Protestant church, broken down these sacred walls. Romanists, ritualists., and Protestant futurists are *all agreed* as to the non-applicability of Scripture prophecies to the Church of Rome and the Papacy. . . . What then is to keep out the incoming papal flood? The Word of prophecy in its solemn warning of the dangers the church has to encounter, the foes it has to resist, is asserted to be silent as to this. Why then should this be feared? The Reformers were mistaken; the popes were right. . . . All these were right in rejecting the fundamental position that papal Rome is Babylon, and its head antichrist; and all the Reformers, without an exception, were wrong in maintaining it; they were foolish interpreters of the ‘sure Word of prophecy,’ and utterly in error as to the real testimony of Scripture concerning the Church of Rome.

“Is this the position you adopt? Is this the conclusion you defend? Are these the view you advocate? You, a Protestant, and this, *after all that has been written upon the subject*, and all the blaze of light which history and experience have poured upon it? If it is, *look to it that you be not found fighting against the truth*, warring against the Word of God, resisting the testimony of the prophetic spirit, hindering the work of the Reformation, promoting the progress of the apostasy, opposing Christ, and helping antichrist.”

## Clouding the Real Issue

“It is remarkable that, out of three classes of interpretations of the pre-advent visions of the Apocalypse, two came from Roman Catholic Jesuits. The preterist scheme, which considers “these prophecies to have been fulfilled in the downfall of the Jewish nation and of the old Roman empire, limiting their range thus to the first six centuries of the Christian era, and making Nero antichrist, originated with the Jesuit Alcasar towards the end of the sixteenth century.”—  
“*The Approaching End of the Age,*” pages 97,98.

From Rome this teaching spread to some hypnotized Protestants who did not see that it was a kind of smoke-screen to hide the real antichrist. But a God-aroused Protestantism urged all to interpret the prophecies as fulfilling before the eyes of all in the history of the Papacy. Rome stirred herself to oppose and to overthrow the mighty power of the Reformation. The preterist scheme was not sufficient to blind the eyes of the most cautious of an awakening people to the true antichrist; so another system of interpretation was devised more completely and more innocently to screen the antichrist. Therefore to meet the issue the futurist view was invented, teaching “that the prophetic visions of Revelation, from chapter 4 to 19, prefigure *events still wholly future*, and not to take place till just at the close of this dispensation. . . . This view gives the literal Israel a large place in the Apocalypse, and expects a personal infidel antichrist, who shall bitterly oppress the saints for three years and a half, near the date of the second

advent, thus interpreting *time* as well as much else in the Apocalypse, *literally*.”—Ibid., page 100. **Pg. 5-8.**

- a. The Futurist school with a future Anti – Christ originated with Jesuits who sought to undo the teaching that the Papacy was the Anti – Christ. See: **Louis F. Were, Futurism and the Anti – Christ of Scripture**, pg. 2-4,5,8,9.

“Dr. H. G. Guinness in his “Approaching End of the Age,” pages 100, 101 writes of the futurist view: “In its present form, however, it may be said to have originated, at the end of the sixteenth century, with the Jesuit Ribera, who, moved like Alcasar, to relieve the Papacy from the terrible stigma cast upon it by the Protestant interpretation, tried to do so by referring these to the distant *future*, instead of like Alcasar to the distant *past*. *For a considerable period this view was confined to Romanists*, [Italics mine], and was refuted by several masterly Protestant works. But of late years it has sprung up afresh, and sprung up (strange to say) among Protestants. It was revived by such writers as the two Maitlands, Burgh, Tyso, Dr. Todd, the leaders of the ‘Brethren’ generally, and by some Tractarian expositors also. It is held thus by extreme parties; by those who, though Protestants, are ashamed of the Reformation, speak of it as an unwarrantable schism, and verge as closely on Rome as is Possible.” ” **Pg. 9.**

1. The aim of the Futurist school of prophetic interpretation and of a future Anti – Christ unrelated to the Church is to cause

men to be unprepared for a Sunday Law pushed by Romanism or the Papacy, or to get them to join in that plan. This is Satan's intention. See: **Louis F. Were, Futurism and the Antichrist of Scripture**,

“Protestantism differed from Roman Catholicism in two fundamental principles: namely, the Papacy was the antichrist, and God's law was immutable. Roman Catholicism taught that antichrist was future, and that God's law could be changed to suit circumstances.” **Pg. 12.**

### Futurism and Law Abolition

“Those who have followed Rome in the theory of futurism have likewise followed her in teaching that God's law could be changed, and had actually been changed, holding that the observance of Sunday instead of the seventh-day Sabbath demonstrated such a change. At one time all the Protestant churches emphasized the binding nature of God's law, but coincident with their acceptance of papal futurism they have now swung around to the papal opposition to God's law. And let it be observed that the very ones mentioned by Dr. Guinness as the chief instruments for the introduction of futurism into Protestantism are also the fiercest opponents of the truth of the immutability of the law of Jehovah. They are the ones who have largely led Protestants to abandon their firm belief in the unchangeable nature of God's law. It appears therefore to be plain to the onlooker, anxious only for truth, that *futurism has in some way an association with a spirit of opposition to the unchanging nature of God's law*, for the two things always go together.

While Protestants held to the truth that the Papacy is the antichrist of Scripture, they also held to the perpetuity of the law of God, as may be seen by reading their articles of faith. But now that they are swinging over to papal futurism, they are likewise emphasizing more and more the papal doctrine that God's law could be changed, and boasting of a freedom from that law, which agrees with papal assumptions of having had power to change it. Therefore it is self-evident even now that theologically "all the world wonders after the beast," as the prophecy declared it would do before the second advent. Rev. 13:3." **pg. 12.**

"As Satan was the author of disregard for God's law, and also the author of futurism, we can read his designs for these last days in the great struggle between the forces of good and evil. *He devised futurism as a system of prophecy which would blind the people's eyes to the last great message now going to all the world,* and which is fulfilling the prophecies. Scripture is very plain in its pronouncements to the effect that the controversy would close with a great conflict over the law of God.

The "remnant," *or last of the church,* is to hold to the perpetuity of the law, and will be against futurism. How do futurists answer this plain prediction? They answer it by relegating it to the future, *while they assist in the very fulfillment of it,* preaching that the law was abolished or changed, and manifesting a wrathful spirit against the upholders of the law's immutability." **pg. 13.**

- a. Since futurism creates a gap of 2000 years of the church age, and it is no where in prophecy, then we have no special Biblical message against the Church that had the leading influence for more than a thousand years of that 2000 years period.
- b. If the scripture ignores the Papacy and all its religious deeds for almost 2000 years, then it can't really be that bad as some claim. Thus resistance to the Papacy and Papal claims is lessened and a conciliatory attitude could be had.
- c. Since then, according to the futurist school, the “little horn” of Dan. 7:8,25-26, is not the Papacy, the “laws” changed could not be the Sabbath etc. so we must not claim Rome changed the Sabbath to Sunday, Sunday did not come from the Papacy, but from the resurrection of Christ. By exalting Sunday Rome is exalting the resurrection, which is a good thing. See: **Austin Flannery, Vatican Council 11, pg. 29-31.**

“By a tradition handed down from the apostles, which took its origin from the very day of Christ’s resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every seventh day, which is appropriately called the Lord’s Day or Sunday. For on this day Christ’s faithful are bound to come together into one place. They should listen to the word of God and take part in the Eucharist, thus calling to mind the passion, resurrection, and glory of the Lord Jesus and giving thanks to God who “has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, unto a living hope”. The Lord’s Day is the original feast day and it should be proposed to the faithful and taught to them so that it may become in fact a day of joy and

of freedom from work. Other celebrations, unless they be truly of the greatest importance, shall not have precedence over Sunday, which is the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year.

But the paschal fast must be kept sacred. It should be celebrated everywhere on Good Friday, and where possible should be prolonged throughout Holy Saturday so that the faithful may attain the joys of the Sunday of the resurrection with uplifted and responsive minds.” **Austin Flannery, Vatican Council 11, pg. 29-31.**

“Jesus rose from the dead ‘on the first day of the week.’ Because it is the ‘first day’, the day of Christ’s Resurrection recalls the first creation. Because it is the ‘eight day’ following the Sabbath, it symbolizes the new creation ushered in by Christ’s resurrection. For Christians it has become the first of all days, the first of all feasts, the Lord’s Day (he kuriake hemera, dics dominica) –Sunday:

We all gather on the day of the sun, for it is the first day [after the Jewish sabbath, but also the first day] when God, separating matter from darkness, made the world; and on this same day Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead.

Sunday is expressly distinguished from the sabbath which it follows chronologically every week; for Christians its ceremonial observance replaces that of the sabbath. In Christ’s Passover, Sunday fulfils the spiritual truth of the Jewish sabbath and announces man’s eternal rest in God. For

worship under the Law prepared for the mystery of Christ, and what was done there prefigured some aspects of Christ:

Those who lived according to the old order of things have come to a new hope, no longer keeping the sabbath, but the Lord's Day, in which our life is blessed by him and by his death.

The celebration of Sunday observes the moral commandment inscribed by nature in the human heart to render to God an outward, visible, public and regular worship 'as a sign of his universal beneficence to all'. Sunday worship fulfils the moral command of the Old Covenant, taking up its rhythm and spirit in the weekly celebration of the Creator and Redeemer of his people.

The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life. 'Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in light of the apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church.' ” **Geoffrey Chapman, Catechism of the Catholic Church, pg. 469-470.**

“.... It is the place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist.

The precept of the Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: 'On Sunday and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass.'

The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice.” **Ibid, pg. 471.**

Just as God ‘rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done’, human life has a rhythm of work and rest. The institution of the Lord’s Day helps everyone enjoy adequate rest and leisure to cultivate their familiar, cultural, social and religious lives.

On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are to refrain from engaging in work or activities that hinder the worship owed to God, the joy proper to the Lord’s Day, the performance of the works of mercy, and the appropriate relaxation of mind and body. Family needs or important social service can legitimately excuse from the obligation of Sunday rest.

... Sunday is traditionally consecrated by Christian piety to good works and humble service of the sick, the infirm and the elderly. Christians will also sanctify Sunday by devoting time and care to their families and relatives, often difficult to do on other days of the week. Sunday is a time for reflection, silence, cultivation of the mind and meditation which furthers the growth of the Christian interior life.

Sanctifying Sundays and holy days requires a common effort. Every Christian should avoid making unnecessary demands on others that would hinder them from observing the Lord’s Day.

The sabbath, which represented the completion of the first creation, has been replaced by Sunday, which recalls the new creation inaugurated by the Resurrection of Christ.

The Church celebrates the day of Christ's Resurrection on the 'eight day', Sunday, which is rightly called the Lord's Day.

'Sunday ... is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church' ... 'On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the mass'.

'On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound... to abstain from those labors and business concerns which impede the worship to be rendered to God, the joy which is proper to the Lord's Day, or the proper relaxation of mind and body'." **Ibid, pg. 472-473.**

What laws will be changed by the future Antichrist? Jewish laws because the temple will be rebuilt and the sacrificial system reinstated. (This denies validity of the death of Christ).

- a. In Dan. 8:11-14 no knowledge of the time of the Investigative Judgment, or of this Judgment could be gained, because futurism tells us that God is to cleanse the Jewish temple that has been rebuilt from the defilement of the future Antichrist.
- b. According to 2 Thess. 2:3-12, in the futurist model the Man of Sin is to be revealed in the future, thus we are to look for a future apostasy and not one in the past. Thus Romanism and the change of the Sabbath is not bad.

- c. The Antichrist in Rev. 13:1-18 being yet future according to futurism, would mean Sunday being enforced is not the mark of the beast and not bad, it is in honour of the resurrection of Christ.
- d. Who are those keeping the Law of God in Rev. 12:17 and Rev. 14:12? Not the church since this is future and the church will be gone to heaven. The church is not under Law; these people are the Jews to whom the Law was given.
- 1. Thus futurism and a future Antichrist to come is all-wrong. See **Louis F. Were, Futurism and the Antichrist of Scripture, pg. 14,15.**

### Fanciful and Unwarranted Interpretations

“Futurism, which is sweeping the world, contrary to the foundation of the Reformation, is knowingly, in face of light from heaven, carrying with it a changed law. The continuance of the Reformation depends upon adherence to the fundamentals of Protestantism, and builds on the work of the Reformers.

Quite a number of the prophecies connected with the work of antichrist speak of a world-wide message unveiling the facts of antichrist’s work against God’s law, as seen in the attempted change of the Sabbath. Now the issue for the world today is: If these prophecies picturing the complete revelation of antichrist’s work are future, then Rome was right at the time of the Reformation, and the founders of the Protestant churches were wrong. If, on the other hand, Rome was wrong

and the Reformers right, then from the same prophecies, which were the foundation of the Reformation, must be preached a return to the Sabbath of God which was changed by the antichrist.

Some, clearly seeing the issue, prefer Roman Catholic futurism, which hides the Sabbath message from the eyes of the present, and postpones the fulfillment of these prophecies to the future under the reign of an imaginary antichrist.

If the Papacy is not the antichrist, as all the Reformers and all Protestant churches for three centuries declared, then Protestants owe Catholics many apologies; but no mistake was made in so designating the Papacy.” **Pg. 14,15.**

1. Thus the prophecies of Antichrist in Dan. 7:8,24-26; Dan. 8:9-13; Dan. 11:36-39; 2 Thess. 2:3-12; Rev. 13:1-18; Rev. 17:1-6, etc. **is about the Papacy** who nevertheless is an office of blaspheme against Christ. See:

a. “Continuing now in Paul’s prophecy, we see that he links the man of sin with a falling away. “That day shall not come, except there come a *falling away* first, and that man of sin be revealed...” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3). The Greek word that is here translated “falling away” is *apostasia*, defined by *Strong’s Concordance* as “defection from the truth.” It is from this word we get our English word “apostasy.” This was not to be a falling away from religion into atheism, but rather a falling away that would develop within the realm of the Christian church. As Lenski has said: “This is apostasy. It is therefore, to be sought *in* the church visible and not *outside*

the church, not in the pagan world, in the general moral decline, in Mohammedanism, in the French Revolution, in the rise and spread of Masonry, in Soviet Russia, or in lesser phenomena.

Has this “falling away” already happened, or is it still in the future? Those who are acquainted with church history know the answer. The original New Testament church was filled with truth and spiritual power. But as time went on, even as the inspired apostles had warned (Acts. 20:29,30; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Peter 2:2,3), there began to be departures from the true faith. The mystery of iniquity was at work.

Compromises were made with paganism. Finally, what the world recognized as the “church” in the fourth and fifth centuries had actually become the *fallen* church. A Biblical and historical account of these things is given in the author’s book, *Babylon Mystery Religion*. Only if Christianity had remained doctrinally pure through all the centuries until now, could the apostasy be yet future. This has obviously not been the case.

As the falling away developed, the bishop of Rome rose to power claiming to be “Bishop of bishops,” that the whole Christian world should look to him as *head*, and to Rome as *headquarters* for the church. Through the centuries, this apostasy has continued with a “man,” at Rome, exalting himself above all others, claiming divine honors and worship—a continual reminder that the falling away took place centuries ago.

Newton has written: “If the apostasy be rightly charged upon the church of Rome, it follows that the man of sin is the pope, not meaning this or that pope in particular, but the pope *in general*, as the chief head and supporter of this apostasy. The apostasy produces him and he promotes the apostasy. Barnes has expressed it this way: “That his [the pope’s] rise was preceded by a great apostasy, or departure from the purity of the simple gospel, as revealed in the New Testament, cannot reasonably be doubted by anyone acquainted with the history of the church. That he is the creation or result of that apostasy, is equally clear.” ” **Ralph Woodrow, Great Prophecies of the Bible, pg. 141-142.**

THE END