

A More Sure Word of Prophecy

by

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A More Sure Word of Prophecy

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by Edwin de Kock

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*Dedicated to Henry and Arleen Stubbs,
who brought me to Cuba,
where I first presented most of this material in the
La Vibora Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

Acknowledgements

In a sense, *A More Sure Word of Prophecy* sets the capstone on everything I have written about prophecy. Underlying all my books in this genre is a key concept: Historicism is true, because it uniquely validates itself. When Bible prophecy is compared with the events of history, we find an accurate match.

The same cannot be said of any other school of prophetic interpretation. Neither Preterism, Futurism, nor Idealism is properly anchored in history, as this book reveals.

So how did *A More Sure Word of Prophecy* come about, and who deserve thanks for assisting with its genesis?

Henry and Arleen Stubbs, who do medical missionary work in Cuba, were impressed by the Lord to take me along to Havana during October 2014. I prepared four lectures, largely edited by my wife Ria and Jerry A. Stevens, an outstanding copy editor. Michael Scheifler with great patience worked with me on the graphics: color images, the 2,300 year-day chart, and other elements.

Yet as the material grew, I had misgivings about its suitability for the intended audience that I thought I would encounter. But I was astounded by how well the lectures were received. I had not known that one in every fifteen adult Cubans was a university graduate! They may well be the best educated Seventh-day Adventists in the Hispanic world.

Suddenly it also struck me that the material which made up the four lectures could, with a few additions, be fruitfully turned into another book, including a Spanish edition. Ria gladly subjected it to further scrutiny. And Jerry A. Stevens as well as Michael Scheifler worked through it all again! It is my pleasure to thank them in a special way.

Beautiful Cuba is sometimes described as the Pearl of the Antilles. This book, I trust, will also come to be regarded as a jewel from the Caribbean, though faults that may remain in it are, of course, entirely my own.

In that country, even before our arrival, Néstor Rivero had anticipated my needs. He translated the four lectures as *La Palabra Profética Más Segura* for screen projection. This also provided an excellent basis for a future Spanish edition in book form. Later his

compatriot, Yanet Martínez, looked over it with an eagle eye, and subsequently so did Dr. Ana M. Pérez Gabriel, another precious friend, originally from México. My gratitude goes to them as well.

Last though not least, I thank my Heavenly Father for a special privilege: to minister in a long line of prophetic witnesses, upholding Historicist truth while adding a few additional insights.

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Foreword

An indispensable method of studying Bible prophecy is to focus on its relationship with history. This is also what this work seeks to do. Of the various approaches, Preterism, Futurism, Idealism, and Historicism, only the last mentioned can in this way be vindicated.

We are, however, well aware of the fact that there is also another dimension. Predictive prophecy is not an end in itself. It has always played an important part in presenting the plan of salvation.

The title of this book is derived from a passage in the second epistle written by the apostle Peter:

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts . . ." (2 Peter 1:16–19).

Peter here related the prophecies of the Bible to salvation. It is therefore not merely foretelling future events for the sake of doing so.

Interestingly, in the Scriptures history likewise transcends itself. It is not a mere secular chronicle of what this or that ancient king or other person experienced. Conformity to the will of God and obeying him is of primary importance and has a moral, even a typological meaning.

The redemptive aspects of prophecy are unmistakable in the Old as well as the New Testament. This goes all the way back to Genesis and the story of Joseph.

Suddenly sold into slavery by his brothers, he became a

prisoner in Egypt. From there he was brought before Pharaoh, the mightiest ruler of that time, with divine help interpreted the king's two prophetic dreams, and abruptly became the second greatest ruler in the country. In this capacity, God made him the savior of Egypt and Canaan. First, he had extra barns built to store the surplus grain produced abundantly during seven years of plenty. Then, in the seven lean years, he shrewdly had it sold and distributed. Prophecy in this case brought redemption. It saved very many lives, including those of the brothers who had sold him into slavery.

Many centuries later, the experience of Daniel in many details paralleled that of Joseph. He, too, was suddenly a captive, taken to Babylon, which was ruled by the greatest king of his time. Nebuchadnezzar also had a dream that nobody could help him recall or interpret. This also in two ways revealed the loving-kindness of the Lord.

First, the young prophet explained the dream, including the stone that ground up the image and then grew into a mountain which filled the whole earth. This, he said, was the kingdom of God that would last forever. The parallel prophecy of Daniel 7 amplifies this as follows: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan. 7:27).

Through all the centuries that lay ahead, the Lord's children would draw comfort from these predictions. Whatever trials, persecution, or other hardship befell them, they could by faith look forward to their redemption in that better world.

Second, with the prophecy of Daniel 2 God was taking a first step toward converting King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel said to him that the Lord had given the dream to reveal "what shall be in the latter days" (vs. 28) and "what shall come to pass hereafter" (vs. 29), but also "that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart" (vs. 30).

This king was a pagan, prone to violence and pride, yet the Most High who wants to save us all detected within him an even deeper yearning than just a desire to know about the future of his empire. Indeed, the Lord was devising a way of saving Nebuchadnezzar for eternity.

In Daniel 3, we read how the Son of God appeared in the furnace to deliver Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. This led Nebuchadnezzar to a decree which greatly honored and exalted their God. The final act of this drama is described in Daniel 4 by the king himself. Here we find another prophetic dream about a great tree that was to be chopped down.

Again the wise men of Babylon were unable to tell the king what it meant. Then Daniel was called. Most reluctantly, he said the tree was Nebuchadnezzar himself. The dream conveyed a warning from Heaven. Daniel advised him to break with his sins and show mercy to the poor. But the king did not do so. Instead, he vented his pride, proclaiming: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Dan. 4:30).

Instantly a voice from heaven announced that God was deposing him. Nebuchadnezzar spent seven years away from human society, insane. At the end of that time, he looked up, acknowledged the Lord as the One who sets up kings and will rule forever, and gave honor to his holy name. Thereupon God restored the humbled Nebuchadnezzar to his throne. Then, converted, he wrote his personal testimony, concluding:

"Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (vs. 37).

In the Apocalypse, prophecy is also concerned with more than just foretelling the future. Here, too, the Lord Jesus is portrayed as a Lamb that was slain for every human being. He will indeed destroy the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet, together with the finally impenitent. But for the book of Revelation, his death on Calvary and the Second Coming to save his people are of paramount importance, as they are in the rest of the Bible.

So while the present work largely focuses on how important Historicism is for understanding Bible prophecy, we should also constantly retain an awareness of the role it plays in the plan of salvation.

Chapter I
Ancient Prophetic Historicism

AN AMAZING IMAGE

Head of gold
Babylonia (605–539 B.C.)

Chest and arms of silver
Medo-Persia (539–331 B.C.)

Belly and thighs of bronze
The Greeks (331–168 B.C.)

Legs of iron
Rome (168 B.C.–A.D. 476)

Feet and toes of iron and clay
Ten kingdoms (A.D. 476–)



The Stone
Christ the King

I first heard about Nebuchadnezzar's dream in 1935, almost 80 years ago. That is, I was five years old when I first heard about four empires together with ten kingdoms, prophecy and history, simultaneously.

Daniel 2, augmented by Daniel 7, is the chief Historicist key to Bible Prophecy.

The four beasts of Daniel 7 basically represent the same political powers as Nebuchadnezzar's image.



A lion with eagle wings

A bear with three ribs between its teeth

A leopard with four wings of a bird and four heads

A beast with iron teeth, bronze claws, and ten horns; then another little horn

Babylonia
(605–539 B.C.)

Medo-Persia
(539–331 B.C.)

The Greeks
(331–168 B.C.)

Rome and Europe
(168 B.C.–)

Let us now compare these two representations. The first one records a dream of Nebuchadnezzar.

First, note, however, that the bronze includes the thighs—the upper legs—all the way down to the knees. This is different from most pictures of the image. What you see was not prepared by a Seventh-day Adventist, yet it is correct. Charles Fitch (1805–1844), a great Millerite preacher, on his chart of 1842 also depicted the bronze that way.¹ The upper and lower legs blend together to indicate a *Greco*-Roman Empire. The strongest muscles of the legs are in the thighs. The Romans derived most of their culture, practically all their philosophy, and much of their religion from the ancient Greeks.

The four beasts were shown to Daniel in a vision that he had many years later, when Belshazzar ruled over Babylon.

In its symbolism, the dream image, a message from God to a king, was tactful and considerate. To Daniel, the four empires are portrayed as carnivorous beasts and came as a terrible shock.

There is also a shift in focus. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed in his bed at Babylon on the Euphrates. In his vision, Daniel stood on the shore of the Great Sea, the Mediterranean. The four beasts had a more western bearing, especially the fourth beast.

These two prophecies have much in common. The statue symbolizes Babylon, Medo-Persia, the Greeks, imperial Rome, and its division into ten kingdoms. The four beasts do much the same, but further details are added.

New prophecies dealing with the same entities never just repeat. They always give more information. I discuss this in my book *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy* where I call it the principle of augmentation. We now briefly consider this factor.

Like the head of gold, the lion with eagle wings represents the Babylonian Empire.

The eagle is a symbol of nobility; the wings, speed in conquest. So it was under the mighty Nebuchadnezzar. But the eagle wings are plucked off. Belshazzar, its last ruler, was a weak and timid king besieged by the Medes and Persians,

whom he feared. When the wings were gone, the lion was pulled up onto its hind legs to stand like a man, and it acquired a fearful human heart.

Like the arms and chest of silver, the bear symbolizes Medo-Persia.

This beast “raised itself up on one side.” First the Medes emerged as a mighty state, but later the Persians, who were related to them, became more powerful. The three ribs between the bear’s teeth have been interpreted as Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt, which they conquered. The words “Arise, devour much flesh” indicate the vast extent of the Medo-Persian Empire.

Like the belly and thighs of bronze, the leopard represents the ancient Greeks.

But to what do the four wings and the four heads refer?

The wings denote speed of conquest. The Babylonian lion had two, but the Grecian leopard twice as many. The conquests of the grand army left by Alexander the Great were much more rapid.

And why four heads? The ancient Greeks never formed a single kingdom. Not even under Alexander. For example, he never ruled over the western Greeks in Sicily and Italy.

This is a historical fact, reflected in Bible prophecy.

On this basis and because of the Greco-Roman factor, my book *Seven Heads and Ten Horns in Daniel and the Revelation* points out a striking fact: In Daniel 7, the four beasts have altogether seven heads. Of these, four heads are Greek. This explains a verse in Revelation 17:10: “. . . seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come.”

The legs of iron plus the feet and toes of iron mixed with clay refer to Rome plus the ten European kings into which the Empire later divided. So does the fourth beast with its ten horns, but it focuses on the kingdoms that arose after A.D. 476.

This is a very important prophetic point: the terrible fourth

beast has iron teeth, which means *Roman*, and bronze claws, which means *Greek*. That is, the power which this creature symbolized was not a purely Roman but a **Greco-Roman** Empire. History shows that such indeed it was.

An eleventh little horn came up among the ten horns and then grew tremendously. It symbolizes the papacy, which would speak blasphemous things and think to change times and the Law of God.

What is blasphemy? For a human being to equate himself with God (Mark 2:7; John 8:56–59; John 10:33). Some Catholic writings have put forth tremendous claims.

The pope is often called the Holy Father, sometimes the Most Holy Father, and even Our Most Holy Lord. Lucio Ferraris (fl. 1748–c. 1763) said the pontiff was “as it were God on earth . . . the supreme King of Kings.”² More than a hundred years later, Pope Leo XIII wrote most boldly: “We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.”³

Three of the ten horns were uprooted: the Vandals in North Africa as well as the Heruli and Ostrogoths in Italy. Why? These kingdoms refused submission to the pope.

They were not really Arians. Also, they were Sabbathkeepers. Not ancient Jehovah’s Witnesses but so to speak ancient Seventh-day Adventists. This is dealt with in my *Christ and Antichrist* as well as *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy*.

1. Now I have a question for you. Who do you think wrote the following words?

“The golden head of the image and the lioness denoted the Babylonians; the shoulders and arms of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard, meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander’s time; the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present; the toes of the feet which were part clay and part iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Antichrist in their midst; the stone that smites the earth and brings judgment upon the world was Christ. . . .”⁴

2. Was it Uriah Smith (1832–1903), in *Daniel and the Revelation*?

No, it was Hippolytus,⁵ (c. 170–235), almost 1,800 years ago, 200 years after Jesus was born.

I quote this passage in my first two prophetic books: *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (2001, 2013) as well as *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy: History, Methodology, and Myth* (2007).

Hippolytus was the bishop of Portus Romanus, an ancient harbor town about 15 miles (24 km) from Rome.⁶

A learned ante-Nicene theologian, he wrote books on prophecy:

A commentary on Daniel,⁷ a largely lost treatise on Apocalypse, and his *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*.⁸

The most remarkable thing about what he said was the time when he wrote it: eighteen centuries ago.

Rome was still ruled by pagans; Constantine had not yet been born and accepted Christianity; and the breakup of the Western Empire lay more than two centuries in the future.

2. Hippolytus lived in a very unstable period.

Historians call it the Troubled Century. Numerous Caesars were assassinated, and barbarians repeatedly invaded the Empire.

3. This learned man was most courageous.

To write like that invited for him a martyr's death.⁹ Rome, the capital, was only 15 miles from his home, and it was treason to foretell the end of Roman domination at a time like that.

4. Coming kingdoms.

Simply on basis of Bible prophecy, Hippolytus boldly predicted “the kingdoms that are to arise.”

Daniel said the beasts represented four kings or *kingdoms* (in Dan. 7; compare 17 and 23).

They were the Western European powers of Hippolytus's future.

Hippolytus also said the Antichrist would appear “in their midst.”

He believed the 10 kingdoms would survive until the Second Coming.

5. The apostle John had written:

“As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists” (1 John 2:18). John was confronting Gnosticism.

But Hippolytus knew that the Bible focused mostly on one Antichrist. He did not, however, realize it was the papacy, which already existed but was not yet fully developed.

6. Antecedents.

6.1. Jewish rabbis

After Titus had destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and Bar Kokhba’s rebellion in A.D. 132–136, sixty years later, the Jews regarded Roman rule as “the ‘reign of Esau’ or Daniel’s Fourth Beast, and prayers for its ending were offered in the synagogues.”¹⁰

6.2 Also earlier, two *Christian writers* interpreted Daniel much like Hippolytus:

Irenaeus (c. 130–c. 203) Bishop of Lyons in Gaul.

Tertullian (c. 160–240), born at Carthage, North Africa.

The latter was the soundest interpreter. Among other things, he taught that the resurrection would take place at the Second Coming.

Unlike Irenaeus or Hippolytus, Tertullian also said Apocalyptic Babylon was Rome.¹¹

6.3 We now focus on the Hippolytus passage because of its wording.

Why did he say *lioness* instead of *lion*?

This word is found in the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testament c. 2nd century B.C. by Jewish scholars at Alexandria, Egypt, ruled by the Greek-speaking Ptolemaic dynasty.

I checked in my copy of it. It does use the word “léaina,” *lioness*. Our Old Testament is mainly based on the Masoretic text, which has *lion*, which is probably the correct original form. But like many early Christians, Hippolytus relied on the Septuagint cited by the apostles, especially Paul.

6.4 Like many after them, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus thought the Second Coming was near. For them, the 3.5 years or 1,260 days in Daniel and the Revelation was literal time. Only in later centuries did prophetic interpreters begin to apply the year-day principle.

7. Our Heavenly Father wants his people to know the future.

7.1 Amos 3:7 tells us: “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” Through their writings, we are given a prophetic road map of what lies ahead.

7.2 Biblical scholar Gerhard F. Hasel loved to tell about his father, a German pastor and colporteur. During World War II, Nazis forced him into their army and sent him to the Russian front. “From time to time when alone he drew courage from a fading picture of the Daniel 2 image, which he treasured in a pocket, reminding himself that Hitler must fail sooner or later.”¹² What made him so sure? One verse in the prophecy, Dan. 2:43: “They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.”

Hitler did fail and is long gone—like Charlemagne, Charles V of Spain, and Napoleon Bonaparte, who had also vainly tried to unite Europe.

8.3 The European Union (EU) a similar ambition:

Will there be a United States of Europe someday? No, for God has said: “They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.” The Western European countries are not made entirely of Roman iron; in them, there is also fragile clay.

Perhaps the present events in Ukraine will begin to shatter this dream.

8.4 An important wider implication.

If the European countries which used to make up the Western Roman Empire will not unite, this also means no world government can come into existence before the Lord returns—despite the Dispensationalists, who with their gap theory predict that the Antichrist will become the ruler of our entire planet.

9. Interpreting prophecy as we do is known as Historicism.

This is also called the *Continuistic* School.

Historicists interpret prophecy by comparing its predictions with the events of history, point by point. This is how Historicism is validated.

9.1 Historicism predominated during three periods of Christianity:

(a) *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic* times, from first to about early fourth century. This included men like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus.

(b) *The Protestant Reformation* for a few hundred years from before Martin Luther until early nineteenth century.

(c) Among *Seventh-day Adventists*.

9.2 Most expositors gave up Historicism, twice:

From about the fourth century and since the nineteenth century. They preferred other schools: Preterism, Futurism, and Idealism. We will discuss these concepts in the next chapter.

Note, however, that only Historicism can be perfectly validated, *proven* through comparisons of Bible prophecy with what actually happened.

So why, in spite of this, have so many interpreters abandoned Historicism, preferring Preterism, Futurism, and Idealism? To answer this question, let us look at what the apostle Peter wrote about prophecy:

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private *interpretation*. For the prophecy came not in

old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Pet. 1:19–21 (emphasis added)

9.3 Dependable prophecy is given only under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Also notice that word *interpretation*. The understanding of prophecy also requires heavenly guidance. In both early Christian times and the nineteenth century, theologians turned away from truth to error. To God the Holy Spirit this is offensive, so he deprives such people of the ability to correctly interpret prophecy.

9.4 In the time of Hippolytus, the Great Apostasy was already at work. Therefore, religious writers lost the ability to understand prophecy correctly.

9.5 The same thing happened to Protestants since the early nineteenth century onward.

In Britain, leading theologians began to favor the doctrines of Rome. The engine that drove them is called the Oxford Movement.

Many of them also, particularly in America, rejected the First Angel’s message described in Rev. 14:6, 7, and persecuted those who had accepted it. As a consequence, the Lord—according to verse 8—regarded them as part of Babylon. They likewise turned away from Historicism and increasingly favored other methods of interpretation. These have a demonstrable kinship with Catholic eschatology.

9.6 Seventh-day Adventists are now the only Protestant denomination of any size that is still Historicist. Are we going to remain faithful to this precious legacy?

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1. A chronological chart of the visions of Daniel and John. Lithograph, devised by Charles Fitch with the assistance of Apollos Hale; lithographer, B. W. Thayer & Co., Boston, 1842. In the Jenks Collection of Adventual Materials, Prophetic Charts, Aurora University, Aurora, Illinois.
 2. Lucio Ferraris, *Prompta Bibliotheca Canonica, Juridico-Moralis Theologia*, vol. 6, art. “Papa” (Venice, Italy: Apud Frasciscum Storti, et Jo: Baptistam Recurti, 1746), 33.
 3. Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter “The Reunion of Christendom,” 20 June 1894, trans. in *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII* (New York: Benziger, 1903), 304, qtd. in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students’ Source Book*, 684.
 4. Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170–235), *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, translated by Stewart Dingwall Fordyce Salmond (1838–1905), Professor of Theology, United Free Church College, Aberdeen, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, edited by the Rev. Alexander Roberts, D.D., and James Donaldson, L.L.D. (Edinburg: T. T. Clark, 38, George Street, MDCCCLXIX [1869]).
 5. *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Ultimate Reference Suite, 2011), s.v. “Hippolytus, Saint.”
 6. LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation*. 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946–54), vol. I: 268.
 7. John McManners, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity* (Oxford, Eng.: UP, 1990), 48.
 8. Froom, vol. I: 268–271. 9. Froom, vol. I: 273.
 10. Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 429.
 11. Froom, vol. I: 256–260.
 12. C. Mervyn Maxwell, “Life Sketch of Gerhard Franz Hasel, 1935–1994,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 6 (1/1995) (Collegedale, TN: Adventist Theological Society), 61–62.

Chapter II

The First Eclipse of Historicism

As shown in our previous chapter, second- and third-century writers like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus interpreted Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 much as Uriah Smith did in the nineteenth century, more than one and a half thousand years later.

This method is known as Historicism.

It interprets prophecy by comparing the Bible's predictions with the events of history, point by point. Historicism is therefore also called the *Continuistic School*. This is how it is validated.

1. **Historicism predominated during three periods of Christianity.**

1.1 *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic* times, from first to about early fourth century. This included men like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus.

1.2 *The Protestant Reformation* for a few hundred years from before Martin Luther until early nineteenth century.

1.3 Among *Millerites* and present-day *Seventh-day Adventists*.

2. **Most expositors gave up Historicism, twice:**

From about the fourth century and since the nineteenth century. Then a preference developed for other schools: Preterism, Futurism, and Idealism. What are these?

2.1 Preterism teaches that the Antichrist was some specific person of very long ago, such as Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a Hellenistic king who persecuted the Jews and profaned their temple in pre-Christian times, or Roman emperors like Nero (37–68) and Domitian (51–96)—but not the papacy.

2.2 Futurism also rejects the idea that the Antichrist has anything to do with the pope. Supposedly he will appear just

before the Second Coming, and the Jewish temple will be rebuilt at Jerusalem. In our time, this view, which originated in Catholic eschatology but became popular among many Protestants, is known as Dispensationalism.

2.3 Idealism does not interpret Bible prophecy in relation to historical events but mostly as allegorical symbols. It likewise rejects the idea that the Antichrist is the papacy.

These three schools have one thing in common: They all undermine the Historicist view, still held by Seventh-day Adventists. They all deny that the Antichrist is the papacy.

This is strange, since only Historicism can be perfectly validated, that is, *proven* through comparisons of Bible prophecy with what actually happened, without twisting facts in funny ways.

Why, then, in spite of this, have interpreters abandoned Historicism, preferring Preterism, Futurism, and Idealism? The answer to this question is to be found in what the apostle Peter wrote about prophecy:

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private *interpretation*. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Pet. 1:19–21 (emphasis added).

3. Dependable prophecy is given only under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

But also notice that word *interpretation*.

4. Understanding prophecy also requires heavenly guidance.

In both early Christian times and the nineteenth century, theologians turned away from truth to error. To God the Holy Spirit this is very offensive, so he deprives such people of the ability to correctly interpret prophecy.

5. In the time of Hippolytus, the Great Apostasy was already at work.

Therefore, Christian religious writers lost the ability to understand prophecy correctly.

Historicism was eclipsed two times, during the Catholic Middle Ages and in the nineteenth century, among Protestants.

This chapter deals with the first eclipse, in the Middle Ages.

We look again look at the statue of Daniel 2 as Nebuchadnezzar saw it:



Let us now focus on the last part: the stone. What does it symbolize?

Daniel 2:44 says it will be an everlasting, indestructible kingdom established by God himself.

According to Hippolytus and other Historicists, including modern Seventh-day Adventists, the stone represents the

kingdom of Christ, beginning with his Second Coming.

This was shown in the previous chapter.

But Catholic scholars after Hippolytus taught that it symbolized the Roman Church.

Let us compare these two views:



The Stone
Christ the King

The Stone
Catholic Church

Why did the Roman Church adopt this view?

It claims that Peter, who it teaches was the first pope, is the rock on which the Lord Jesus built his church.

If you go to Rome, you can see this for yourself. Inscribed within the rotunda of St. Peter's at the Vatican are the words from Matt. 16:18: "Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram ædificabo ecclesiam meam" (Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church). According to the doctrine of apostolic succession,

every pope is like a reincarnation of that apostle. This idea links together all the popes from century to century.

But what does the Bible say? The apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians, declared that the church was “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20).

Peter himself, allegedly the first pope, quoting the Old Testament, put it this way: “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on *him* shall not be confounded” (1 Peter 2:6, emphasis added).

His source, Isaiah 28:16, is even stronger: “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.”

We now look at *The New American Bible* (2000), a Catholic version with the imprimatur of James A. Hickey, Archbishop of Washington in 1986 and previously endorsed by Pope Paul VI on 18 September 1970.¹

When they read the Scriptures, members of the Roman Church are required to understand them in accordance with notes that Catholic Bibles also contain. This is what *The New American Bible* says about Nebuchadnezzar’s image:

“The four successive kingdoms in this apocalyptic perspective are the Babylonian (gold), the Median (silver), the Persian (bronze), and the Hellenistic (iron). The last, after Alexander’s death, was divided among his generals (vv. 41f). The two resulting kingdoms, which most affected the Jews, were the dynasty of the Ptolemies in Egypt and that of the Seleucids in Syria, who tried in vain, by war and through intermarriage, to restore the unity of Alexander’s empire (v. 43). The stone hewn from the mountain is the messianic kingdom awaited by the Jews (vv. 44f).”

For Catholics like other Christians, “the messianic kingdom” can refer only to that of Jesus, our Lord.

Here is a graphic portrayal of what is meant by these notes on Daniel 2:36–45, where Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is explained:

Catholic Interpretation



The basis for this view was especially created by Augustine of Hippo, (St. Augustine), 354–430. He lived about two hundred years after Hippolytus. Augustine believed the stone which struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay represented not Christ’s Second Coming but his *first* coming, when he set up his kingdom as personified by Catholicism.²

Fourteen hundred years later, the American Catholic Bible teaches the same idea.

Let us therefore see how it interprets the feet and toes of iron and clay. We first read its translation of Daniel 2:41–43:

“The feet and toes you saw, partly of potter’s tile and partly of iron, mean that it shall be a divided kingdom, but yet have some of the hardness of iron. As you saw the iron mixed with clay tile, and the toes partly iron and partly tile, the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. The iron mixed with clay tile means that they shall seal their alliances by intermarriage, but they shall not stay united, any more than iron mixes with clay.”

The note says that the rulers of Hellenistic Egypt and Syria “tried in vain, by war and through intermarriage, to restore the unity of Alexander’s empire.”

But they were not really trying to reunite that vast empire which stretched from Greece to India and included all of Persia. Further, there is no attempt to explain in what sense

Hellenistic Egypt and Syria were “partly strong and partly fragile.”

But explaining the stone as the Church of Rome is futile. Why?

Because, according to this Catholic Bible, “In the lifetime of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed” (vs. 44). Which kings/kingdoms? Supposedly Hellenistic Syria and Hellenistic Egypt. But both were conquered by the Roman Empire before the time of Christ.

The Catholic interpretation depicted by the image shown above suggests that the Roman Church originated in pre-Christian times!

That is absurd, *historically*. It also runs into much trouble when compared with the symbols of Daniel 7.

Remember that in Chapter I we cited the following passage from Hippolytus, (c. 170–235), a pre-Nicene prophetic expositor:

“The golden head of the image and the lioness denoted the Babylonians; the shoulders and arms of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard, meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander’s time; the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present; the toes of the feet which were part clay and part iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Antichrist in their midst; the stone that smites the earth and brings judgment upon the world was Christ. . . .”³

The notes of the Catholic Bible acknowledge that the beast symbols in Daniel 7 correlate with the symbols in Daniel 2. On verses 4–6, the comments are:

“The representation of the Babylonian empire as a winged lion, a common motif in Babylonian art, symbolizes the bestial power hostile to God. The two wings that are plucked represent Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. On two feet like a man . . . a human mind contrasts with what is said in Dn 4, 13, 30. A bear: represents the Median empire, its three tusks

symbolizing its destructive nature. . . . A leopard: used to symbolize the swiftness with which Cyrus the Persian established his kingdom. Four heads: corresponding to the four Persian kings of Dn 11, 2.”

The note in the Catholic Bible on the fourth beast of Daniel 7 identifies it with the empire established by Alexander the Great. This, it says, “was different from all the others in that it was Western rather than Oriental in inspiration. The ten horns represent the kings of the Seleucid dynasty, the only part of the Hellenistic empire that concerned the author. The little horn is Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–163 B.C.), the worst of the Seleucid kings, who usurped the throne.”

This is a Preterist explanation, which also strangely seems to imply that the Roman Church originated before the time of Christ. It contrasts strongly with the Historicism of men like Hippolytus eighteen centuries ago and Seventh-day Adventists like Uriah Smith.

In Chapter I, we saw a pictorial representation of the four beasts in Daniel 7. Below them, we read:

A lion with eagle wings	A bear with three ribs between its teeth	A leopard with four wings of a bird and four heads	A beast with iron teeth, bronze claws, and ten horns; then another little horn
<i>Babylonia</i> (605–539 B.C.)	<i>Medo-Persia</i> (539–331 B.C.)	<i>The Greeks</i> (331–168 B.C.)	<i>Rome and Europe</i> (168 B.C.–)

Now let us consider the two rival interpretations:

Ante-Nicean and Modern Historicism

Irenaeus (c. 130–203), Tertullian (c. 160–240), Hippolytus (c. 170–235), Uriah Smith (19th century)

<i>Babylonia</i> (605–539 B.C.)	<i>Medo-Persia</i> (539–331 B.C.)	<i>The Greeks</i> (331–168 B.C.)	<i>Rome and Europe</i> (168 B.C.–)
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Medieval and Modern Catholic Preterism

Augustine of Hippo (354–430) and the 20th-century Catholic Bible)

<i>Babylonia</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Persian</i>	<i>Alexander the Great and</i>
(605–539 B.C.)	<i>Empire</i>	<i>Empire</i>	<i>two Hellenistic kingdoms</i>
(605 B.C.–)	(539–331 B.C.)	(331 B.C.–)	

We are struck by several problems with these Catholic identifications.

One of them concerns the relationship of the Median Empire with both the Babylonian and the Persian Empires.

About the arms and chest of silver, Nebuchadnezzar was told: “Thou art this head of gold. And *after* thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee . . .” (Daniel 2:39; emphasis added). But the dates of the Median Empire show that it did not succeed Babylonia. It came to the height of its power in the same year and expired while the Babylonian Empire still existed. The Medes were conquered by Cyrus before he took the city of Babylon.

Under him, they retained a special status, and much of what they had achieved was absorbed into the Persian Empire, such as their legal system: “The law of the Medes and the Persians,” which was unalterable (Daniel 6:8).

Further, since the Medes did not come to power after the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, they cannot be represented by the bear. Cyrus was the son of a Median princess. Historically men like Hippolytus and Uriah Smith have been correct in speaking of the Medo-Persian Empire. In this respect, the Catholic Bible is badly wrong.

It is true that Alexander the Great established a huge but short-lived empire, which included Greece and the entire Persian Empire. After his death, the unity of the Greeks disappeared, so they are aptly symbolized by four heads on the leopard beast, as interpreted by Hippolytus and Uriah Smith. But it is a weak and false opinion that in the book of Daniel the Lord was concentrating on only two Hellenistic kingdoms.

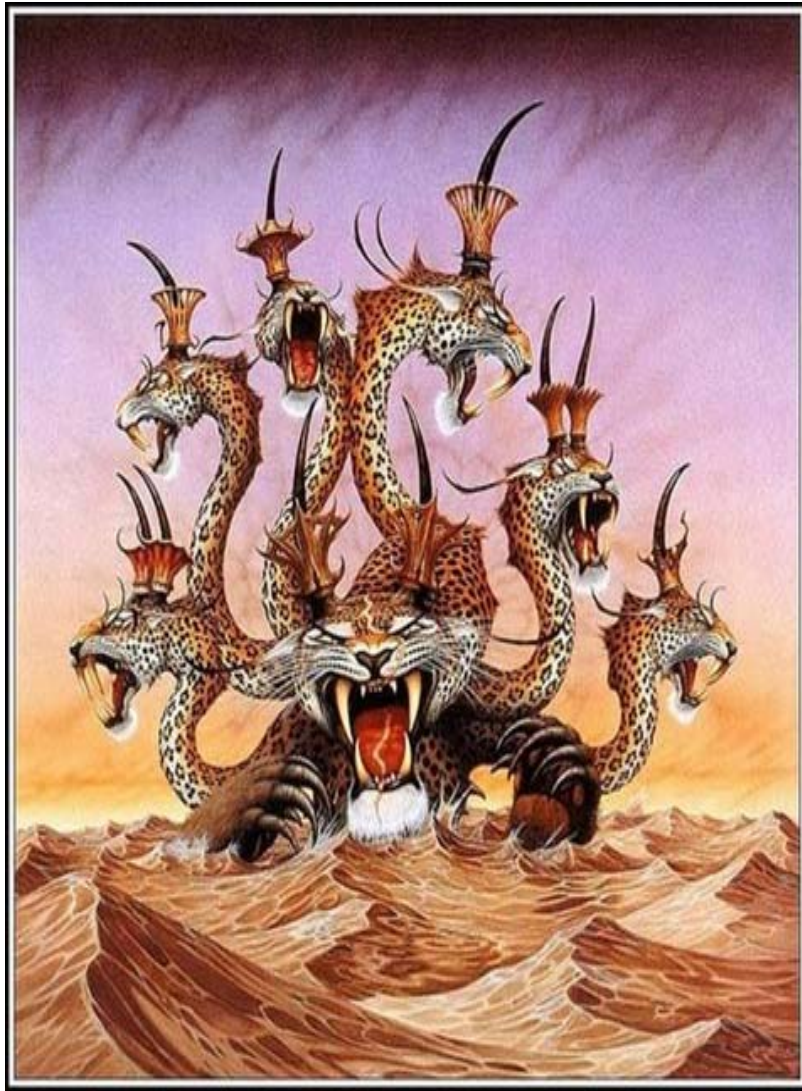
In Daniel 7, the heavenly being who explained the vision of the four beasts emphasized their universality: “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of

the earth” (vs. 17). Also: “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth” (vs. 23). The focus is definitely not just on two Hellenistic kingdoms.

As for the notorious Little Horn which grows into a huge horn, the Bible first says it would “come up among” the ten horns (vs. 8), but as the heavenly being said to Daniel it would truly “arise after them” (vs. 24). This cannot be Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a ruler of passing and minor interest, except for the Jews, who had to fight bitterly to throw off his yoke.

Daniel 2 and 7 provide a prophetic key to unlock the meaning of the Apocalypse. So now, for our comparisons, we jump over more than six hundred years and apply it to Revelation 13.

This is what the prophet John saw in a vision on the Isle of Patmos—approximately. I say *approximately*, because I have never found a picture that fully does justice to the Biblical text or is not awkward in some details. For instance, why in this portrayal—the best one of many that I have seen—do a few heads have two horns each while most have only one? It is, however, basically correct.



Here is the text in the Authorized (King James) Version that the portrayal reflects. John “saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion . . .” (Revelation 13:1–2)

This beast is a composite creature, perfectly amalgamating the four beasts of Daniel 7.

Like them, it arises out of the sea. Like them, it has seven heads: one for the lion, one for the bear, four for the leopard, and one for the fourth beast, i.e., $1 + 1 + 4 + 1 = 7$. Like those four beasts, this one is also characterized by blasphemy. And like the fourth beast, it has ten horns. What it lacks is a little horn, but it is, so to speak, *itself* the Little Horn, as is revealed by the rest of Revelation 13.

It is a giant leopard. In addition to the ten horns, other prominent features are the feet of a bear and a lion's mouth. Please observe that the text does not say the seven heads themselves were lion-like. Only the mouth was that of a lion. But this could boast and roar and tear to pieces, just like ancient Babylon when anyone dared to oppose it.

For Historicists, the Beast of Revelation 13 represents the papacy. This view was held since the second half of the European Middle Ages till the nineteenth century, especially by most Protestants, for more than 600 years.

Unfortunately, nowadays most Protestants no longer believe that the papacy is the Antichrist. Instead, under Romanist and especially Jesuit influence, they have adopted other, especially Futurist and Preterist, explanations.

The last remaining major Historicist church is the Seventh-day Adventists, with writers like Uriah Smith and others after him.

Outside their ranks, Preterism, Futurism, and Idealism predominate.

Good examples are to be found in the notes on the book of Daniel and the Apocalypse of the English Catholic Bible, which we quoted earlier with reference to Daniel 2 and 7. Concerning verses 1–10 of Revelation 13, it also, like Historicists, links Revelation 13 with Daniel 7, but with a Preterist interpretation.

“This wild beast, combining features of the four beasts in Dn 7, 2–28, symbolizes the Roman empire, the seven heads represent the emperors. . . . The blasphemous names are the divine titles assumed by the emperors.”

About vs. 3, which speaks of a head that received a deadly wound, it says: “This may be a reference to the popular legend that Nero would come back to life and rule again after his death (which occurred in A.D. 68 from a self-inflicted stab wound in the throat). . . . Domitian (A.D. 81–96) embodied all

the cruelty and impiety of Nero.

There is quite a gap in time between those Roman emperors and us who live before the Second Coming. Will Nero or Domitian really return after more than 1,900 years? What do you think?

Revelation 13:4–6 predicts that the whole world would worship the blasphemous Beast. In this, Historicists see a universal adulation of the papacy, which has already begun. But how do the notes in the Catholic Bible put it?

“13, 4: Worshiped the beast: allusion to emperor worship, which Domitian insisted upon and ruthlessly enforced. . . . 13, 5–6: Domitian, like Antiochus IV Epiphanes . . . demanded that he be called by divine titles such as ‘our lord and god’ and ‘Jupiter.’ ”

Ah, *Antiochus IV Epiphanes*! Now where does he fit in? The proper answer is **nowhere**, for here we have a massive inconsistency.

Where the Catholic Bible deals with Daniel 7, it identifies the Little Horn as *pre-Christian* Antiochus IV Epiphanes. But here, in its comments on Revelation 13, it says Nero and Domitian, who lived *after* Christ! William Shakespeare supposedly wrote: “Consistency, thou art a Jewel.” It certainly is, but Catholic non-Historicists are unable to be consistent, because actual events do not endorse their explanations.

Revelation 13 ends with an enigmatic statement: “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six” (vs. 18).

Historicists, many of them non-Seventh-day Adventists from before the time of Uriah Smith, have identified the number 666 with *vicarius Filii Dei* (vicar/representative of the Son of God).

Catholic apologists have tried repeatedly to deny the validity of this title. But my book, *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy* (2011, 2013), citing many documents in five languages, irrefutably vindicates this identification.

But what do the notes in the English Catholic Bible say?

“Each of the letters of the alphabet in Hebrew as well as in Greek has a numerical value. Many possible combinations of

letters will add up to 666, and many candidates have been nominated for this infamous number. The most likely is the emperor Caesar Nero . . . , the Greek form of whose name in Hebrew letters gives the required sum.”

A *Latin*-speaking emperor’s *Greek* name in *Hebrew* letters? Oh, what nonsense! Was the person who wrote this being stupid? Not at all, he was doing his best to exonerate the papacy. But this will not do.

The Beast of Revelation 13 has to meet many criteria, which “Caesar Nero” does not. For instance, this is not a blasphemous name, nor will “all that dwell upon the earth . . . worship him” (vs. 8).

This bit of peculiar Preterism stands up weakly against the historical fact that *vicarius Filii Dei* really has through the centuries been applied to various popes on numerous occasions.

Let us now go to Revelation 20 and read the notes in the Catholic English Bible on verses 1–6:

“Like the other numerical values in this book, the thousand years are not to be taken literally; they symbolize the long period of time between the chaining up of Satan (a symbol for Christ’s resurrection-victory over death and the forces of evil) and the end of the world. During this time God’s people share in the glorious reign of God that is present to them by virtue of their baptismal victory over death and sin. . . .”

In other words, the millennium lasts from Christ’s *first* advent to the end of the world. This is also what Augustine of Hippo taught.

History, however, contradicts him as well as these notes, for both the European Middle Ages and the period that followed have been extremely violent. It was not a glorious time of peace, and Satan was not in any sense chained but very much on the loose. Further, the Roman Church and its Inquisition, assisted by the secular government, were on an unprecedented scale for centuries murdering dissenters, the real “saints” of the Most High. Just as Revelation 13:7 had foretold: “It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.”

Also notice the statement that “like the other numerical values in this book, the thousand years are not to be taken literally; they symbolize the long period of time . . .”

This kind of explanation contains two fatal flaws.

First, the Apocalypse often uses numbers. Sometimes, so does the book of Daniel. In these books, throughout, we find a clear-cut use of numbers, consistent with one another. There are, for instance, the 3.5 years, the 42 months, and the 1,260 days of prophetic time according to the year-day principle.

Second, this Catholic assertion that the numerical values in Revelation “are not to be taken literally” is arbitrary and unprovable. It is a variant of Idealism, based on a vague allegorical method promoted by Origen (184/185–253/254) and his predecessors.

He was born at, and for a time also lived in, Alexandria, Egypt. His life largely overlapped with that of Hippolytus, but his approach to Scripture was very different.

Here is an example of his allegorical method, applied to Matthew 21, which describes how Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and was hailed by an enthusiastic crowd. According to Origen, “The Ass and the Colt Are the Old and the New Testament” [wording in a chapter title] while “ ‘Jesus is the word of God which goes into the soul that is called Jerusalem.’ ” He allegorizes at length on the ‘branches,’ the ‘multitudes,’ and other expressions, and repeats his fancy that ‘the ass and the foal are the old and the new Scriptures, on which the Word of God rides. . . .’ ”⁴

Origen was a very learned professor, but in such passages he wrote pure drivel. Nevertheless, his approach to the Scriptures influenced Eusebius, the famous church historian, who in turn impacted on Augustine of Hippo, whose prophetic ideas predominated throughout the Middle Ages.⁵

Here, according to Fromm, is what medieval Christians, under the influence of men like Augustine, were required to believe: “The camp of the saints [in Rev. 20] is the church of Christ extending over the whole world. The 144,000 are the church of saints, of the city of God; and the Jews are to be converted. The imperial Catholic Church is the stone shattering all earthly kingdoms, until it fills the entire earth.”⁶

The English Catholic Bible in its note on Revelation 21:2 also states that the New Jerusalem is a “symbol of the church.”

As already stated, this translation says: “The other numerical values” in Revelation “are [also] not to be taken

literally.” So, did our Lord not really direct John to write to seven churches on his behalf, because the number seven is “not to be taken literally”? But in Revelation 2 and 3, we do find those letters. Exactly seven of them.

The abandonment of Prophetic Historicism in the European Middle Ages produced an almost impenetrable mental fog which settled onto the medieval mind. For Catholics who consult the notes in the *New American Bible*, it has still not been lifted to this day.

Nevertheless, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, those who have not been deluded continue to have “a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Pet. 1:19–21).

1. *The New American Bible*, World Catholic Press, a Division of Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2000.

2. LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation*. 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946–54), vol. I: 478.

3. Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170–235), *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, translated by Stewart Dingwall Fordyce Salmond (1838–1905), Professor of Theology, United Free Church College, Aberdeen, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, edited by the Rev. Alexander Roberts, D.D., and James Donaldson, L.L.D. (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, 38, George Street, MDCCCLXIX [1869]).

4. Froom, vol. I: 316, 317.

5. Edwin de Kock, “Two Thousand Years of Prophetic Interpretation,” *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy: History, Methodology, and Myth* (Edinburg, TX: Published by the author, 2007), 16–18.

6. Froom, vol. I: 479.

Chapter III Historicism Revived

During the European Middle Ages, theologians turned away from truth to error, which offended the Holy Spirit; therefore, he deprived them of the ability to interpret prophecy correctly. Nevertheless, the Lord did not want the people of that unfortunate period to remain captive to forces hostile to Heaven. After a time he therefore raised up pious men to shine light into their darkness by turning back to a more Historicist interpretation of prophecy.

Attempts at reformation came partly from the Albigenses in southern France and the Waldenses in the alpine valleys of northern Italy. These ancient dissenters were some of Heaven's reserve outside the Catholic Church. The Waldenses thought the papacy was the Beast and Rome the Apocalyptic Babylon.¹ The Albigenses had similar views.²

Spurred on by the papacy, a bloody crusade was launched against the latter in 1209. It was largely successful, wiping out a splendid civilization that had flourished in southern France and produced among others the cultivated Troubadours. But the Waldenses in their mountain fastnesses survived.

During the later Middle Ages, some Catholics began to favor a sounder understanding of what the Bible teaches. This also promoted a better way of studying its prophecies, approved by the Holy Spirit.

One such interpreter within the Roman Church was Joachim of Fiore (Floris), c. 1135–1202, a remarkable man. He lived almost 800 years after Augustine of Hippo, a fourth- and fifth-century man, whose prophetic interpretation had dominated and beclouded the medieval mind during all those centuries. Joachim rekindled the light of Historicism. Who was he?

For a time, he was the abbot of the Cistercian Abbey at Corazzo, in southern Italy. He appeared exactly halfway through the 1,260 years predicted in prophecy, at a time when the papacy was nearing the peak of its power. He was thirty years of age in 1168, that is to say exactly 630 years after 538. The career of Innocent III (1198–1216), the highest point of pontifical power, largely fell within Joachim's lifetime.

He wrote *The Book of the Harmony of the New and Old*

*Testament, An Exposition of the Apocalypse, and The Psalter of Ten Strings.*³

As a prophetic expositor, Joachim became tremendously famous.⁴ This learned man was a Catholic, but ultimately as a “biblical commentator and philosopher of history, was influential in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance in reformist circles. . . .”⁵

According to Froom, the greatest of Joachim’s contributions was to apply the year-day principle to the prophecy of the 1,260 days (the first person known to have done so) and to revive the Historical School of prophetic interpretation.

It is very possible, even likely, that Waldensian influence had reached him from Guardia Piemontese. It is within 100 miles or so from Corazzo, where he lived and worked. How could they have entered the picture? In Joachim’s time, the Waldenses “during the 12th and 13th centuries arrived in Calabria fleeing from the Inquisition in the areas of Bobbio Pellice and Torre Pellice, in what is now Piedmont,” northern Italy. At first they concealed their identity but during the sixteenth century in Reformation times began to reveal it. The Inquisition promptly smelled them out, and Cardinal Michele Ghislieri, later Pope Pius V [a Catholic saint since 1712], unleashed a crusade against them, and had 2,000 Waldenses murdered. Soon they disappeared from Calabria, though they are still remembered there.⁶

Joachim may in part have reflected some Waldensian ideas.

Understanding the 1,260 days had been hidden from the time of Christ. Just before his ascension and Pentecost, the apostles had asked the Saviour: “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” He answered: “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” (Acts 1:6–7)

So how did it happen that a medieval Catholic could make such a great discovery? It was God’s doing, and the time had finally come.

Joachim could no longer believe that the three and a half years or 1,260 days were a literal period. They had been rendered incredible by the very long passage of time.

Led by the Holy Spirit, Joachim read the Latin Bible, as medieval clerics were able to. One day he must have come across Num. 14:34, and the crucial words leaped into his

mind: “After the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, *each day for a year*, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise” (emphasis added). Later he would also have found the same idea in Eze. 4:6: “I have appointed thee each day for a year.”

Incidentally, Joachim may also have known about the discovery of this equivalence by Jewish scholars, long before him. For instance, Palestinian Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph (c. 50–132), had “recognized both the year-day principle and the four empires” of Daniel.⁷

Joachim was fascinated by the 1,260 days, equated in the Apocalypse with 42 months, 3.5 years or a time, times, and half a time. This last-mentioned equivalence goes back to the book of Daniel. This placed the following question before his mind:

1,260 prophetic days = calendar years

? _____ ?

He concluded that the 1,260 years could end in A.D. 1260, which was not right. The correct answer, corroborated by history, is:

1,260 prophetic days = calendar years

A.D. 538 _____ A.D. 1798

Byzantine *General
Belisarius* established
papal supremacy in
Rome

French *General
Berthier* deposed
Pope Pius VI,
who died in exile

These details would eventually be worked out by other expositors in the centuries after Joachim. But it was most important that somebody like him would first wonder about that number and firmly establish the principle that a prophetic day is equal to a calendar year.

He claimed to be guided in his attempts to understand the Bible, especially the Apocalypse, indicating that there were three moments of special illumination. The second one he said took place on an Easter evening, “after a period of frustrated study of the biblical book of Revelation when he felt himself

‘imprisoned’ by difficulties. In the midnight silence, suddenly his mind was flooded with clarity and his understanding released from prison.”⁸ Was that not the doing of the Holy Spirit?

People came to regard Joachim as a prophet in addition to being an interpreter of prophecy. He had a mixed reception. At first, a number of popes encouraged his research, but later the tide turned against him. The Spiritual Franciscans, whom the pontiffs disliked, “at mid-13th century and various other friars, monks, and sects down to the 16th century appropriated his prophecy of a third [very spiritual] age.” Consequently, he “has always had a double reputation, as saint and as heretic, for cautious Christian thinkers and leaders have seen his writings as highly dangerous.”⁹

After he died in 1202, his influence grew. “In 1260 a council held at Arles condemned Joachim’s writings and his supporters, who were very numerous in that region.”¹⁰

Unmasking the papacy as the Antichrist became more prominent in the generation after Joachim. This culminated in the conflict between Pope Gregory IX (c. 1170–1241) and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (1194–1250), whom the papacy wanted to destroy because he had become too powerful.

Those two men, in a heated exchange, denounced each other as the Antichrist. At the Council of Regensburg in 1240 or 1241, the emperor had a powerful ally: Eberhardt II, Archbishop of Salzburg (1200–1246). This was one of Frederick’s most important counsellors as well as the “chief spokesman for the emperor among the German bishops.”¹¹

In support of his master, Eberhardt distanced himself from the Vatican, declaring that the papacy was the Little Horn, which was a new interpretation.¹² Looking back over almost two centuries, the learned archbishop castigated the pontiffs of the High Middle Ages. He said that “Hildebrand, one hundred and seventy years before, first laid the foundations of the empire of Antichrist under the appearance of religion.”¹³

So both Frederick and Eberhardt were excommunicated, which was Rome’s most effective method of dealing with dissenters. The archbishop “died under the ban in 1246. Burial in consecrated ground being refused, he was interred in common ground in an annex of the parish church in Radstadt. Some forty years later, in 1288, his remains were transferred

to the consecrated ground of the Salzburg Cathedral. In the *Annals of Convent Garsten* his obituary states that he was ‘a man of great learning’ who ‘ruled his see most nobly forty-six years.’¹⁴

Criticism of the medieval church was not confined to monarchs and clerics. Several Catholic authors, including some of the most famous who have ever lived, portrayed specific popes as Antichrist.

Among them were Jean de Meun (c. 1275), the Frenchman who finished the *Romance of the Rose*—a vastly popular work in those days—and two eminent Italian writers, Jacopone da Todi (c.1230–1306) and Dante Alighieri (1265–1321),¹⁵ the greatest Christian poet of the past seven hundred years.

In the nineteenth canto of his *Inferno* (the *Divine Comedy*), Dante commits a number of popes to hell for simony and lusting after worldly possessions. He clearly indicates that the church through the love of money had become the harlot woman of Rev. 17. He rages against several pontiffs: Nicholas III, Boniface VIII, and Clement V, consigning them to hell (XIX.22–30).¹⁶

For these Historicists back in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Beast of Revelation 13 represented the papacy.

According to Froom, Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498), more than a hundred years later, preached repentance and reformation in Florence. He was a nobleman who had become a Dominican priest and the mightiest prophetic voice in Italy since Joachim of Floris, whom he cited. He drew huge crowds as he preached against a corrupt clergy, who were more interested in Renaissance art than in the things of God.¹⁷

He early incurred the anger of Alexander VI, a Spanish Borgia pope, by launching denunciations based on Bible prophecy. “The Roman church is full of simony and vileness. . . . I visualized a black cross over Babylon-Rome with the inscription: Wrath of the Lord. And on the strength of vision I declare again, that the Church must reform herself, and that very soon because God is angry.”¹⁸

Eventually Savonarola enunciated these nine doctrines, which he set out before his death:

- (1) Free justification by faith in Christ.
- (2) Communion in both kinds.

- (3) Papal pardons and indulgences of no effect.
- (4) Preaching against the wicked lives of cardinals.
- (5) Denial of pope's supremacy.
- (6) Keys not given to Peter but to the universal church.
- (7) The pope is Antichrist.
- (8) The pope's excommunication invalid.
- (9) Auricular confession not necessary.¹⁹

With his use of prophecy and such doctrines, Savonarola sealed his fate. He was declared a heretic, excommunicated, stripped of his robes, and deposed as a priest. He was hanged on the gallows and then burned in public on May 23, 1498.²⁰

Froom declared that in those days many others also proclaimed the evils of the papacy, urged people to study the Bible, and died for their faith. "From 1450 to 1517 there were frequent declarations of the retribution about to burst over Rome, the popes, and the clergy, together with cravings for reformation."²¹

That date, 1517, is famous in the story of the sixteenth-century Reformation. It was then that Martin Luther first lifted his voice against the wickedness of Rome. He likewise found vindication in Bible prophecy, which he studied diligently.

Here, according to Froom, is how Luther explained King Nebuchadnezzar's dream image as recorded in Daniel 2:

"The first kingdom is the Assyrian or Babylonian kingdom; the second, the Medo-Persian; the third, the great kingdom of Alexander and the Greeks; and the fourth, the Roman Empire. In this the whole world agrees, and history supports it fully in detail.

"But the prophet has the most to say about the Roman empire, . . . the legs, the feet, and the toes. The Roman empire will be divided. Spain, France, England, and others emerged from it, some of them weak, others strong, and although it will be divided there will still be some strength, as symbolized by the iron in it. . . . This empire shall last until the end; no one will destroy it but Jesus Himself, when His kingdom comes."²²

That was a good 350 years before Uriah Smith!

Regarding the papacy, Luther wrote: "The second Babylon is similar to the first, and what the mother has done, that is

also practiced by the daughter. The first Babylon defended her faith by fire and burnt the ancestors of Christ. This Babylon in Rome burns the children of Christ. One Babylon is as pious as the other.”²³

Luther’s interpretation of Bible prophecy was not always consistent or sound. For instance, under the impact of the Ottoman onslaught in Eastern Europe, he equated the Little Horn described in Daniel 7 with the Turks.²⁴

Nevertheless, prophecy—mostly of the Historicist variety—played an important role in his preaching.

In his *All Roads Lead to Rome?* Michael de Semlyen, an anti-ecumenical writer, in 1993 wrote that from the second half of the European Middle Ages until the nineteenth century, Historicism prevailed, especially among Protestants, for more than 600 years:

“Wycliffe, Tyndale, Luther, Calvin, Cranmer; in the seventeenth century, Bunyan, the translators of the King James Bible and the men who published the Westminster and Baptist Confessions of Faith; Sir Isaac Newton, Wesley, Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards; and more recently, Spurgeon, Bishop J. C. Ryle and Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones; these men among countless others, all saw the office of the Papacy as the Antichrist, that is substituting for Christ, the new face of the old paganism that is *Mystery Babylon* in the Bible.”²⁵

To these, de Semlyen should have added both the Millerites and the Seventh-day Adventists, who also inherited this glorious Historicist tradition. The latter have retained it to the present.

Unfortunately, however, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Catholicism began to make a comeback. The Counter Reformation, spearheaded by the Jesuits, laid the groundwork for demolishing Historicism through alternative schools of prophetic interpretation.

A number of very clever scholars prepared the way.

One of them was Luis del Alcázar/Alcázar (1554–1613), a Spanish Jesuit. His magnum opus was an *Investigation of the Hidden Sense of the Apocalypse*, a 900-page commentary.

In it, he taught that *all* of Revelation applied to the era of pagan Rome and only the first six centuries of Christianity. According to Alcázar, Revelation 12 to 19 describes the overthrow of Roman paganism (the great harlot) and the

conversion of the empire to Catholicism. Revelation 20 deals with the final persecutions by Antichrist, who is identified as Caesar Nero (A.D. 54–68). He stated that Revelation 21–22 described the triumph of the New Jerusalem, which is the Roman Church. He also attacked Joachim of Fiore, saying: “He who will may hold the Abbot Joachim to be a prophet of God, but not I.”²⁶

Though Alcázar was largely a Preterist, he also used other methods of interpreting prophecy such as Idealism, based on allegorization. In fact, a preliminary note in his book specifically mentions Origen,²⁷ who perfected this wrongheaded approach to the Bible. Alcázar’s Preterism needed bits of Idealism to patch over awkward statements.

For instance, Revelation 1:7 says: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”²⁸

Alcázar did not contradict the idea that Christ would “come to Judgment in a *material cloud*,” yet for him “so beautiful and apt is the symbolical signification of *clouds*” that he explained this verse in a way that Origen could have liked: “Behold, the Apocalypse sets before us the Advent of Christ in the *clouds of the preaching of the Gospel*, by means of which God pours down His heavenly shower, that is, the spirit of peace and of prayer” (Clissold’s Translation).²⁹

Other Jesuits of the Counter Reformation espoused Futurism.

Francisco Ribera (1537–1591), a Jesuit doctor of theology, also born in Spain, began writing a lengthy commentary in 1585 on the book of Revelation. It was published in about 1590, the year before his death. To show that the papacy was not the Antichrist, Ribera proposed that the first few chapters of the Apocalypse applied to ancient pagan Rome. The rest he limited to a yet future period of 3.5 literal years, immediately before the Second Coming.

During that time, the Antichrist, a *single* individual, would persecute and blaspheme the saints of God, rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, abolish the Christian religion, deny Jesus Christ, be received by the Jews, pretend to be God, kill the two witnesses of God, and conquer the world. The 1,260 days, 42 months, and 3.5 years were not 1,260 years, but *literal* calendar time.

Therefore, according to Ribera, *none* of the book of Revelation had any application to the Middle Ages or the papacy, but to the future just before the Second Coming—hence the name *Futurism*.

His solution was to fit the 1,260 as literal time into the first half of the seventieth prophetic week of Daniel 9. The second half, Ribera said, would end with the Second Coming. But that would leave a huge time gap, much wider than the Grand Canyon, between the first and the second half of the final year.

Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, one of the best known Jesuit apologists, between 1581 and 1593 published his *Polemic Lectures Concerning the Disputed Points of the Christian Belief Against the Heretics of This Time*. He also denied the day-year principle, pushing the reign of the Antichrist into a future period. Like Ribera, he insisted that the 1,260 days could not be 1,260 years. Why not? Because nobody lived that long!

There is a powerful reason why this Futurist solution is hopeless. As shown in my *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (2001) and a *Ministry* article (August 2002), there is no prophetic link between the 1,260 days/42 months/3½ years and the second half of the seventieth year-week in Dan. 9.

It is contradicted by the simple fact that, as literal time, 3½ years do not consist of 1,260 days. We can easily prove this with a simple electronic calculator.

According to the Gregorian calendar, the year comprises 365 days, except when there is a leap year. The actual number is 365.2422 days. So we must use this figure as the basis of our calculation, as follows: $365.2422 \times 3.5 = 1,278$ days; not 1,260 days. There is an 18-day discrepancy!

Did Ribera not notice this? He certainly did, and even admitted but also brushed aside the problem: “*These days do not completely make up three years and a half, just as Christ did not complete a half year of preaching,*”³⁰ which is completely

untrue.

This is a feeble argument, for the Bible also expresses the 3½ years as 42 months and 1,260 days. This shows that Inspiration meant it to be not an approximate but an exact, specific number. And it is meaningful only as a symbolic figure, in terms of prophetic year-days. This prophetic period just cannot, as literal time, be identical with the last half of the final year-week described in Dan. 9:27.

That this Futurist interpretation differed so greatly from that put forth by Alcázar, mattered little to the Roman Church, confronted by the attacks of Protestant Historicists on the papacy. Catholicism was using two vastly different and contradictory prophetic interpretations in a desperate effort to counter the claims of the Reformers.

All non-Historicist schools, namely Preterism, Futurism, and Idealism, have one thing in common: They deflect the finger of accusation away from the papacy.

A book containing yet more of Satan's deceptions appeared in 1766: *Apocalypsis Revelata* (The Apocalypse Revealed) by Emanuel Swedenborg. Its author was a former Swedish scientist brilliant in many fields. According to him, the Lord Jesus, as a bright and shining personage, had appeared to him and said he would explain to him the mysteries of Revelation. Swedenborg, essentially a Spiritualist, had many visions. He taught that nothing in the Apocalypse should be taken literally. Everything was symbolic, including the numbers. And he denied that the 666 of Revelation 13:18 referred to the pope.

At first, the Protestants just sneered at or ignored these deviations. But in the nineteenth century things would change. Sad to say, from then onward, very many Protestants unwittingly became the victims of the Catholic Counter Reformation and turned away from prophetic Historicism. Some would also be influenced by Swedenborg's deceptions. The next chapter will deal with these issues and their consequences.

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 2. Friedrich Otto, *The End of the World* (New York: International Publishing, 1986), 70.
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 5. *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Bicentennial ed., 23 vols., Chicago: William Benton, 1968), s.v. “Joachim of Fiore (Flora or Floris).”
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 11. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. I, 796. 12. *Ibid.*, 798.
 13. *Ibid.*, 799. 14. *Ibid.*, 798–799.
 15. Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1994), 167–170.
 16. Dante, cited in McGinn, *Antichrist*, 171.
 17. Froom, vol. II: 142–144, 152. 18. *Ibid.*, 152
 19. *Ibid.*, 149. 20. *Ibid.* 21. *Ibid.*: 153–155.
 22. *Ibid.*, 267–268. 23. *Ibid.*, 277. 24. *Ibid.*, 269.
 25. Michael de Semlyen, *All Roads Lead to Rome? The Ecumenical Movement* (Gerrards Cross, Eng.: Dorchester House Publications, 1993), 152.
 26. Ludovici ab Alcázar, *Vestigatio Arcani Sensvs in Apocalypsi* [*Investigation of the Hidden Sense of the Apocalypse*] (Antwerp: Johannes Keerbergh, 1614).
 27. 15th (Decimaquinta) Preliminary Note (56–57) in *Vestigatio*.
 28. Note 7, chapter 1, verse 7 (199–202), in *Vestigatio*.
 29. *Ibid.*
 30. Francisco Ribera, cited in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 2, 492.

Chapter IV Transatlantic Contrast

The book of Daniel contains several time prophecies. Three of them are featured in its last chapter, but the prophet was not allowed to understand them. Instead, he was told: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4).

He saw a divine being raising his hands toward heaven who “swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be fulfilled” (Daniel 12:7). Daniel loved his people the Jews and was very upset, so he asked an explanation, but it was refused. He was told: “Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end” (vs. 9).

“Time, times, and a half” is one of the ways in which the 1,260 year-days were expressed. This phrase is also found in Revelation 12:14. There we read about a woman that symbolizes the people of God fleeing from the great red Dragon into the wilderness. This is what that prophecy, which begins “the time of the end” basically means:

1,260 prophetic days = calendar years

A.D. 538 _____ A.D. 1798

Byzantine *General Belisarius* established papal supremacy in Rome

French *General Berthier* deposed Pope Pius VI, who died in exile

Since 1798, knowledge has indeed increased stupendously. Science and inventions have been flourishing, but also an understanding of Bible prophecy. Historicists have figured out this prediction. It occurs seven times in Daniel and the Revelation, presented variously as “time, times, and a half” (3.5 years), 42 months, and 1,260 days.

William Miller (1782–1849), a powerful Baptist preacher, Bible student, and writer, with others who agreed with him, calculated that Christ would return in 1844 on the basis of this

prediction: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Dan. 8:14). About this, Daniel was also told: “Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision” (Daniel 8:17).

Like most other Christians in those days, the Millerites believed the sanctuary was this earth. Their final date for the Second Coming was October 22, 1844. Well, the Lord Jesus did not appear, and after the Great Disappointment most of them gave up their belief. One group, which later became the Seventh-day Adventists, concluded that while the Millerite calculations of the time period had been correct, the prophecy did not refer to the Second Coming. Instead, that date in 1844 marked the beginning of the Investigative Judgment, when the Saviour entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary.

The Investigative Judgment is a cardinal and unique doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventists. Based on Revelation 14:6–7, this is also called the First Angel’s Message.

It involves the existence of a sanctuary in heaven. According to the Bible, both the ancient tabernacle made by Moses more than three millennia ago and Solomon’s larger, more magnificent temple a few hundred years later were patterned after it (Ex. 25:9; 1 Chron. 28:11–13; Heb. 9:23). These were not, however, simple replicas; they contained typological elements pointing to our Saviour’s future ministry.

Here are examples of it. The blood on the altar of sacrifice outside the sanctuary represents Jesus crucified for us. Within the first apartment, known as the Holy Place, the showbread signaled the fact that our Lord is the bread of life, while the seven-branched candlestick prefigured him as the light of the world. The High Priest also represented Jesus, who is the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 12:24).

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, which the Jews to this day call Yom Kippur, the earthly high priest entered the second apartment of the sanctuary, called the Most Holy Place. He sprinkled blood from the altar of sacrifice onto the Mercy Seat, above the Ark of the Covenant. This chest contained God’s Law, the unalterable Ten Commandments, that the Most High had written on two tablets of stone. Two golden cherubim with outspread wings looked down on the Mercy Seat and the Ark of the Covenant beneath. They

represent celestial angels who gaze with consuming interest on and study the significance of what Christ, our sacrifice, mediator, and judge, is doing there. The proceedings on the earthly Yom Kippur, which Jews still regard as an annual judgment day, typified the heavenly Day of Atonement, which began on October 22, 1844, as calculated by the Millerites.

Though this doctrine makes use of typology and related ideas, it is not just symbolic; a sanctuary in heaven really exists. The two apartments represent two stages of our Lord's ministry.

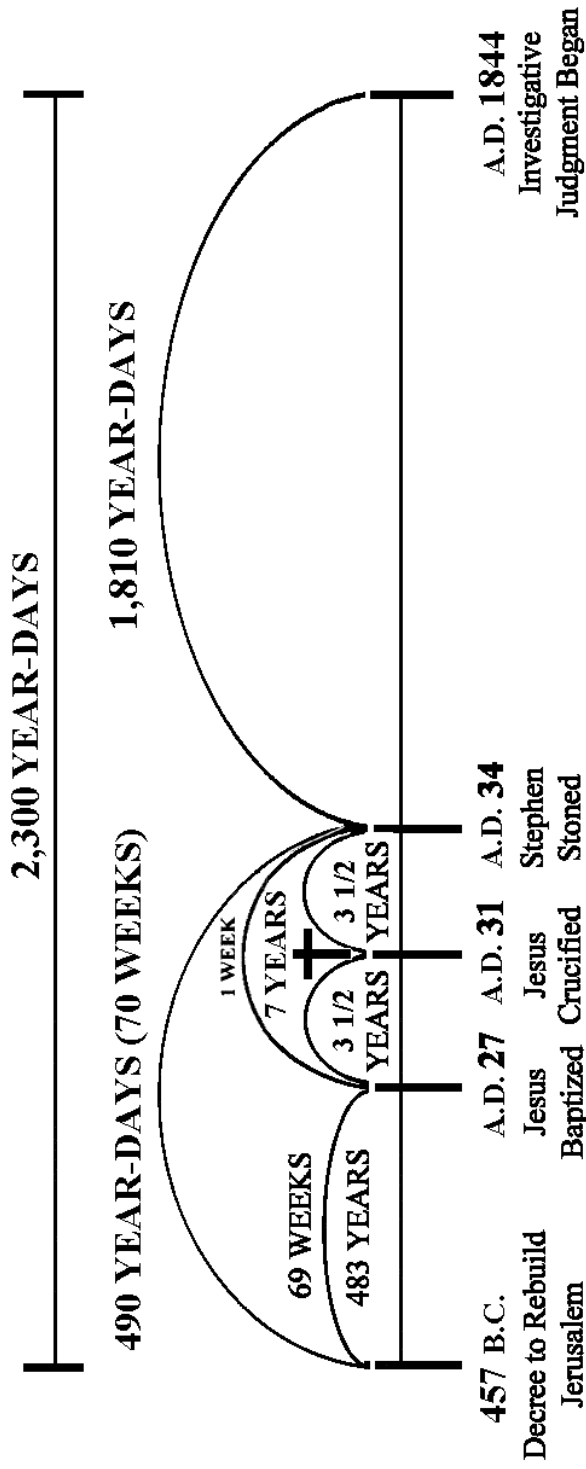
But what of the criticism that God, who knows everything and can instantly judge, does not need a visible tribunal?

Ultimately much more is involved than evaluating the lives of men and women. Satan, fallen Lucifer, first misled into transgression a host of angels. After that he seduced our ancestors, Eve and through her Adam. He also entered into a great controversy with the Most High, whom he accuses of wrongdoing. Therefore, the universe needs to observe how all of this is dealt with—especially to see that God can be simultaneously just and merciful. As in pre-Christian times, they note that Law is always linked with Mercy, but only by sacrifice, through Christ.

The fact is that for justice to be done it must be seen to be done. Not merely seen by God, but by questioning heavenly angels and other intelligent beings in the universe.

At least some judgment must take place before the Second Coming, to decide who will be saved and who will be lost. This especially applies to those who are accounted righteous through the Saviour's merits, both the living when he returns and the dead whom he will resurrect. This is the Investigative Judgment now in progress. It will affect us all.

“And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shoudest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament . . .” (Rev. 11:18–19).



As is shown in Froom's masterpiece, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, the First Angel's Message was proclaimed not only in the United States but in many countries, including Latin America, South Africa, and Europe—especially Great Britain.¹

After 1844, the Second and Third Angels' messages, also found in Revelation 14, followed. The last of them (Revelation 14:9–11), denounces the Beast of Revelation 13 as the papacy and its mark, which Seventh-day Adventists believe is Sundaykeeping. They teach that one day America and other countries will make Sunday laws to persecute those who observe the seventh-day Sabbath.

A major element in identifying the Antichrist of Revelation 13 as the papacy is the period during which it would dominate Western Europe: 1,260 days, 42 months, or 3.5 years—supported by the Historicist principle that a prophetic day represents a calendar year. There is *only one entity on earth* that has ruled for this length of time after the fall of pagan Rome, and that is the papacy.

But even while the Millerites were rolling out their prophetic charts, the Evil One had already set in motion forces of reaction, first in Britain. Afterwards they would also cross over to America. Eminent Protestants fell in love with the rituals and doctrines of Rome. Some of them looked back to non-Historicist schools perfected during the Counter Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by Jesuit scholars, whom we have already discussed.

Samuel Roffey Maitland (1792–1866), scholar and librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote *An Enquiry Into the Grounds on Which the Prophetic Period of Daniel and St. John, Has Been Supposed to Consist of 1260 Years*² which appeared after 1826.

He helped to establish Futurism in England. Like the Jesuits of the Counter Reformation, he said the 3.5 times, 42 months, and 1,260 days of Daniel and Revelation had to be literal calendar time.

It is doubtful, however, whether Maitland—unlike Ribera—was aware of the fatal calculation error embedded in Futurism, namely that there are not 1,260 literal days in a calendar year but 1,278. Probably not. The same is true of his intellectual heirs, the present-day Dispensationalists.

Maitland belonged to the Church of England, which had always contained more Catholic than Protestant elements. But in the nineteenth century, the distance that separated Canterbury from the Vatican was about to be narrowed further, with Futurism providing the theological bridge for doing so. In this process, two institutions of higher learning were to play a prominent part.

The first of these was Trinity College, later the University of Dublin, Ireland. Here Maitland soon acquired a passionate disciple: Dr. James Henthron Todd (1805–1869), the Regius Professor of Hebrew, who had become an Anglican priest in 1832.³ Though a Protestant, he was also a nationalist, preoccupied with the history of his country and working hard on the resurrection of Irish manuscripts.⁴

In 1838 and the next year, Todd was Donnellan Lecturer at Trinity College “and chose as his subject the prophecies relating to Antichrist. Openly proclaiming himself Maitland’s follower, he boldly attacked the Reformers’ Historical School view—still commonly held by the Protestant clergy in Ireland—that the Pope was Antichrist.”⁵

His 1838 lectures were later published as *Discourses on the Prophecies Relating to Antichrist in the Writing of Daniel and St. Paul* (1840) with a dedication to Maitland.⁶

For Todd, too, the Antichrist was not the papacy but an individual, who would appear immediately before the Second Coming, with a Jewish rather than a Christian background.⁷ Todd attributed the traditional Protestant views to the Waldenses and Albigenses, who had “applied the Scriptural symbols . . . of beast, harlot, and synagogue of Satan, to the Papacy.” This line of thinking, he thought, resulted from Manichaeism. But he also acknowledged the role of medieval Catholics like Joachim of Floris.⁸

Above all, Todd did not regard Catholicism as an apostasy from Bible religion. For him, despite its errors, “the Church of Rome [was] a true Christian Church.”⁹

Todd’s Irish patriotism and fellow feeling for likeminded Catholics provided a powerful motive for not wanting to see the Roman Church or the papacy as the Antichrist. Other scholars in his country agreed with him.

One of them was William Burgh/de Burgh (1806–1866). Educated at Trinity College, Dublin, he later also lectured

there. He produced a treatise on *Antichrist* (1829), as well as *The Apocalypse Unfulfilled* (1832) and *Lectures on the Second Advent* (1832). “He became persuaded of the Futurist concept of a personal antichrist that would be revealed before the Lord’s coming. He also expressed ‘unfeigned gratification’ over Maitland’s Futurist *Attempt to Elucidate the Prophecies Concerning Antichrist* (1830).”¹⁰

Another Futurist with an Irish connection was John Nelson Darby (1800–1882), likewise educated at Trinity College, Dublin.¹¹

The Plymouth Brethren, with whom Protestant Futurism became associated, also have Irish roots. “About 1825 Edward Cronin gathered the first congregation in Dublin, and was joined by other leading spirits, the most notable perhaps being John Nelson Darby and B. W. Newton. The name Plymouth Brethren is derived from the fact that Plymouth was long the chief center of the movement.”¹²

Nothing has for the past two hundred years played a more important part in the religious history of the Anglo-Saxon world than the Irish connection, in both its purely Catholic and ecumenical aspects.

Futurism, particularly through its espousal by Irish Anglicans, largely neutralized the first angel’s message in the British Isles. More than that, it did much to catholicize the Church of England and to prepare the way for the ecumenical movement of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

While these developments were afoot in Ireland, the religious ferment affecting Britain during the early nineteenth century had also reached Oxford University. But there it did not concentrate at first on future events like the Second Coming or the fulfillment of time prophecies in Daniel or Revelation.

It began with an aesthetic and emotional appeal, focusing on England’s medieval, Catholic roots.

This movement originated in 1833. It began with John Keble’s sermon on “National Apostasy” at Oxford. Eventually it caused the defection of many Anglican priests to the Roman Church. The most eminent of these were two scholarly men: Henry Edward Manning (1808–1892), Prime Minister Gladstone’s friend, and John Henry Newman (1801–1890). Manning went on to become the Archbishop of

Westminster—as head of the Roman Church in England. Both converts were made cardinals by the pope.

The Oxford Movement formally ended in 1845, with Newman’s conversion to Catholicism,¹³ though to this day its Rome-ward influence has endured.

Another name for the Oxford Movement was Tractarianism, because it produced a series of ninety *Tracts for the Times*, issued in that university town between 1833 and 1841. The tracts discussed a variety of questions, but “the underlying intention of all of them was,” as Lytton Strachey puts it, “to attack the accepted doctrines and practices of the Church of England.”¹⁴

According to Froom, the Tractarians sought “to demolish the doctrinal barriers that separated the Anglican Church from Rome, and so let down the bars for the reentry of many in 1845–46.”¹⁵ Tract 90 set out “to prove that there was nothing in the Thirty-nine Articles incompatible with the creed of the Roman Church,” provided they were correctly interpreted.¹⁶

Newman was the editor¹⁷ and by far the most influential personality of the Oxford Movement. A gifted writer and poet, “he was a child of the Romantic Revival, a creature of emotion and of memory.”¹⁸ He was also a slippery and charming sophist, about whom Thomas Huxley wrote when he had reread him: “After an hour or two of him I began to lose sight of the distinction between truth and falsehood.”¹⁹

Newman was absolutely enchanted with the Middle Ages, in which both he and Keble “saw a transcendent manifestation of Divine power, flowing down elaborate and immense through the ages; a consecrated priesthood, stretching back, through the mystic symbol of the laying on of hands, to the very Godhead. . . .”²⁰

One special hurdle barred the way of the Anglicans on their way back to Rome: the Protestant teaching that the papacy was the Antichrist according to various Bible prophecies, including the 1,260 year-days. But Ribera’s Futurism, revived by Maitland and emphasized by Todd, enabled them to overcome this problem.

In his essay, “The Protestant Idea of Antichrist,” written five years before he joined the Roman Church, Newman said: “The discourses which Dr. Todd has recently given to the world, are, perhaps, the first attempt for a long course of years in this part of

Christendom [Protestant England] to fix a dispassionate attention and a scientific interpretation upon the momentous 'Prophecies relating to Antichrist in the writings of Daniel and St. Paul.' ”²¹

He added: “We entirely agree with Dr. Todd”²² and also wrote: “The question really lies, be it observed, between those two alternatives, *either* the Church of Rome is the house of God *or* the house of Satan; there is no middle ground between them. The question is, whether, as he [Todd] maintains, its fulfillment is yet to come, or whether it has taken place in the person of the Bishop of Rome, as Protestants have very commonly supposed.”²³ Newman attributed the Historical School of prophetic interpretation to “three heretical bodies,” between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, namely the Albigenses, Waldenses, and the Spiritual Franciscans—“the third of which arose in the Church of Rome itself, as well as the Fraticelli, and the Joachimites, including Olivi,” and afterwards “the Hussites, Lutherans, Calvinists, and English Reformers.”²⁴

We, however, have traced it much further back, to the earliest Christian Church.

Manning, who defected to Catholicism six years after Newman, held similar views. He even declared that Protestantism had already desecrated, in many lands, the continual sacrifice. “What is the characteristic mark of the Reformation, but the rejection of the Mass, and all that belongs to it . . . ? The suppression of the continual sacrifice is, above all, that mark and characteristic of the Protestant Reformation.”²⁵

Futurism in nineteenth-century England dealt a deathblow to the Historical School of prophetic interpretation and largely extinguished British Adventism. It then went on to bolster the Oxford Movement. Not only did important Anglican clergymen like Newman and Manning become Catholics. They came to see the work of Reformers like Luther, Calvin, and others as the abomination that makes desolate the sanctuary service of Catholicism. For them, the *tamid*, the continual sacrifice, had become the sacrifice of the Mass!²⁶

Chronologically there is a curious parallel between the career of Adventism in America and of the Tractarians in England.

During August 1831, William Miller (1782–1849) covenanted with God to share what he had discovered in the

prophecies, and was promptly asked to preach. He continued to do so until 1844.²⁷

In 1833, the Oxford Movement began, when John Keble also preached a sermon. The Tractarians formally ceased their activities in 1845, when Henry Newman joined the Roman Church.

These Catholic conversions coincided, in 1845–1846, with the seminal years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, when its pioneers were formulating three of its most distinctive doctrines: the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, and the Spirit of prophecy.

And so the reader may imagine: “Well, that’s how it all ended! The Oxford Movement ceased to be a factor in the English-speaking world.” But, no, those nineteenth-century events were only a beginning. They crystallized two competing structures, diametrically opposed to each other—and set on a collision course for the future.

This is how Michael de Semlyen contextualized it: “The Reformed faith of Anglicans and Free Churchmen had been eroded over the centuries by the Counter-Reformation, and particularly in the nineteenth century, after the 1833 launch of the *Oxford Movement* in the Anglican Church, by John Henry Newman and the other Tractarians. As belief in the Bible was diminished by humanism, rationalism and liberal theology, Roman Catholic tradition was held firm and strengthened by the new Anglo-Catholic group in the Church of England. By the beginning of this [the twentieth] century High Anglicans had joined liberal traditionalists in key positions at the head of the church, doctrinal differences were downgraded and ecumenism was well and truly under way.”²⁸

We especially note the fact that Futurism, transmitted from Ribera to Maitland, to Todd, and finally to Manning and Newman, broke through the prophetic barrier between Protestantism and the Roman Church.

1. Where not acknowledged specifically, sources are provided in one or more of the following: LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation* (4 vols. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946–1954), especially vol. 2; Edwin

de Kock, *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy* (Edinburg, TX: Published by the author, 2011, 2013); Edwin de Kock, *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (Edinburg, TX: Published by the author, 2001, 2013); Edwin de Kock, *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy: History, Methodology, and Myth* (Edinburg, TX: Published by the author, 2007).

2. Samuel R. Maitland, *An Enquiry Into the Grounds on Which the Prophetic Period of Daniel and St. John Has Been Supposed to Consist of 1260 Years*, cited in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 3, 542.

3. Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 3, 659–660.

4. Herbert A. Kenny, *Literary Dublin: A History* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1974), 112–113.

5. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. III, 660. 6. *Ibid.* 7. *Ibid.* 8. *Ibid.*, 661.

9. James Henthron Todd, cited in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 3, 662.

10. William Burgh, cited in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. 3, 658–659.

11. John Nelson Darby, www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages, downloaded 3/11/03.

12. Footnote, Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. IV, 1223.

13. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. III, 663.

14. Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians* (1918. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, n.d.), 21.

15. Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. III, 663–664.

16. Strachey, *Eminent Victorians*, 30.

17. *Ibid.*, 18. 18. *Ibid.*, 16.

19. Thomas H. Huxley, cited in Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Lord Acton: A Study in Conscience and Politics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), 158.

20. Strachey, *Eminent Victorians*, 19.

21. John Henry Newman, “The Protestant Idea of Antichrist,” *Essays Critical and Historical*, vol. 2, 112, cited in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. III, 667.

22. Newman, *ibid.*, 114, cited in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. III, 667.

23. *Ibid.* 24. *Ibid.*, 667–668.

25. Henry Manning, *ibid.*, 159, 160, cited in Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, vol. III, 736.

26. Henry Manning, *ibid.*, 158, cited in Froom, *Prophetic*

Faith, vol. III, 735.

27. Don F. Neufeld and Julia Neuffer, eds., et al. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. (Rev. ed. Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1976), s.v. "Miller, William."

28. Michael de Semlyen, *All Roads Lead to Rome? The Ecumenical Movement* (Gerrards Cross, Eng.: Dorchester House Publications, 1993), 20.

Chapter V

Historicism Eclipsed in North America

John Nelson Darby (1800–1882), a Church of Ireland clergyman, later with the Plymouth Brethren, also promoted Futurism and a secret rapture in his *Studies on the Book of Daniel*. Darby later visited America several times between 1859 and 1874, where his Futurist theology was eagerly accepted.

Darby's writings greatly influenced Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843–1921), who incorporated Futurism in the notes of the *Scofield Reference Bible*. First published by Oxford University Press in 1909, one million copies of it were printed by 1930. During the twentieth century, this was a powerful instrument for firmly establishing the Jesuit-inspired Futurist interpretation in the Protestant Bible schools of the United States.

Many Protestant seminaries, institutions, and ministries in the United States have abandoned the Historicist teaching that the Roman Catholic Church is the apostate church and the harlot of Revelation, with the Antichrist papacy at its head. Instead, they have been deluded into adopting Jesuit-inspired Futurism.

One of them is likely the most influential seminary in the United States today, the Dallas Theological Seminary, a nondenominational Protestant school. It was founded in 1924 as Evangelical Theological College by Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871–1952), a student of Cyrus Scofield. Its faculty or alumni include influential Futurists. Here only a few of them can be singled out.

Charles C. Ryrie, author of *The Ryrie Study Bible*. This has been characterized as the updated *Scofield Reference Bible* for the end of the twentieth century. With 10,000+ study notes, it is listed among the best-selling books published by Moody Press.

Hal Lindsey (1929–), who has authored many books and is perhaps the best-known prophetic interpreter of the last 30 years. Futurism was greatly strengthened by his works, especially *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970), a world best seller, *The 1980s: Countdown to Armageddon* (1982), and *The Rapture: Truth or Consequences* (1983).

But these books contained two fatal flaws. One was the assumption that the Soviet Union would continue to exist, which it did not. The other was time setting. According to Lindsey, from the founding of Israel as a state on 14 May 1948, the Second Coming would take place within a generation, that is, about 40 years.¹

By 1988, the Lord had not yet returned. It is now 26 years later, and he still has not. Did this finish off Mr. Lindsey? Not at all. Still writing and lecturing, on television and videos, he remains popular, because so many cling to Dispensationalism.

Lately, he also linked the present United States president with his predictions. As *Time* magazine reported: “Conservative Christian author Hal Lindsey declared in an essay on WorldNetDaily, “Obama is correct in saying that the world is ready for someone like him—a messiah-like figure, charismatic and glib . . . The Bible calls that leader the Antichrist. And it seems apparent that the world is now ready to make his acquaintance.”²

Matt Novak, a writer who is also a human gadfly and Lindsey debunker, wrote about him in his blog Paleofuture, a look into the future that never was. On Wednesday, February 14, 2007, he exclaimed:

“Every so often you stumble upon a book that makes you wish you were illiterate. In Hal Lindsey’s *The 1980’s: Countdown to Armageddon* he boldly proclaims, ‘The decade of the 1980s [*sic*] could very well be the last decade of history as we know it.’“

Novak also said: “While it may be funny to think that a man could write such a ridiculous book it is discouraging to think that this man still has a reputation to speak of. In a just society, this man would have been laughed off the face of the earth.” Therefore, “as a public service I present the most hilarious of Hal Lindsey’s claims for why the 1980s may, [*sic*] ‘be the last decade of history as we know it.’”

He quoted eleven peculiar statements and failed predictions, with the numbers of the pages on which they occur in the book, concluding sarcastically: “Needless to say, everything that Mr. Lindsey predicted came true and everyone in the United States that was a true-believing Christian was raptured into the heavens after the great 1980’s Soviet attack upon U.S. soil (in which demon-aliens were involved. Don’t

forget the demon-aliens and their human spacecraft).”³

At the turn of the millennium, Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins with their *Left Behind* series repeated Lindsey’s success. More than 20 million copies of these books have been sold. Their conception was very similar to Lindsey’s, though they avoided the pitfall of time setting. Also, they presented their ideas through the medium of fiction, although the underlying theology was supposed to have a factual basis, as explained in LaHaye’s *Revelation Unveiled*. He retained the idea from the Cold War era that Russia would seek to conquer Israel. For this, he thought it was due to suffer destruction at the hand of God.⁴

These authors maintained that Antichrist’s kingdom would be essentially atheist, with socialism as the “basic philosophy” of its government and economic system.⁵ Well, these notions are also now outmoded, like those of Hal Lindsey. Russia has returned to the fold of the Orthodox Church and is striving to become a more or less capitalist country.

Has this put an end to Dispensationalism? It has not, for its roots are too deep, and these men are highly respected owing to their abilities as ministers, public speakers, and academics.

Timothy F. “Tim” LaHaye (1926–), an older contemporary of Hal Lindsey, holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from Western Theological Seminary (Reformed Church in America). He was a Baptist minister for almost 25 years and wrote more than 50 books, both fiction and nonfiction. Further, he was involved in creating several institutions. In 1971, he founded Christian Heritage College, now known as San Diego Christian College. In 1991, he cofounded the Pre-Trib Research Center, a think tank of over 200 pro-Rapture scholars.⁶ In January 2002, he founded the Tim LaHaye School of Prophecy, which opened on the campus of Liberty University, Lynchburg, Va., whose Chancellor was Dispensationalist Dr. Jerry Falwell.⁷

Also Futurist are Jack Van Impe Ministries and the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.

Trinity Broadcasting, perhaps the largest Christian TV Broadcasting Network, has produced two futurist-themed movies: *Omega Code* and *Megiddo* (Omega Code II). TBN has also aired movies with secret rapture/futurism themes.

The intent of both Futurism and Preterism was to be

diversionary, to counter or offset the Protestant Historicist interpretation, and present alternatives, no matter how implausible they might be.

Of this, the truly amazing part is that nowadays Futurist ideas predominate in Protestant teaching. Mostly we hear or read about the yet-to-appear Antichrist, who will be unveiled in the last three and a half years of Daniel's 70th week, when he declares himself to be God in a rebuilt temple at Jerusalem. That scenario is directly traceable back to the pen of the Jesuit Francisco Ribera, a Roman Catholic.

A minority of Protestants prefers Preterism, the other Jesuit school of Interpretation, perfected by Luis del Alcázar.

Seventh-day Adventists are the only remaining Protestant denomination of any size that is still Historicist. Unfortunately their thinking has also of late been infiltrated by elements of Preterism, Futurism, Idealism, and a strange Numerology, as is shown in my three-volume work, *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy* (2011, 2013).

Such thinking by some scholars is eroding the Three Angels' Messages. Though they do not always realize it, they have yielded to the influence of writers outside our church. The latter are a motley crew of Protestants who have rejected the Three Angels' Messages and turned their backs on Historicism, sometimes with ecumenical overtones; Roman Catholics; and even Spiritualists like Emanuel Swedenborg.

But as these chapters have shown, Historicism is the only method of prophetic interpretation that is self-validating. It proves itself, for the Bible's predictions are over the centuries perfectly matched by real events in the affairs of the world.

The same is not true of Preterism or Futurism, which rely on peculiar ideas like gaps in history and anachronisms. Catholic eschatology, which happily embraces both deviations, especially favors the former, ignoring the fact that in the Apocalypse the Lord Jesus emphatically told John to write what he had seen, not only "the things that are" but also "the things which shall be hereafter" (Rev. 1:19).

Preterism mostly ignores the predictive character of this book. Instead, its devotees look back to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who lived in pre-Christian times, or Roman emperors like Nero and Domitian, who also died before

Revelation was even written.

As for Futurism, it ignores a vast expanse of history, which demonstrates that the papacy is indeed the Antichrist. It largely focuses on a few years of an imaginary future, invoking the Secret Rapture, a false doctrine about the Second Coming.

Idealism, often allied with Historical-Critical exegesis, also tends to overlook the predictive character of the Revelation. Supposedly we should ask how its first readers understood it. Well, whatever else they thought—something that we can imagine but never really know—they would certainly have understood the predictive elements of the Apocalypse and also noticed how its symbols were interrelated with those in Daniel.

Most writers and evangelists in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are still faithful to their prophetic heritage; therefore, the deviations from it will not prevail.

Placed into our hands, Historicism remains a bright and shining torch. We must never let it go out, but hold it high, to illuminate aright the events that lie ahead, not only for us but for a benighted planet Earth, as it plunges on through space toward its rendezvous with destiny, when the Lord returns.

1. Hal Lindsey, with Carole C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), 53–54.

2. “An Antichrist Obama in McCain Ad?” *Time* magazine, August 8, 2008.

3. Matt Novak, www.paleofuture.com.

4. Tim LaHaye, *Revelation Unveiled* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999). A revised and updated ed. of *Revelation Illustrated and Made Plain*, 143–144.

5. *Ibid.*, 211.

6. www.pre-trib.com.

7. Wikipedia, s.v. “Tim LaHaye.”

Other Books on Prophecy by Edwin de Kock

1. *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (2013), book, \$19.95. E-mail Attachment, \$10.00. Data CD: *Christ and Antichrist, Africa and the Bible*, plus 12 other items, \$19.95.
2. *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy* (2007). Book, \$14.95. E-mail Attachment, \$10.00.
3. *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy* (2013), a set of 3 volumes, including a data CD, \$35.00. E-mail Attachment, \$19.95.
4. *Seven Heads and Ten Horns in Daniel and the Revelation* (2012). Book, \$20.00. E-mail Attachment, \$14.95.

All prices in U.S. dollars, plus shipping and handling. U.S.A. checks and money orders only. No credit cards.

More details on **www.propheticum.com**: All Publications. E-mail: edwdekock@hotmail.com.

What is special about these works? Apart from the contrast between high quality and low prices, it is their excellent readability as well as the author's grasp of history—which is rare among writers on prophecy—and contemporary affairs. More than twenty years went into the research, and the books appeared over a period of thirteen years. In each of them are chapters and topics not found in any of the others, or anybody else's writings.

For instance, *Christ and Antichrist* shows that the first four materials in Nebuchadnezzar's dream also feature in a Greek poem written a hundred years before that king was born! The book also deals in a brand-new way with the role of literal as opposed to "spiritual" Israel. A related topic is "The History That Never Was." This chapter explains a series of conditional prophecies in the Old Testament, such as Eze. 39, which many readers have found perplexing. And the three horns of Dan. 7 are shown to symbolize not Arians, who believe that Christ was a created being, but ancient Sabbath keepers that rejected papal supremacy and therefore were eradicated.

The Use and Abuse of Prophecy surveys prophetic

interpretation from the time of Jesus to the present, which clarifies why we believe in Protestant Historicism rather than Preterism or Futurism, both of which are derived from Catholic, Jesuit eschatology. As one reader put it, “I have been a Seventh-day Adventist all my life, but only now I understand why we explain the prophecies as we do!” This book also shows why the Bible must be true and debunks some false ideas about typology, such as the idea that the Dutch, the British, or the Americans are a latter-day Israel.

The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy is a prophetic journey through history focusing on the papacy, in relation to the world’s empires, kingdoms, and republics from late apostolic times until the Second Coming. Citing authorities in Latin, English, German, French, Italian, and Spanish, it vindicates Uriah Smith’s interpretation that the number 666 in Rev. 13:18 refers to *vicarius Filii Dei* (vicar or representative of the Son of God). Much of this material has never been published before.

Seven Heads and Ten Horns in Daniel and the Revelation examines nine Seventh-day Adventist explanations of this topic and shows why none of them can be correct—before presenting a Historicist view that solves numerous problems. It shows that the ancient Romans were, at least in part, biologically descended from the Western Greeks who colonized Sicily and much of Italy. This greatly impacted on Roman philosophy and religion in both pagan and Catholic times. To our knowledge, no other writer has published material to make these points.

All these books are, moreover, wonderfully readable. Many readers have praised this feature as well as the quality of the research involved. Here are just a few reactions:

In 2001, David Bowles, English Professor at the University of Texas–Pan American, Edinburg, Texas, wrote about *Christ and Antichrist*: “I must recommend your fresh, easy-to-read style! Compelling stuff. I find your historical synthesis fascinating. I’ve heard Daniel and Revelation expounded upon zillions of times, and this view of yours seems the most respectable of the interpretations out there. There’s not a dull moment throughout! Amazingly well researched and put together. I’m sure the future volumes will be equally fascinating and educational.”

During 2007, the late Alfred Nahman, a Jewish Seventh-day Adventist in South Africa, declared: “Your book, *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy*, is truly a masterpiece. There is so much that one can learn by reading and studying it. I would like to call it the Compendium of Prophecy or the Readers’ Digest of Prophecy. It is a mine of information. Very readable and exciting—almost like a detective story!”

In 2013, Jon Paulien, Ph.D., Dean of Theology, at Loma Linda University, wrote: “I have just started reading your book on the number 666. Wow! You have such a delightful writing style. It reads like a story book or a novel. I was figuring it would take me three or four months of spare time to get through, but I’m already at page 270 and it is hard to put down.”

Also striking are the comments on the first volume of the same book by Douglas E. LaPrade, Ph.D., a tenured English professor at the University of Texas–Pan American, who is an author in English as well as Spanish, and the recipient of two Fulbright scholarships. He is also an ardent student of Bible prophecy. He declared: “Like everything else in the book, your documentation and historical approach are impeccable. But like the literature professor that you are, you have noticed that the crime of forgery is especially sinister because it is so characteristic of Satan, the great impostor who disguises evil with beauty. The Antichrist is a counterfeit Christ, and counterfeit is the twin of forgery. As you observe in your text, the latest crime of the computer age is identity theft, but the Antichrist steals Christ’s identity in order to deceive people. In summary, these sections provide a good conclusion to Volume I, both historically and thematically.”

As part of his Preface to *Seven Heads and Ten Horns in Daniel and the Revelation* (2012) Jerry A. Stevens, author of *Vicarius Filii Dei*, calls this book “classic Historicism.” He also says: “Edwin turns a phrase as well as anyone I have ever known” and gives three examples. Here is the last one describing the situation of Satan and his host awaiting judgment during the thousand years that follow the Second Coming:

“On a devastated world, these await the awful verdict. The degenerate angels, once so energetic in spitefully ruining people to acquire companions for their final misery, now have

nothing to do. Around them lies a planetful of corpses in unburied heaps or dismally alone. The wicked who have come and gone with the years and centuries still molder in their graves. The fallen angels brood on their own condition and sometimes squabble bitterly among themselves, while lost humanity slumbers on in the sleep of the damned.”

The Author

Edwin de Kock (1930–) displays a grasp of history, contemporary world affairs, and a polyglot culture that is unusual among writers on prophecy. Typically their works are replete with errors about the facts of history, which de Kock avoids. His writings are soundly Historicist though not derivative, being based on the latest research.

He has also published in Afrikaans, his mother tongue, and Esperanto, the International Language. In the latter, he is one of its most famous original poets. A good deal of his poetry has been translated into other languages, including English.

De Kock’s fascination with prophecy and history is virtually as old as his Adventism, beginning in his native South Africa eight decades ago. It culminated in more than twenty years of intensive research, which is still continuing. He has academic qualifications in theology, literature, education, and speech. In Israel, on Crete, and in Europe, he visited great museums, cathedrals, art galleries, and important sites connected with the contents of his books.

He has lectured internationally and been interviewed on radio and television, including the Esperanto service of Radio Vatican. The last mentioned was about his Adventism.

Professionally he was an educator for more than thirty-five years in South Africa, South Korea, and the United States, especially as a college teacher. He finished this career as a writing professor at the University of Texas–Pan American, in 2000. His wife Ria, whom he married in 1954, did the same kind of work at the last-mentioned institution from 2004 to 2012. Their two sons and their families also live in America.