

BIBLICAL PREDICTIONS

NOT PRETERIST BUT HISTORICIST

Earliest views on Biblical predictions not preteristic but historicalistic



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BIBLICAL PREDICTIONS NOT PRETERIST BUT HISTORICIST **(The earliest views about the predictions in the Bible were not preteristic but historicalistic)**

Preterism falsely teaches that all or most of the predictions in Holy Scripture were fulfilled in the same generation or lifetime of those to whom they were first announced. And futurism falsely teaches that all or most of the predictions in Holy Scripture were and are yet even now still to be fulfilled only many generations after they were first announced – fulfilled only at the very end of history when they believe our World will become the late great planet Earth.

Historicism, however – or rather historicalism – teaches that all or most of the predictions in Holy Scripture are being fulfilled throughout the whole course of Church History. Indeed, all Church History – which started right after the fall in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15f) – shall endure till the very end of time. And these historicalistic predictions will only finish being fulfilled – when Jesus returns at the times of restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy Prophets since the World began (Acts 3:21).

The first Biblical predictions *before the fall* were not preteristic but all historicalistic

The first predictions in the Holy Bible before the fall, were then understood neither preteristically nor futuristically but only historicalistically. This should have remained man's understanding – also after the fall.

Thus, in Genesis 1:28, God predictively ordered all mankind: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the Earth and subdue it!" This is something that surely could not be done preteristically in merely one generation. Nor is it something which would start to be done only toward the end of time. This is something which obviously needed to be done, down through the centuries – historicalistically.

The same applies to Genesis 2:3. There, the inspired Hebrew words actually say: "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He had rested from all His work which God created in order to make it (*l^e:asoth*)."

Here, the message is not that the Lord had thereby preteristically finished manufacturing things – after the completion of His work of the six days of creation – right after the expiry of His sixth day, in His first generating of the first man. Nor is the message that God would start to rest only futuristically – only later, and toward the very end of World History. But here – the message is historicalistically that after His six days of creation, God **started** His rest in Adam and Eve, and would then also continue that rest, down throughout all of the centuries until the very end of time. Cf. Hebrews 4:3-11.

The right understanding also of Genesis 2:17, is similar. There, God did not preteristically tell Adam that he would finish dying immediately after eating the forbidden fruit – nor that he would later finish dying during his then 930-year-long lifetime. Neither did God there futuristically tell Adam he would not start to die until the end of history. God then historicalistically told Adam he would start to die spiritually the very day he ate the forbidden fruit; die physically 930 years later; and that unless subsequently justified – he and all of his descendants down through the centuries would keep on dying here on Earth.

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Finally, also in the tasks God gave to Adam – in Genesis 2:15 & 2:19f & 2:24 – it is very clear that they could not be accomplished finally in just one generation, preteristically. It is also clear that those tasks were all to start being accomplished many thousands of years before the end of history in the yet-future. For all those many tasks and predictions were to continue being fulfilled throughout history, historicalistically.

The first Biblical predictions *after* the fall were not preteristic but all historicalistic

The same is seen in the first Gospel Promise given after the fall (and in all other Gospel promises). Fallen Eve should not preteristically have expected Genesis 3:15 to be fulfilled in Cain, within her own generation (Genesis 4:1f). Nor should she futuristically expect Christ to crush Satan only at the yet-future end of the world. But she should have expected Christ to crush Satan progressively and within the course of history; as too did that infallible historicalist the Apostle Paul. Romans 16:20.

The plain fact is that all Old Testament Messianic promises were to be fulfilled not preteristically but historicalistically. Exactly the same applies regarding all New Testament promises of Christ's conquest of this World.

It cannot be our purpose in this short essay to demonstrate that every prediction about the Messiah (such as Genesis 5:29 & 12:3 & 49:8f and Numbers 24:17-24 and Isaiah 7:14 & 9:6f & 52:15f *etc.*) was intended to be viewed neither preteristically nor futuristically but only historicalistically. Nor can it be our purpose here to show exactly the same as regards every prediction about Christ's World Conquest (such as Psalms 2 & 72 & 110 and Isaiah 11 & 42 & 66f and Romans 11:25-36 and First Corinthians 15:24-28 and Revelation 15:4 *etc.*). Such, indeed, should be obvious.

We could point out that a then-future reference naturally inheres in the words "You have heard that the Antichrist comes" in First John 2:18. Indeed, in what here follows, we shall demonstrate that the three chief predictive portions of Scripture (*viz.* Daniel 2-12, Second Thessalonians two, and Revelation 13 to 17) – were clearly intended historicalistically, and were also so interpreted by the mainstream Church of all ages.

Daniel's predictions must necessarily be interpreted historicalistically

Daniel wrote his prophecies from B.C. *circa* 604 to 536. According to the famous Judaistic Historian Flavius Josephus in his famous 75 A.D. book *The Antiquities of the Jews*,¹ the B.C. *circa* 332 Jewish high priest Jaddua regarded the notable horn on the Greek he-goat of the Third World Empire that would smite the Second World Empire's Persian ram as predicted in Daniel eight – to be Alexander the Great (who died in B.C. 323).

Explained Josephus of the Jewish high priest Jaddua: "When the Book of Daniel was shown to him [Alexander], in which he [Daniel] had declared that one of the Greeks would destroy the Empire of the Persians – he [Alexander] believed himself to be the one indicated.... When the high priest [Jaddua] asked that they might observe their country's laws and in the seventh year be exempt from tribute, he [Alexander] granted all this."

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Interestingly, Jaddua here agreed with Daniel's own historicalistic predictions of what to Daniel were the then-future kingdoms of Persia and Greece in Daniel eight. Implicitly, this identifies also the Fourth World Empire in both Daniel two and Daniel seven – as that of **Rome**.

Also the original B.C. 270 Jewish Alexandrine translation of Daniel from Hebrew and/or Aramaic into Greek in their *Septuagint*, evidences agreement with the earlier Judaist Jaddua's historicalistic interpretation of the predictions in Daniel. Indeed, at Dan. 11:30, at the latter's Semitic phrase "ships of Chittim" – the Alexandrine Septuagint states: "**The Romans**² shall come with ships."³

Calvin comments here:⁴ "This passage is free from all doubt, because Antiochus was restrained not by the Greeks but by the **Romans**.... 'There shall come against him,' says he, 'ships of Chittim' – meaning **Italy**." Compare too the same Hebrew word *Chittim* at Numbers 24:24, where Calvin also remarks: "Without doubt, in Daniel (11:30), 'the ships of Chittim' must be taken for those of **Italy or Rome**."⁵ Moreover, the obvious interpretation of the seventy 'weeks' of years (at Daniel 9:24-27) – very clearly sees the *terminus ad quem* thereof not preteristically in Daniel's own time but historicalistically – and precisely in the time of the then-future of **the Roman Empire**.

Also from the Pre-Christian *Targum Jonathan*, an Aramaic language paraphrase on portions of the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures, one learns: "The Kingdom of Babylon shall not endure.... The kings of Media shall be killed.... The mighty men of the worshippers of the stars and [of the] constellations [seemingly meaning the Greeks], shall not prosper. The **Romans** shall be destroyed, and they shall not gather rakings from Jerusalem [*viz.* profits from its destruction]."⁶

Josephus himself wrote⁷ historicalistically in A.D. 75 that "Daniel spoke with God. For he was not only wont to prophesy future things as did the other Prophets, but he also fixed the time at which these would come to pass.... The head of gold represents you [King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon]; and...the two arms and shoulders signify that your Empire will be brought to an end by two kings [*viz.* those of Media and Persia]. But their Empire will be destroyed by another king from the West [*viz.* that of Greece], clad in bronze. And this power will be ended by still another, like iron [*viz.* that of **Rome**].... Daniel wrote about the Empire of the **Romans**, and that Jerusalem would be taken **by them** and the temple laid waste" – *viz.*, just five years earlier in A.D. 70.

After Josephus, also the Jewish *Talmud* in the first four centuries of the Common Era identified Daniel's Fourth Empire as "the Kingdom of **Rome** the wicked."⁸ Indeed, of the Fourth Beast, Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai in the first century C.E. said: "It is written (Daniel 7:23) 'It shall devour the whole Earth and shall tread it down and break it in pieces.'"⁹

Also in the later Middle Ages, this same standard Judaistic interpretation was still followed. Thus we find it in: Saadia ben Joseph; Rashi Solomon ben Isaac; Abraham ben Ezra; the Karaite Jepheth Ha-Levi; and Rabbis Moses Maimonides, Levi ben Gershon, Judah Abravanel (who identified Daniel's "Little Horn" as the Romish Papacy), and Joseph ben David ben Yahya.¹⁰

The Apostolic Fathers interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

The Apostolic Fathers – the Earliest Christian writers who knew the Apostles – historicalistically agree with the above Old Testament and later Judaistic interpreters that Daniel's Fourth World Empire

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was that of **Rome**. They also interpreted also the New Testament's predictions neither preteristically nor futuristically, but historicalistically. Such Apostolic Fathers probably included the original author of the *Didachee* in its most ancient form – and certainly included the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas*.

Perhaps around A.D. 90f, also *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* predicts non-preteristically and non-futuristically but historicalistically:¹¹ "In the last days, false-prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied [*cf.* Second Peter 2:1f], and the sheep shall be turned into wolves.... And **then** shall appear the 'deceiver of the World' [Second Thessalonians 2:3-8 & Revelation 12:9 & 13:11f] as 'Son of God' – and shall do signs and wonders, and the Earth shall be delivered into his hands.... But [*post-tribulationistically!*] they that endure in their faith, shall be saved.... Then the World shall see the Lord."

Thus the A.D.100 *Epistle of Barnabas* declares¹² that "the Prophet [Daniel 7:24]...speaks thus: 'Then kingdoms shall reign upon the Earth, and a little king shall rise up **after them**. He shall subdue three of the kings under one.' In like manner, Daniel [7:7-8] says about the same: 'And I beheld the Fourth Beast, **wicked** and powerful and more savage than all the Beasts of the Earth, and how from it sprang up ten horns, and out of them a little budding horn, and how it subdues three of the great horns under one'....

"Take heed **now** to yourselves! ... So that 'the Black One' may find no means of entrance – let **us** flee from every vanity! Let **us** utterly hate the works of the way of wickedness! ... Take heed, lest...**the Wicked Prince**, acquiring power of us, **should** thrust us away from the Kingdom of the Lord!"

To Barnabas then, although Daniel's predictions were being fulfilled (in part) in Barnabas's own time – the **chief** fulfilment would be in the future **after** Barnabas's time. Consequently, Barnabas is neither preteristic nor futuristic, but historicalistic.

Justin Martyr of Samaria interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Also the *circa* 150 A.D. first Christian Apologist Justin Martyr of Samaria discusses Daniel 7:9-28 – in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*: Explains Justin of the there-predicted Saviour:¹³ "He was pierced by you [Judaists].... The Father...has brought Him back again from the Earth – setting Him at His own right hand until He makes His enemies His footstool. This indeed is happening from the time that our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven, after He rose again from the dead – the time **now** [*circa* 150 A.D.] **running on to its consummation**....

"He Whom Daniel foretells would have dominion for a time and times and an half [namely the Antichrist], is even now at the door." Yet that 'door' would open – only in what was then still **future**.

Indeed, Antichrist would appear only **after** the time of Justin (who died in A.D. 165). Moreover, when that Antichrist finally **would** appear, he would "speak blasphemous and daring things against the Most High."

Justin then went on to tell Trypho the Jew in 150 A.D.: "But you, being ignorant of how long he [the Antichrist] will have dominion – hold another opinion. For you interpret the 'time' as being a hundred years. But if this is so – the 'man of sin' [Antichrist] must, at the shortest, reign **350 years**, in order that we may compute that which is said by the holy Daniel [7:25 & 12:7-12f]."

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Thus, according to both the Christian Samaritan Justin and Trypho the Judaistic Jew – in 150f A.D., Daniel's Antichrist was not the preterists' A.D. 54-68 Nero. To the contrary. Daniel's Antichrist would be a **post-165** A.D. 'man of sin.' He would not arise **before then**. Indeed, when he did come – he would, unlike Nero, historicalistically reign for no less than 350 years.

Nevertheless, even after that post-Justinic manifestation of Daniel's Antichrist, Justin immediately goes on tell Trypho:¹⁴ "All this I have said to you in digression, in order that you at length may be persuaded of what has been declared...by God." Justin then cites Psalms 110 & 72, insisting: "**Christ is King...and He shall have dominion from sea to sea and from the rivers unto the ends of the Earth.** Ethiopians shall fall down before Him, and His enemies shall lick the dust" *etc.*

Indeed, Justin later further continues:¹⁵ "Two advents of Christ have been announced. The one in which He is set forth as suffering...; but the other in which he shall come from Heaven with glory, when 'the man of apostasy' [Second Thessalonians 2:3]...**shall** venture [!] to do unlawful deeds on Earth against us Christians.

"They [*viz.* 'us Christians'], having learned the true worship of God from the Law and the Word which went forth from Jerusalem by means of the Apostles of Jesus – have fled for safety to the God of Jacob.... We cultivate piety, righteousness, philanthropy, faith and **hope**.... For you are aware that the prophetic Word says, 'And his wife **shall** be like a **fruitful** vine' [Psalm 128:3].

"Now it is **evident** that no one can terrify or subdue us who have believed in Jesus.... Though beheaded and crucified and thrown to wild beasts..., we do not give up our confession. But the more such things happen, **the more** do **others** and in **larger** numbers become faithful!"

Irenaeus of Lyons in Gaul interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Irenaeus was probably a Celtic East-Galatian from Smyrna. Later, he became Church Overseer among the West-Galatians (alias the Gauls) in Lyons – within what is today called France. Then, in A.D. 185, he wrote his great historicalist work *Against Heresies*. There, he explains:¹⁶

"In the Second [Epistle of Paul] to the Thessalonians [2:8], speaking of Antichrist he says, 'And then shall that wicked one be manifested, whom the Lord Jesus Christ shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth and shall destroy him with the presence of his coming – [even him] whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying-wonders'.... If, then, one does not attend to the [proper] reading [of the passage]; and if he does not exhibit the **intervals** of breathing as they occur [in the Greek] – there shall be not only incongruities. But also, when reading – he will utter blasphemy."

A little later, Irenaeus adds: "Speaking too of Antichrist, he [Paul] says clearly in the Second to the Thessalonians [2:11]: "And for this cause, God shall send them the working of error so that they would believe a lie; so that they all who did not believe the truth but consented to iniquity might be judged'.... Also in the present time God (knowing the number of those who will not believe)...has given them over to unbelief and turned away His face from men of this stamp, leaving them in the darkness which they have themselves chosen for themselves."¹⁷

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According to the historicalist Irenaeus, the time to which St. Paul was thus infallibly referring in Second Thessalonians – was not that Apostle's own 1st century A.D. Nor was it Irenaeus's own late-2nd century. It must, therefore, have been a **subsequent** time.

That is why the A.D. 185 Irenaeus yet later adds:¹⁸ "Not only by the particulars already mentioned, but also by means of the events which **shall** occur in the **time** of **Antichrist** – it is shown that he, being an apostate and a robber, is anxious to be adored as God.... He [Antichrist] being endued with all the power of the devil, **shall** come...as an **apostate**....

"The Apostle thus speaks in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians [2:3-4].... The enemy shall sit, endeavouring to show himself **as Christ**. Also [Jesus] the Lord declares [Matt. 24:15-21]...: 'You shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken about by Daniel the Prophet, standing in the holy place'....

"Also Daniel [7:8 *etc.*], looking forward to the end of the last kingdom – *i.e.* to the ten last kings among whom the kingdom of those men **shall be partitioned** and upon whom the son of perdition shall come – declares that ten horns **shall** arise in their midst.... Daniel [8:23 *etc.*] says again: 'And he **shall** desolate the holy place...and he shall be lifted up in his heart.... He **shall** also ruin many by deceit, and lead many to perdition'....

"In a still clearer light, John, in the Apocalypse [Rev. 17:12 *etc.*], indicated to the Lord's Disciples what **shall** happen in the last times – and concerning the ten kings who **shall then** arise, among whom the [**Roman**] **Empire** which now rules, **shall be partitioned**. He teaches us what the ten horns **shall** be which were seen by Daniel – telling us that thus it had been said to him: 'And the ten horns which you saw, are ten kings who have received no kingdom **as yet**. But they **shall** receive power, as if kings, one hour with the beast'.... 'God **shall** also send them the operation of error, so that they may believe a lie' [II Thess. 2:10-12]....

"When he, [the] **Antichrist** **has** come, and of his own accord concentrates the apostasy in his own person and accomplishes whatever he **shall** do according to his own will and choice – he shall also sit in the temple of God.... His coming John has thus described in the Apocalypse [Rev. 13:2-14]: 'And the beast which I had seen, was like a leopard; and his feet like a bear; and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon conferred his own power upon him and his throne'....

"After this he likewise describes his armour-bearer, whom he also terms a false-prophet: 'He spoke like a dragon.... The name of the Beast or the number of his name...is 666.... Lateinos has the number **666**; and it is...very probable...this was the name of the last kingdom [of the four seen by Daniel]. For the Latins are they who at present [*viz.* in A.D. 185] bear rule.... This Antichrist **shall**....devastate all things.... But then [*viz.* thereafter], the Lord will come from Heaven on the clouds...for the righteous." Very clearly, then, Irenaeus historicistically precludes preterism!

Clement of Alexandria in Egypt interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

In Clement of Alexandria's A.D.194 *Miscellanies*, he explains¹⁹ what he calls "our chronology" in terms of "the days which **Daniel** indicates **from** the desolation of Jerusalem – the seven years and seven months of the reign of Vespasian [from A.D. 68 onward].... **Daniel** [8:13f]...said that there were

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2300 days – **from** the time that the abomination of [the A.D. 54-68] Nero stood in the holy city [of Jerusalem] till its destruction [in A.D. 70]....

"**Daniel** [12:11-12] says, 'Blessed is he that comes to the 1335 days'.... **From** the time of the change of continuation and of the giving of the abomination of desolation – there shall be 1290 days. Blessed is he who **waits** and comes to the 1335 days.

"Flavius Josephus the Jew, who composed the history of the Jews – computing the periods – says that from Moses to David were 585 years; from David to the 2nd year of Vespasian, 1179; then from that to the 10th year of Antoninus, 77. So that from Moses to the 10th year of Antoninus [in A.D. 148], there are in all 2133 years." Clearly, in spite of possible minor inaccuracies – this Clement was neither preterist nor futurist but historicalist.

Tertullian of Carthage in Africa interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Tertullian of Carthage – the greatest theologian in the Ante-Nicene Church – clearly rejects the preterist notion that the whore of Revelation was Ancient Jerusalem. He also rejects the futurist notion that this whore would be revealed only after some or other still-pending 'secret rapture' of the Christian Church at some or other at least partly visible return of Jesus.

Clearly a historicalist, Tertullian stoutly maintained **around 200 AD**:²⁰ "That powerful **State** which presides over the seven mountains and very many waters has merited from the Lord the appellation of a prostitute.... **Babylon**, in our own John [at Revelation 17:5-9f], is a figure of the city **Rome**"²¹ – thus **prefiguring** the **Rome** of what to Tertullian was **then still future**.

Moreover, Tertullian regarded Paul's man's of sin as being a then-still-future entity which would only appear **thereafter**. He explains:²² "Satan himself is transformed into an 'angel of light'.... **At last**, he will 'show himself to be even god' [Second Thessalonians 2:4] – and will exhibit great signs and [false-]wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) he shall deceive the very elect."

Opposing the dangerous heretic Marcion, Tertullian shows²³ that Paul's "'man of sin' [and] 'son of perdition'...must first be revealed before the Lord comes." That 'man of sin' indeed "opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped.

"He is to sit [not preteristically 'he did sit'] in the temple of God, and boast himself as being god' [Second Thessalonians 2:3-4]. In our view, he is **Antichrist** – as taught us in both the ancient and the new prophecies [or both he Old and New Testaments]; and especially by the Apostle John, who says [First Epistle 4:1-3] that 'already many false-prophets are gone out into the world' as the **fore-runners of Antichrist**."

Tertullian's strongest anti-preterist and anti-futurist statement, is made probably **after 200 AD**. Then, he writes:²⁴ "Up to the present moment, they [the Jews] have not tribe by tribe, smitten in their breasts, looked upon Him Who they did pierce [Zechariah 12:1 & John 19:27]. No one has as yet fallen in with Elijah [Malachi 4:5 cf. Revelation 11:3f]. **No one** has as yet escaped from **Antichrist** [First John 4:3]. **No one** has – as yet – had to bewail the downfall of '**Babylon**' [cf. Revelation 18:2]....

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"Again, in the Second Epistle [II Thessalonians 2:1-7], he [Paul] addresses them with even greater earnestness. 'Now I beseech you...that you be not soon...troubled..., 'as if...the day of the Lord is at hand.... 'For that day shall not come,' **unless** indeed there **first** come a falling away...and that man of sin be revealed' – that is to say, **Antichrist**.... What **obstacle** is there [to his being revealed], but the Roman State – the falling away of which, by being scattered into ten kingdoms, shall introduce Antichrist (upon its own ruins) [*cf.* Daniel 7:7-25 & Revelation 17:8f]?"

Then, the time will come "that the city of fornication may receive from the ten kings – its deserved doom [Revelation chapters 16 to 18].... The beast Antichrist with his false-prophet may wage war on the Church of God.... It is therefore more competent for us...to maintain a spiritual resurrection at the commencement of a life of faith – we who acknowledge the full completion thereof at the end of the World [Revelation 22:2-6]."

It is obvious that the *circa* A.D. 170-220 Tertullian believed **the Antichrist** had not yet, as then, appeared. It is also obvious he believed that this 'man of sin' could not possibly appear until the restraining **Roman Empire** itself had first collapsed.

Thus Tertullian wrote to Scapula,²⁵ the Roman Proconsul at Carthage: "A Christian is enemy to none, least of all to the Emperor of Rome whom he knows to be appointed by his God – and so cannot but love and honour. Moreover, he must needs desire his well-being, together with that of the Empire over which he reigns...so long as...Rome shall continue."

Once again and obviously with the later appearance of **the Antichrist** in mind, Tertullian says in his *Defence of Christianity to the Rulers of the Roman Empire*, alias his *Apology*:²⁶ "There is also another and a greater necessity for our offering prayer in behalf of the Emperors – nay, for the complete stability of the Empire and for Roman interests...."

"For we know that **a mighty shock** impending over the whole Earth...threatening **dreadful woes**, is retarded only by the continued existence of the Roman Empire [*cf.* Second Thessalonians 2:6f]. We have no desire, then, to be overtaken by these dire events; and in praying that their coming may be delayed, we are lending our aid to Rome's duration."

Hippolytus of Portus in Italy interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Around 230, Hippolytus the Overseer of the Church at Portus (the harbour-town of Rome) wrote to a considerable extent about eschatology. From those writings, it is clear that he was neither a preterist nor a futurist – but a convinced historicalist.

In his *Fragments on Daniel*, Hippolytus observes²⁷ on the seventh chapter of that Prophet: "'The Fourth Beast (was) dreadful and terrible: it had iron teeth, and claws of brass.' Who, then, are meant by this – but **the Romans**, whose kingdom that still stands, is expressed by the **iron**?' 'For,' says he, 'its **legs** are of iron'...."

"By the [**ten**] **toes** of the feet he meant, mystically, the **ten kings** that rise out of that kingdom [*cf.* Daniel 2:42f & 7:7 & 7:20f]. As Daniel says: 'I considered the beast; and look, (there were) ten horns behind – among which shall come up another little horn, springing from them.'"

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"By this, none other is meant than the **Antichrist** which **is** to rise [viz. after the time of Hippolytus, who died around 236]. "These things, then, **are destined to come to pass**.... The toes of the image turn out to be democracies. And the ten horns of the Beast – are **distributed** among ten kings" or kingdoms.

In his *Scholia on Daniel*, Hippolytus asks:²⁸ "Should **we** then not mark the things prophesied of old in Babylon by Daniel, and **now yet** in the **course** of **fulfilment** in the World? For the image shown at that time to Nebuchadnezzar, furnished a type of the whole World.

"In those times, the Babylonians were sovereign over all; and these were the golden head of the image. And then, after them, the Persians held the supremacy for 345 years; and they were represented by the silver.

Then the Greeks had the supremacy, beginning with Alexander of Macedon, for 300 years – so that they were the brass. After them came **the Romans**, who were the iron legs of the image. For they were strong as iron. Then (we have) the [**ten**] **toes** of clay and iron, to signify the **democracies** that were subsequently to rise – partitioned among the **ten toes** of the image, in which iron **shall** be mixed with clay [**future tense**]....

"After the first kingdom of the Assyrians [and/or Babylonians], which was denoted by the gold – there will be the second kingdom of the [Medes and/or] Persians, expressed by the silver. And then the third kingdoms of the [Greeks and/or] Macedonians, signified by the brass. And after it, the fourth kingdom of **the Romans** will succeed – more powerful than those that went before it." By 'his feet.' *etc*, Hippolytus includes the '**ten toes**' of the Roman Beast. "In the vision of the Prophet, the **ten horns** are things that are **yet to be**....

"Behold, a Fourth Beast!" [Daniel 7:7f].... That there has arisen **no** other kingdom after that of the **Greeks** save that [**Roman Empire**] which stands sovereign **at present** [!], is manifest to **all**.... From **it**, **will** spring **ten horns**.... We ought to look for the ten horns which are to spring from it – **when** the time of the Beast shall be fulfilled and **the little horn** which is **Antichrist** suddenly **shall** appear [**future tense**!] in their midst, and righteousness shall be banished from the Earth.... We ought not to anticipate [quasi-preteristically] the counsel of God, but exercise patience and prayer – so that we do not fall on such times. We should not, however, refuse to believe that these things **will** come to pass.... These things also **shall** certainly be fulfilled....

"The Fourth Kingdom...from which the ten horns **are** to spring...[are] to be apportioned among ten crowns. And amid these, **another little horn shall** rise – which is that of **Antichrist**. It **shall** pluck up by the roots the three others before it...with a view to acquiring [as '**Sole Pope** alias '**Universal Father**'] for itself **universal dominion**. And, **after** conquering the **remaining seven** horns, he **will at last begin**, inflated by a strange and wicked spirit – to stir up war against the **saints** and to **persecute** all everywhere, with the aim of being glorified by all and being worshipped as god....

"The abomination of desolation shall be given (set up).' Daniel [8:23f & 11:31 cf. 12:11 & 9:27 & 7:20f] speaks therefore of **two** abominations. The one of destruction, which **Antiochus** set up in its appointed time and which bears a relation to that of desolation; and the other universal, when **Antichrist shall** come."

Hippolytus interpreted the Biblical predictions of Christ and Antichrist historically

Hippolytus explains all of this in very much greater detail, in his *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*. There he argues:²⁹ "A Fourth Beast, dreadful and terrible..., had iron teeth and claws of brass' [cf. Daniel 7:19f]. And who are these, but **the Romans**? ...

"And **after** this – what remains, beloved, but the [**ten**] **toes** of the feet of the image, in which part is iron and part clay, mixed together? And mystically, by the [**ten**] **toes** of the feet, he meant the [**ten**] **kings** who **are to arise** from among them. As Daniel also says (in the words) 'I considered the Beast, and look! There were **ten horns** behind it – among which **shall** rise another (**horn**), an **offshoot**, and **shall** pluck up by the roots the three (that were) before it.' And under this, was signified none other than **Antichrist**....

"The golden head of the image [Daniel 2] and the lioness [Daniel 7] 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 [**ten**] **toes** of the feet which were part clay and part iron, and the **ten horns**, were emblems of the kingdoms that are **yet to arise**. The other **little horn** that **grows up** among them, means **the Antichrist** in their midst....

"John [in Revelation 11:3] says, 'And I will give power unto My two witnesses [the Law as seen in Moses and the Prophets as represented by Elijah]; and they shall prophesy 1260 days, clothed in sackcloth.... And when they shall have finished their course and their testimony' – what saith the Prophet [John]? 'The Beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them and shall overcome them and kill them' [Revelation 11:4-6] – because they will not give glory to **Antichrist**. For this is meant by the little horn that grows up....

"Daniel [7:8f] says, 'I considered **the horn**. And behold! In the horn were eyes, like the eyes of man; and a mouth speaking great things. And he opened his mouth to **blaspheme** God. And that horn made war against the saints and prevailed against them – **until** the Beast was slain and perished, and his body was given to be burned'....

"John then speaks thus [in Revelation 13:11f]: 'And I beheld another Beast coming up out of the Earth. And he had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon'.... The words 'he exercised all the power of the First Beast before him'...signify that, after the manner of the law of Augustus by whom **the Empire of Rome** was established, he too will rule and govern sanctioning everything by it and taking **greater** glory to himself. For this [**Empire of Rome**] is the Fourth Beast whose head was wounded and healed again....

"Then he (**Antichrist**) **shall** [**future** tense!] with knavish skill heal...and restore it [**the Empire of Rome**]. For this is what is meant by the Prophet [John in Revelation 13:15f], when he says: 'He will give life to the image; and the image of the Beast will speak.' For he will act with vigour again, and prove strong by reason of the laws established by him; and he will cause all those who will not worship the image of the Beast, to be put to death.

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"Here the faith and the patience of the saints will appear. For he [John] says: 'And he will cause all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their forehead; so that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, the name of the Beast, or the number of his name'...

"His number [that of **the Antichrist**] is 666.' With respect to his name..., John understood it.... It is manifest to all, that those who **at present** still hold the power – are **Latins**. If, then, we take the name as the name of a single man – it becomes *Latinus*."

Yet the Church shall survive even the Latin Antichrist! For, as Hippolytus also writes, "upon her head a crown of twelve stars...mean[s] that the Church will not cease to bear from her heart the Word that is persecuted.... **The Church** always bring forth Christ the perfect man-child of God Who is declared to be God and man, [and] becomes the **Instructrix** of all the nations....

"To the woman were given two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time away from the face of the serpent' [Revelation 11:3;12:14f]. That refers to the **1260 days...during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church**.... Daniel [11:31 & 12:11f] says, 'And they shall place the abomination of desolation 1290 days. Blessed is he that waits, and comes to the 1295 days!'" Cf. the Hebrew phrase "1335 " at Daniel 12:12.

After then citing Second Thessalonians 2:1-11, Hippolytus finally concludes: "Isaiah [26:10] says, 'Let the wicked be cut off, so that he not behold the glory of the Lord!'.... 'For the wrath of God is revealed...against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth of God in unrighteousness' [Romans 1:17]." Consequently, even the days of the future Antichrist were all numbered – and his demise certain.

Hippolytus interpreted both Antichrist and the End of the World historicalistically

Finally, in the *Appendix or Discourse by the Most Blessed Hippolytus...on the End of the World and on Antichrist*, it is shown³⁰ how Daniel chapter seven "tells **us** of the 'Fourth Beast dreadful and terrible. Its teeth were of iron, and its claws of brass.' And what is meant by these, but the kingdom of **the Romans** – which also is meant by the iron by which it will crush all the seats of empire that were before it, and will lord it over the whole Earth?

"**After** this, then – what is left for us to interpret of...the '**[ten] toes** of the image'?.... For by the ten toes of the image, he meant figuratively **the ten kings** who sprang out of it, as Daniel also interpreted the matter.... '**Another horn...will** pluck up by the root three of those before it.' And by this offshoot horn, none other is signified than **the Antichrist**....

"In every respect, that **deceiver** seeks to make himself appear like the Son of God. Christ is a lion; and **Antichrist** is a lion. The Christ is King of things celestial and things terrestrial; and **Antichrist will** [and thus in the then-future!] be a king, upon Earth.

"The Saviour was manifested as a lamb; and **he** [**Antichrist**], likewise, shall appear as a lamb – being within, a **wolf** [Revelation 13:11]. As Christ sent out Apostles to all nations, so will he [**Antichrist**] similarly send out false-apostles.

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"The advent of **Antichrist**...will work signs and wonders, with the object of making men ashamed. They [the signs and wonders] will fulfil their testimony – as Daniel also says. For he foresaw that **the Beast** that came up out of the abyss, would make war with them.... That is **the little horn** that sprang up....

"Blessed shall they be, who overcome the tyrant [Antichrist] **then!** For they **shall** be set forth as more illustrious.... These overthrow and conquer the accuser himself, the son of perdition.... The kingdom of the deceiver and **Antichrist shall be removed speedily!**" For not Antichrist but Christ shall gain the victory – here on Earth, even as it is in Heaven.

Origen of Alexandria in Egypt interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Around 230 A.D., Origen of Alexandria wrote that Daniel's four successive World Empires were those – of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and **Rome**.³¹ Then he added against the pagan philosopher Celsus:³² "Paul, in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians [2:3f], shows in what manner there will **one day** be revealed 'the man of son...who opposes and exalts himself...so that he sits in the temple of God'.... Any one, moreover, who likes – may find the prophecy in Daniel [at 7:26], respecting **Antichrist**....

"Celsus rejects the statements concerning '**Antichrist**' (as it is termed), having neither read what is said of **him** in the Book of Daniel [8:23] nor in the writings of Paul [**First Thessalonians** 2:3f].... God, comprehending all things by means of His foreknowledge and foreseeing what consequences would result from both of these – wished to make these known to mankind, by His Prophets. Thus, those who understand their words might be familiarized with the good and be on their guard against its opposite....

"The prophecy...regarding **Antichrist** is stated in the Book of Daniel [cf. 8:23f].... 'There is craft in his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart; and by craft shall destroy many'....

"What is stated by Paul in the words quoted from him, where he says 'so that he sits in the temple of God showing himself to be divine' [Second Thessalonians 2:4] – is in Daniel [9:27 & 11:36f & 12:11 *etc.*] referred to in the following fashion: 'And **in the temple** – shall be the abomination of desolations'.... Holy Scripture...gives us information concerning the Devil and **Antichrist**."

Also in his *Commentary on Matthew*, the A.D. 230f Origen sees **Antichrist** as then yet future. There too he enjoins:³³ "Give heed to that which is said by the Apostle [in Second Thessalonians 2:9f] on the man of sin, the son of perdition! Thus, 'with all power and signs and lying-wonders, he **shall** be manifested to them that are perishing – imitating all kinds of wonders.'"

Furthermore, also in his *Expositions of John*, Origen's non-preteristic historicalism especially as regards John's Book of Revelation – is obvious. For Origen writes:³⁴ "John...has left us one Gospel, though he confessed that he might write so many that the World could not contain them. And he wrote also the Apocalypse – but was commanded to keep silence and not to write the words of the seven thunders." See Revelation 10:4.

Cyprian of Carthage in Africa interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

It is true that after the Decian persecutions, the A.D. 251f Cyprian of Carthage had started to move toward sacramentalism. Yet also he³⁵ still applied Second Thessalonians 2:10-12 not to the Apostolic Era preteristically – but, historicalistically, precisely to a later period **after** his own time. For there – he writes about "**Antichrist**, when he **shall begin** to come"; and of the Judaizers who "endeavour to imitate the coming of **Antichrist** who is now **approaching**" (and thus as then had not yet arrived).

Cyprian further writes:³⁶ "You ought to know and to believe and hold it for certain, that the day of affliction has begun to hang over our heads – and...the time of **Antichrist** to draw near, so that we must all stand prepared for the battle.... Let not any one of you, beloved brethren, be so terrified by the fear of future persecution or the coming of the threatening **Antichrist** – as not to be found armed for all things by the evangelical exhortations and precepts, and by the heavenly warning. **Antichrist** is coming; but above him, comes Christ also....

"In the Apocalypse, He instructs and forewarns, saying: 'If any man worship the Beast and his image and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God mixed in the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire.... And they who worship the Beast and his image, shall have no rest day nor night.'" Revelation 14:9-11 *cf.* 13:1-18.

Not pessimistically, Cyprian even adds elsewhere:³⁷ "The profound gloom of the falling darkness, has so blinded the hearts of some that they receive no light from the wholesome precepts." Yet it is that light from God's precepts which should guide them through the gloom!

Nevertheless, also in his *Treatises*, Cyprian shows he knew that the foreseeable future then would be a challenge. For there, he observes³⁸ that "the World has now grown old...., bearing witness to its decline by the testimony of its failing estate.... In Daniel [12:4f], moreover, [the Lord had said]: '**Secure** the words, and seal the book until the time of consummation!'"

Dionysius and the *Pseudo-Sibyllines* interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Also Cyprian's contemporary, Dionysius of Alexandria, wrote around 256 A.D. anent Christian persecutions by the Roman Emperors Decius (A.D. 249-51) and Valerian (253-60). He stated:³⁹ "Gallus did not understand the wickedness of Decius." And Decius foreshadowed the **Antichrist**.

Indeed, "to John a revelation was made in like manner: 'And there was given unto him,' he says [of the Antichrist], 'a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemy' [Revelation 13:5].... And one finds both things to wonder at, in Valerian's case." For Valerian too foreshadowed **Antichrist**.

With some hesitation, and only because many Preterists erroneously cite them, we also mention the *Pseudo-Sibylline Oracles*. The ancient sibyls were pagan pseudo-prophetesses. The *Pseudo-Sibylline Oracles*, cumulatively composed by Judaists from the second century B.C. onward and progressively augmented also from Christian writings until the third century A.D., 'predicted' (at II:16-21) that "the people of the seven-hilled Rome...shall perish" (note the non-preteristic future tense!).

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Even the fifth book (composed during the second and third centuries (A.D.) – by 'predicting' the return of the first-century's Nero – were historicalistically rather than preteristically oriented. And the eighth book historicalistically 'predicted' that not the A.D. 54-68 Nero but rather the third emperor after Hadrian would be the last at Rome's 196 A.D. alleged destruction.

So the *Pseudo-Sibylline Oracles* – for whatever they may be worth – are not preteristic but historicalistic. Desperate indeed modern Preterists must be, to cite (and to distort) even such dubious writings!

Victorinus of Pettau in Gaul interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Even as the last **pagan** Roman Emperor Diocletian was brutally persecuting Christians at the end of the third century A.D., Christian Church Overseer Victorinus of Pettau in Gaul was writing what is now indisputably the oldest extant commentary on the Book of Revelation. There, he writes also about the rise and fall of the **Roman Antichrist**.

Already on the phenomenon of the black horse in Revelation 6:5, the A.D. 300 Victorinus writes: "The word is specially extended to the times of **Antichrist** – when there shall be a great famine, and when all shall be injured." And on Revelation 9:13f, he adds: "By the corners of the Earth, or the four winds across the River Euphrates, are meant four nations.... They do not overpass their boundaries, because at the last they shall come with **Antichrist**."

Adds Victorinus:⁴⁰ "**The Beast** which ascends from the abyss' [in Revelation 11:7]...is proved by many testimonies." This represents "a numerous people...in the kingdom of kingdoms – that is, of **the Romans**.... He [the Beast] was in the[ir] kingdom....among the Caesars."

"Also the Apostle Paul bears witness. For he says to the Thessalonians [2nd. Epistle 2:7-9], 'Let him who now restrains, keep on restraining until he be taken out of the way'....

"So that they might know that he **would** come..., he added 'he already endeavours after the secret of mischief' [Second Thessalonians 2:10].... His seven heads were seven kings of **the Romans** – from whom is **Antichrist**, as we have said above; 'and ten horns.' He says that the ten kings in the latest times are the same [cf. Revelation 12:3 with 17:9f].

"This is the beginning of **Antichrist**.... All the apostate angels, as well as Antichrist, must [in the then-future] be roused up from hell. Paul the Apostle says: 'A falling away comes first; and the man of sin shall appear' [Second Thessalonians 2:3f].

"Then I saw a Beast rising up from the sea, like a leopard.' This signifies the kingdom of **that** time of **Antichrist**, and the people mingled with the variety of nations.... 'His number is the name of a man, and his number is **666**'....

"Daniel [11:45 & 9:27] had previously predicted his contempt and provocation of God.... 'But when you shall see the contempt which is spoken of by Daniel the Prophet standing in the holy place – let him who reads, understand!' [Matthew 24:13]....

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"The seven heads are the seven hills on which the woman sits.' That is **the city of Rome**. 'And there are seven kings.... And the Beast which you saw, is from the seven.'

"**Before** those kings, **Nero** reigned [Revelation 17:9-11].... And Daniel [7:19-24] sets forth the ten horns and the ten diadems.... Three of the principal leaders, are killed by **Antichrist**."

Nevertheless, there would be no swift rapture of the Church followed by a millennium. Rather, there would be a long yet ultimately successful struggle of the Church against the Antichrist – to be followed by the Church's (post)millennial reign right here on Earth (Revelation 20).

Lactantius of North Africa interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

After the last great Pagan-Roman persecution under Diocletian in 303-305f, Constantine became the first Christian Emperor. He then promptly appointed Lactantius to tutor his son.

The learned Lactantius, from North Africa, completed his great volume on *The Divine Institutes* probably⁴¹ between A.D. 306-311. Interestingly, that work already reflected the **great change** to the Roman Empire effected by the accession of Constantine.

This change is reflected especially in Book VII of his *Institutes*. There, in almost-prophetic words, Lactantius also presents his expectations regarding the **future** of that **then-christianizing** Empire.

After that time the emphasis in the Church's understanding of the fulfilment of Biblical predictions henceforth begins to move forward from Daniel's Fourth Empire. It moves first to that Empire's later break-up into ten sub-kingdoms – and later, into its progressive conquest by the 'little horn' kingdom which would succeed it.

Amazingly, when writing *circa* A.D. 306-11, Lactantius apparently expected that 'break up' to start about 200 years later⁴² – and thus around 506-11, after the Fall of Rome to Odoacer's Goths in A.D. 476. Interestingly, the ten kingdoms within the Roman Empire can easily be discerned as commencing from 486-90 onward – in fulfilment of the predictions anent Daniel 7:7-24f.

Writes Lactantius⁴³ the African: "The sword will traverse the World, mowing down everything and laying low all things like a crop. Now my mind dreads to relate it, but I will relate it because it will happen [*quia futurum est*]. The cause of this desolation and confusion will be thus, because **the Roman name** by which the World is now ruled **will be 'taken away'** from the Earth [*cf.* Second Thessalonians 2:7]....

"The Egyptians, and Persians, and Greeks and Assyrians **had** the government of the World. And after the destruction of them all, the chief power came also to **the Romans**. Now inasmuch as they excel all other kingdoms in magnitude – with so much greater an overthrow, **will they fall**. Because those buildings which are higher than others, have more weight for a downfall....

"**Rome is doomed to perish**. And that, indeed, by the judgment of God; because it held His Name in hatred.... Being the enemy of righteousness, it destroyed the people who kept the truth.... **The Roman Empire** and name, would be **'taken away'** from the World....

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"I will show how it **will** come to pass. First, the [Roman] kingdom **will** be **enlarged** – and the chief power, dispersed among many and divided, will be diminished. **Then**, civil discords will be sown perpetually.

"Nor will there be any rest from deadly wars, until ten kings arise at the same time. They **will** [future tense!] divide the World – not to govern it, but to consume it... [**Then**,] another king shall arise...from an evil spirit – the overthrower and destroyer of the human race....

"That king will not only be most disgraceful in himself, but he will also be a 'prophet of lies.' And he will constitute and call himself divine, and will order himself to be worshipped as [representing] the Son of God. And power will be given him to do signs and 'wonders' – by the sight of which he may entice men to adore [or to venerate] him.... He will also enwrap righteous men with the books of the Prophets, and thus burn them. And power will be given him to desolate the whole Earth for 42 'months' [Revelation 13; Second Thessalonians 2; Daniel 7]....

"**While** the city of **Rome** remains, it appears that **nothing of this kind is to be feared**. But **when that capital of the World** shall have fallen – who can doubt that its end has arrived? ... It is **that city alone** which still props up all things!" Cf. Second Thessalonians 2:6f.

The Apostolic Constitutions interprets the Biblical predictions historicalistically

The *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, is a famous work which was constantly expanded from about A.D. 325 onward. There one reads:⁴⁴ "Daniel [7:13 cf. 2:34] describes... 'the Son of man coming to the Father' and receiving all judgment and honour from Him.... 'The stone cut out of the mountain without hands, becomes a great mountain filling the whole Earth.' It shatters the many governments of the smaller countries, and the polytheism of gods – but it preaches the one God, and ordains the monarchy of the Romans....

"You have understanding, and are able to know the right hand from the left and to distinguish false-teachers from true teachers [Second Peter 2:1f].... For in the last days, false-prophets shall be multiplied and such as corrupt the Word.... The sheep shall be changed into wolves.... And **then** the 'deceiver of the World' shall appear – the enemy of truth; the prince of lies."

Clearly, all preterism and even futurism is absent from this historicalistic document. Indeed, that is the situation also in the entire Ante-Nicene Church.

Eusebius of Caesarea interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

In his *Demonstrations of the Gospel* (IV:15-16), Eusebius of Caesarea gives the standard historicalistic interpretation of Daniel chapters two through nine. He then further contrasts historicalistically the subsequent first with the later second advent of Christ.

Even as the Nicene Creed was being drawn up, Eusebius of Caesarea was completing his famous *Church History* around 325. There, he says⁴⁵ it was "at the time...of **the Roman Empire**...that the...Teacher of virtue; the Minister of the Father in all good things; the divine and heavenly Word of God – in a human body...suffered the things which had been prophesied.... The Prophet Daniel [7:7-

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14], under the influence of the divine Spirit, saw His Kingdom at the end of [that] time" of the economy of the Older Testament.

"Thus he was inspired to describe the divine vision in language fitted to human comprehension: "For I beheld,' he says, 'until thrones were placed and the Ancient of Days did sit Whose garment was white as snow'.... And again, 'I saw,' says he, 'and behold, One like the Son of man came with the clouds of Heaven [at the time of His Ascension] – and he hastened unto the Ancient of Days, and was brought into His presence.

"Then there was given Him the dominion and the glory and the Kingdom. And all peoples, tribes and tongues serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom [unlike that of Rome] shall not be destroyed'....

"These words refer to no one else than to our Saviour, the God-Word. He was in the beginning with God, and He was called the Son of man because of His final appearance in the flesh."

Yet that appearance of our Saviour at His incarnation, soon unleashed a series of persecutions of those who follow Him. Such a persecution was that experienced by the Apostle John.

Explains Eusebius: "In this persecution, the Apostle and Evangelist John...was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos.... Irenaeus in the fifth book of his work *Against Heresies*...discusses the number of the name of **Antichrist** – which is given in the so-called 'Apocalypse of John'....

"In the fifth book [of his work *Against Heresies*], he speaks as follows concerning the Apocalypse of John [the Apostle]...: 'The **Romans** has established their Empire.... [The A.D. 251-60 Pagan-Roman Emperor] Valerian, with his son Galienus, received the Empire....

"[The A.D. 259-69 Roman Bishop] Dionysius relates of him...the following account. 'And in like manner it is revealed to John [in **Revelation 13:5**], "For there was given to him...a mouth speaking great things and blasphemy; and there was given to him authority and 42 months.'"

"It is wonderful that both of these things **occurred under Valerian**," who was the Emperor of the Roman Empire just before October 253 A.D. Hence Eusebius was neither a preterist nor a futurist, but an historicalist.

Especially after the victory of Constantine in 313 A.D., wrote Eusebius (*History IX:12:4f*), there was a mighty advance of Christianity. That occurred also in fulfilment of God's historical predictions in His Book of Revelation chapters 12 & 13f:–

"The Emperor publically displayed a painted resemblance of the dragon beneath his own and his children's feet, stricken through with a dart, and cast headlong into the depths of the sea.... Thus he expressed what the Prophets had foretold concerning this monster, saying that 'God would bring His great and terrible sword against the dragon, the flying serpent, and would destroy the dragon in the sea' [Isaiah 27:1 *cf.* Revelation 13:1f]....

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"One might have thought that a picture of Christ's Kingdom was thus shadowed forth.... It may be that this was that second and new Jerusalem spoken of in the predictions of the Prophets." Thus Eusebius's *Life of Constantine* III:3,15,33.

Whatever one might think of the accuracy or not of Eusebius's understanding of Scripture – one thing is as clear as crystal. He was neither preteristic nor futuristic, but solidly historicalistic.

Athanasius of Alexandria interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

The great hero of the Trinitarianism that triumphed over Arianism at the Council of Nicaea in 325 was, of course, Athanasius of Alexandria. In seeing unitarian **Arianism** as the first really serious forerunner of **Antichrist**, he antipreteristically deprived Nero of that doubtful honour.

However, in seeing 318-381 Arianism as the **forerunner** of Antichrist, it is also abundantly clear that Athanasius regarded **Antichrist himself** as clearly **Post**-Arian. As Athanasius writes in his work *On the Councils of Ariminum & Seleucia*:⁴⁶ "The Nicene Council...pronounced the Arian heresy to be the **forerunner** of **Antichrist**."

In his work *The Deposition of Arius*, Athanasius writes:⁴⁷ "I addressed the letter to Arius and his fellows, exhorting them to renounce his impiety.... There have gone forth in this diocese at this time certain lawless men – enemies of Christ – teaching an **apostasy** which one may justly suspect and designate as a **forerunner** of **Antichrist**." And in his important work *To the Bishops of Egypt*, Athanasius insists that⁴⁸ "the Arians...make ready...the way of deceit for **Antichrist**."

These predictions of Athanasius are truly remarkable. Especially when one sees both the 'Hyper-Arian' **Mohammad** and the 'Beast-ial' **Pope** arising at the beginning of the seventh century – as **contemporaneous Antichrists!**

It is, however, especially in his work *The History of the Arians* that Athanasius clinches his own historicalistic view as to **Antichrist** being as then yet future. For there, he states:⁴⁹

"Does not the vision of Daniel [7:25] thus describe **Antichrist** – that he shall make war against the saints; and prevail against them; and exceed in bad deeds all who have been before him; and shall also humble three kings; and speak words against the Most High; and shall think to change times and laws? Now what other person besides Constantius [the arianizing 337-361 Eastern Emperor] has ever attempted to do these things? He is surely **such** a one as **Antichrist would** be. He speaks words against the Most High, by supporting this impious heresy [of Arianism]....

"Having put on the profession of Christianity and entering into the holy places and standing there, he lays waste the churches.... A persecution, indeed, such as never arose before; and such as no one perhaps will again stir up – **except** 'the son of lawlessness' [Second Thessalonians 2:8].

" This is what these enemies of Christ exhibit – who already present a [foreshadowing] **picture** of him.... This be that 'falling away' [described in Second Thessalonians 2:3] – **after** which **he** [*viz.* **the Antichrist**] shall be manifested, of whom Constantius is surely the **forerunner**."

Cyril of Jerusalem interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Around 347f, Cyril of Jerusalem gave his *Catechetical Lectures*. There, he quoted Christ's own words in Matthew 24:15, referring to Daniel 12:7-11f, and then added:⁵⁰ "Hatred of the brethren makes room **next** for **Antichrist**... God forbid that any of Christ's servants here, or elsewhere, should run over to the enemy!" He then quoted Second Thessalonians 2:1-10, and added: "Thus wrote Paul; and **now** [around 347f] is the 'falling away.'"

Cyril then challenged his catechumens: "The Church now charges you before the Living God! She declares to you the things concerning **Antichrist** – **before** they **arrive**.... The adversary...is a magician [*cf.* the even-then sacramentalization of the ordinances which would later result even in transubstantiation *etc.*], and most expert in sorceries and enchantments of beguiling **craftiness** [*cf.* Daniel 8:25]. He **shall** seize for himself the power of **the Roman Empire**, and shall falsely style himself 'christ' [*cf.* the 'Vicar of Christ']....

"This aforesaid **Antichrist** is to come – **when** the times of **the Roman Empire** shall have been fulfilled.... There shall rise up together **ten kings** of the **Romans** – reigning **in different parts** perhaps, but all about the same time. And **after** these, an eleventh – **the Antichrist**, who by his magical craft shall seize upon the Roman power. And of the kings who reigned before him, 'three he **shall** humble'; and the remaining seven he **shall** keep in subjection to himself [*cf.* Daniel 7:7-23].

"At first, indeed, he will put on **a show of** mildness (as though he were a learned and discreet person), and of soberness and **benevolence**.... These things we teach not of our own invention – but having learned them out of the Divine Scriptures used in the Church, and chiefly from the prophecy of Daniel [7:23].... The Fourth Beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon Earth, which shall surpass all kingdoms. And that this kingdom is that of **the Romans**, has been the tradition of the Church's interpreters.... The fourth kingdom, **now**, is that of **the Romans**....

"Who is this, and from what sort of working? Interpret to us, O Paul! 'Whose coming,' he says, 'is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders' [Second Thessalonians 2:9].... For **the father of falsehood** will make a show of the works of falsehood – so that the multitudes may think that they see...lame men walking and blind men seeing, when the cure has not been wrought....

"Again he says 'who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped (against every God). **Antichrist** forsooth...'enthrones himself in the temple of God.... He says [Daniel 7:21]: 'I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints'....

"In another place, Daniel [12:7-12] says the same thing. 'And He swore by Him Who keeps on living for ever, that it shall be for a time and [two] times and half-a-time.' And some perhaps have referred what follows, also to this. Namely '1290 days'; and this: 'Blessed is he that endures and comes to the 1335 days!' For this reason, we must hide ourselves and flee....

"Who then is the blessed man, who **shall** at that time devoutly witness for Christ? For I say...in the time of **Antichrist**, they **shall** do battle with Satan.... Guard yourself, then, O man!

"You have the signs of **Antichrist**; and remember them not only yourself, but impart them also freely to all! If you have a child according to the flesh – admonish him of this **now**! If you have

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begotten one through catechizing – put him too on his guard, lest he receive 'the false one' as the True! For the 'mystery of iniquity' is at work already [Second Thessalonians 2:7]. I fear these wars of the nations! I fear the schisms of the churches! I fear...much, concerning **Antichrist**... It is **another** head of the dragon, **lately** sprung up....

"May the God of the whole World keep you all in safety, bearing in mind the signs...and remaining **unsubdued** by **Antichrist**! Thus you have received the signs about the Deceiver who is to come.... Guard 'that which has been committed to you' concerning Christ [Second Timothy 6:20] – so that you may stand with a good confidence before the Judge, and inherit the Kingdom of Heaven!"

Hilary and Ambrose and Tichonius all interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

In 364, Hilary the Overseer of the Church at Potiers in what is now France, wrote a public letter regarding a Church Leader called Auxentius. There he said that the Arians and the Semi-Arians were the forerunners of **Antichrist**, and that they were bearing themselves not as Christ's Bishops but as Priests of Antichrist. The time of Antichrist, disguised as an angel of light, was **coming**!

"Because of that **Antichrist** – you do wrong to attach importance to the walls of temples, or to regard a building as the **Church of God**. Is it then doubtful – but that **Antichrist** may establish his throne there?"⁵¹ No! For that is exactly what he **would** do. Cf. Second Thessalonians 2:3f.

The 340-97 Ambrose of Milan, the great Augustine's mentor, states⁵² that the Prophet "Daniel...by his counsels...foretold the future." What is called 'the apostasy' in Second Thessalonians two, says Ambrose, is 'an apostasy' from 'true religion' – in which **the Antichrist** would seize the kingdom (apparently of the Romans).⁵³

Yet "the Lord Jesus not only judges in the Spirit, but punishes also" – argues Ambrose.⁵⁴ As regards **the Antichrist**, Jesus had not done so preteristically, but would yet do so historicalistically. For "He **shall** punish **Antichrist**, of whom we read: 'The Lord Jesus **shall** slay him with the Spirit of His mouth.'"

Indeed, also "John, likewise, says that heretics are antichrists [First John 2:18f].... It is written of **the Antichrist** that 'he opens his mouth to blaspheme against God, to blaspheme His Name and to make war against His saints' [Revelation 13:6].... Perchance **Antichrist** will not have falsified the Holy Scriptures!" And significantly, **even the Popes** claim to uphold them⁵⁵ – even while always augmenting them with their own vain traditions.

Around 380 Tichonius of Africa said⁵⁶ neither preteristically nor futuristically but historicalistically: "Respecting the things seen by St. John in the Apocalypse – it seemed to some of the ancient Fathers that either all or at least the greater part **pre-signified** the **coming** of **Antichrist**....

"The things contained in it, began to have fulfilment immediately after Christ's passion; but are to go on fulfilling, up to the day of judgment.... But a small portion may seem to remain, for the times of **Antichrist**.... Wicked ones making up the body of the Devil" – shall conquer them that yield "in the midst of **the Church**."

Chrysostom of Constantinople interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Around 386, the great antipreteristic Chrysostom of Constantinople historicistically declared⁵⁷ that "**Antichrist shall** appear – [only] **after** whom is the **end**." Indeed, "Paul, speaking concerning **Antichrist**, said prophetically that 'God **shall** [first] send them strong delusion – so that they who believe not the truth but have pleasure in unrighteousness might be judged' (Second Thessalonians 2:11-12)."⁵⁸

Finally, Chrysostom observed⁵⁹ around 390 that "**Antichrist...will** not come on bended knees but 'exalting himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God' (Second Thessalonians 2:4)... Certain persons went about, having forged an epistle as if from Paul; and [they]...said that the Day of the Lord is at hand....

"So that they [the recipients of that forged epistle] might not be deceived, Paul gives certainty by the things he writes. And he says...'it will not be, except the falling away come first; and the man of sin be revealed...that opposes and exalts himself...in the temple of God'....

"Here, he discourses concerning the Antichrist, and reveals great mysteries. What is 'the falling away'? He calls it apostasy.... He is a man.... He will be seated in the temple of God – not that of Jerusalem alone, but also in every church....

"And now you know that which restrains..... There is one that restrains now, until he be taken out of the way'.... What is that which withholds? ... Some indeed say, the grace of the Spirit; but others, **the Roman Empire** – to whom I most of all accede....

"Because he said this of **the Roman Empire**, he naturally glanced at it and speaks covertly and darkly.... For if he had said that after a little while **the Roman Empire** would be dissolved, they would immediately even have overwhelmed him.... **When** the Roman Empire **is** taken out of the way, **then** he [the Antichrist] **shall come**....

"The kingdoms before this, were destroyed. For example, that of the Medes by the Babylonians; that of the Babylonians by the Persians; that of the Persians by the Macedonians; that of the Macedonians by **the Romans**. So will this also be, by **the Antichrist** – and he by Christ.... These things **Daniel** delivered to us with great clearness."

Jerome of Bethlehem's *Epistles* interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

The Goths had been hammering the Roman Empire for at least twenty years. Indeed, the city of Rome itself would buckle in 410. No wonder Jerome of Bethlehem warned his friend Marcella in Rome as early as 386 – to flee that doomed city.

Writes Jerome⁶⁰ "Mary the mother of the Lord left the lowlands – and made her way to the hill country.... Read the Apocalypse of John [17:4-9 & 18:1f]!...

"Consider what is sung there, about the woman arrayed in purple and the blasphemy written upon her brow; the seven mountains; the many waters; and the end of **Babylon**! ... It is true that **Rome** has a holy church.... **But** the display, power, and size of the city; the seeing and the being seen; the paying

and the receiving of visits; the alternate **flattery and detraction**, talking and listening...even when one is least in the mood to do so – all these things are alike **foreign to principles**."

To Heliodor too, Jerome of Bethlehem writes in 396:⁶¹ "I shudder when I think of the catastrophes of our time! For twenty years and more, the blood of **Romans** has been shed daily between Constantinople and the Julian Alps. Scythia, Thrace, Macedonia, Dardania, Dacia, Thessaly, Achaia, Epirus, Dalmatia, the Pannonias" – note, **ten kingdoms in all**, exactly as predicted by the Prophet Daniel and also in the Book of Revelation⁶² – "each and all of these have been sacked and pillaged and plundered by Goths and Sarmatians, Quades and Alans, Huns and Vandals and [also] Marchmen. How many of God's matrons and virgins, virtuous and noble ladies, have been made the sport of these brutes! Bishops have been made captives.... Churches have been overthrown.... **The Roman World is falling!**"

By 399, the Huns had joined in the attack. Writing to Oceanus in that year, Jerome observes:⁶³ "News came that the hordes of the Huns had poured forth...and the rude Massagetæ [or Saxon Scyths?] where the gates of Alexander keep back the wild peoples behind the Caucasus.... They were filling all the World with panic and bloodshed. **The Roman Army was absent** at the time, being detained in Italy on account of the civil wars.... May Jesus avert from the Roman World the further assaults of these wild beasts!"

Jerome, commenting on Daniel, interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Jerome, in his *Commentary on Daniel* (chapter 7), indicates that all the ecclesiastical writers agree with Irenaeus's understanding of Daniel 7 and Revelation 17. Thus Jerome rejects the infidel Porphyry's preteristic identification of the little horn with Antiochus Epiphanes, during the very time that "Daniel" would have written his seventh chapter.

Then Jerome himself explains:⁶⁴ "Let us therefore affirm, agreeably to the concurrent judgment of all ecclesiastical writers, that in the consummation of the World when the Roman Empire is to be destroyed, there **shall arise ten kings** who shall **divide the Roman World** among themselves.... An eleventh king [the 'little horn' in Daniel 7:8-25] **shall** arise, who shall subdue three of those ten kings. In that little tyrant, Satan **shall** dwell entirely and bodily" – the same as Paul's 'man of sin' in Second Thessalonians 2:3f.... **The Roman Empire** would finally be **destroyed** on account of the blasphemies of this **Antichrist**."⁶⁵

Jerome, on Second Thessalonians, interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Jerome explains that the 'let' or 'hindrance' in the way of the manifestation of Paul's **Antichrist** in Second Thessalonians 2:3f, was the then-existing **Roman Empire**.⁶⁶ Indeed, to Algasia, Jerome says⁶⁷ similarly in 406, that **Antichrist** would not come **until** the **Roman Empire** is first destroyed and **he** is truly judged to be **in the Church**. For Paul's "man of sin" would "sit in the temple; that is, in the Church." Indeed: "It is only by assuming Christ's Name, that the simpler ones of the believers can be seduced to go to Antichrist. For then they will go to Antichrist – while thinking to find Christ!"

Around 407, Jerome of Bethlehem remarks on Daniel 2:34-42 (*cf.* 7:7-24) on the image seen in a dream by Nebuchadnezzar – that the breaking up of the iron legs in the image into ten toes, meant the

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weakness of **the Roman Empire** at the time he himself was living. He also said⁶⁸ that the four Beasts in Daniel 7 referred to the same four Empires as those depicted in the dream-image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2.

To Ageruchia, after the Vandals irrupted even into Gaul – Jerome wrote in 409 that the whole Roman Empire was then being removed. Explained Jerome⁶⁹ from the predictions of Paul in Second Thessalonians 2:7f: "He who restrains, is being taken out of the way; and yet we do not realize that **Antichrist is near**. Yes, **Antichrist is near** – whom the Lord Jesus Christ 'shall consume with the Spirit of His Mouth'...

"I shall now say a few words of our present miseries [in 409]. A few of us have hitherto survived them.... Savage tribes in countless numbers have overrun all parts of Gaul.

"The whole country between the Alps and the Pyrenees, between the Rhine and the Ocean, has been laid waste – by hordes of Quadi, Vandals, Sarmatians, Alans, Gepids, Herules, Saxons, Burgundians, Allemanni and...even Pannonians.... Even Spain is daily on the brink of ruin and [of that of the] temple – as they recall the invasion of the Cymry.... **Rome has to fight** within her own borders; not for glory, but for bare life!"

Jerome of Bethlehem interpreted the then-recent fall of Rome historicalistically

Rome was taken by Alaric in 410. Next, in 411, Jerome wrote:⁷⁰ "The siege of the city of Rome has been announced to me. And thus – he who has been strewn all over, has become paralyzed. For days and nights, I have been thinking about nothing else than the safety of all....

"After this, the clearest light of all lands will be extinguished. Indeed, the head of the Roman Empire having been chopped off – as I truly say, the whole World perishes in one city! I have suddenly become silent, and am humbled."

Jerome continues:⁷¹ "Who would believe that **Rome**, built up by the conquest of the whole World, had collapsed; that the mother of nations had become also their tomb; that the shores of the whole East, of Egypt, of Africa (which once belonged to the Imperial City) were filled with the hosts of her male and female slaves; that we should every day be receiving in this holy Bethlehem men and women who once were noble and abounding in every kind of wealth but are now reduced to poverty? ... Who could boast – when the flight of the people of the West, and the holy places (crowded as they are with penniless fugitives naked and wounded), plainly reveal the ravages of **the Barbarians?**"

And now, Jerome knew that the stage was being set for the rise of the little horn **Antichrist**. Yes, from Daniel, Jerome knew that this horn would **later** uproot three of the ten other horns – and then **keep on growing**, till it became a **persecutor of the true saints!** Jerome also knew that this **Antichrist** would corrupt **Christ's earthly Temple**. For, as he writes on Second Thessalonians two:⁷² "He shall change, and try to increase, the sacraments of **the Church!**"

Finally, in 412, and looking back, Jerome writes:⁷³ "**Rome** – once praised by an Apostle [Paul in Romans 1:8] – was now in **danger**.... Rome had been **besieged** and its citizens had been forced to buy their lives with gold.... The City which had taken the whole World, was itself taken [by Alaric the Visigoth who ransacked Rome in 410].... In their frenzy, the starving people had recourse to hideous

food – and tore each other limb from limb, so that they might have meat to eat. Even the mother did not spare the babe at her breast."

Indeed, in 413, Jerome further writes:⁷⁴ "**The World sinks into ruin**. Yes. But shameful to say, our sins still live and flourish. The renowned city, the capital of the **Roman Empire**, is swallowed up in **one tremendous fire** [cf. Daniel 7:11f & Revelation 17:16].... Churches once held sacred, are now but heaps of dust and ashes.... We live as though we are going to **die tomorrow**.... Such are the times!"

Sulpitius Severus of Gaul interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Contemporary to Jerome of Bethlehem was the protégé of Martin of Tours in what is now France – the famous historian Sulpitius Severus. In his approximately A.D. 400f biographical work *The Life of St. Martin* (chapter 24), Sulpitius wrote regarding Elijah in John's Revelation (11:6 cf. James 5:17): "We may infer from this, since false-prophets...have appeared, that the **coming of Antichrist is at hand**." Clearly, then, Sulpitius believed around A.D. 400 that Antichrist had then still not been manifested – but then soon would be, at a time then yet future.

In his *Dialogues* (II:14), he said of the A.D. 335-400 Martin of Tours: "When we questioned him concerning the end of the World, he said to us that '**Nero**' [*redivivus*] **and Antichrist** have **first to come**; that '**Nero**' will rule in the **Western** portion of the World **after** having subdued ten kings; and that a persecution will be carried on by him with the view of compelling men to worship the idols of the Gentiles. He **also** said that **Antichrist** [cf. Islam?] on the **other** hand, would **first** seize upon the Empire of the **East**....

"He further said that '**Nero**' was to be **destroyed by Antichrist**, and that the whole World and all nations were **to be reduced** under the power of Antichrist until that impious one should be **overthrown**.... He told us too that there was no doubt but that Antichrist, having been conceived by an evil spirit, was already born and had by this time [A.D. *circa* 400] reached the years of boyhood – while he would assume power as soon as he reached the proper age. Now [*circa* 408 A.D.], this is the eighth year since we heard these words from his lips. You may conjecture, then, how nearly about to **happen in the future** – are those things which are feared."

Regardless of the accuracy or not of the details of these 'predictions' – one thing is crystal clear. St. Martin of Tours, who died around A.D. 400, believed that **Antichrist** would be manifested only in the **future after** A.D. 400.

In his A.D. 401 *Sacred History*, Sulpitius Severus himself writes⁷⁵ very historicalistically and not at all preteristically that, as recorded by the Prophet in Daniel chapter two, "Nebuchadnezzar had a dream.... Daniel heard of it...[and] the Prophet interpreted the matter."

"The image which was seen," continues Sulpitius, "furnished a representation of the World.... The iron legs point to...**the Roman Empire**, which was more powerful than all the kingdoms which were before it. But the fact that the feet were partly of iron and partly clay, indicates that the Roman Empire was to be **divided**....

"This too **has been fulfilled** [and indeed just recently]. For the Roman state **is being ruled** not by one Emperor, but by **several**....

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"Finally, by the clay and the iron being mixed together – yet never in their substance thoroughly uniting – are showed forth those **future** [!!!] mixtures of the human race which disagree among themselves, though apparently combined. For it is obvious that the **Roman territory** is occupied by **foreign nations**.....

"Luke made known the doings of the Apostles, up to the time when Paul was brought to Rome under the **Emperor Nero**. As to Nero, I shall **not** say that he was the **worst** of kings – but that he was worthily held [then to be] the basest of all men.... It was he [*viz.* Nero] who first began a persecution.... He will be the last to carry it on – **if** indeed we admit, as many are inclined to believe [on the strength of sources such as the *Pseudo-Sibylline Oracles*] that he will yet appear immediately before the coming of **Antichrist** [who would thus be yet another entity!]....

"After the departure of Nero, **Galba** seized the government. And ere long, on Galba being slain, **Otho** secured it. Then **Vitellius**.... After an interval, **Vespasian's** son **Domitian** persecuted the Christians.... There then occurred the third persecution, under **Trajan**....

"Then, under **Hadrian**, the Jews attempted to rebel. After Hadrian, the churches had peace under the rule of **Antoninus Pius**. Then the fifth persecution began under **Aurelius**....

"The sixth persecution of the Christians took place under the emperor **Severus**.... Then, during an interval of 38 years, the Christians had peace....

"Ere long, under **Decius** as emperor, the seventh bloody persecution broke out.... Next, **Valerian** proved himself the eighth enemy of the saints. After him, with an interval of about 50 years, there arose under the emperors **Diocletian and Maximian** a most bitter persecution.... Never more than at that time, was the World exhausted by wars....

"The end of the persecutions was reached 88 years ago [*viz.* in 313] – at which date the emperors began to be Christians. For **Constantine** then obtained the sovereignty – and he was the first Christian of all the Roman rulers....

"From that time," concludes Sulpitius in 401, "we have continued to enjoy tranquillity. Nor do I believe there will be any further persecutions – **except** that which **Antichrist** will carry on.... The Arian heresy – was condemned.... There follow the times of our own day – both difficult, and dangerous."

Augustine of Hippo interpreted the Biblical predictions in the Psalms historicalistically

The greatest theologian of all time before Calvin was, of course, **Augustine of Hippo-Regius** in North Africa. Between 401 and 415, he wrote his work *On the Psalms*. There, he stated:⁷⁶ "We have the Lord Himself called a mountain by the Prophet [Daniel 2:34f]. As it is written, 'The Stone that was cut out without hands – grew to the size of a mountain.'

"But this cannot be taken of His Person.... It is more plain and unembarrassed, if we understand that God heard out of His justice.... For we read [Psalm 36:6] 'Your justice is like the mountains of God'.... His 'holy Hill' [Psalm 43:3f] is His holy Church. It is that mountain which, according to the vision of

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Daniel [2:35], grows from a very small 'stone' – till it crushes the kingdoms of the Earth and grows to such a size that it 'fills the surface of the Earth.'"

Significant too is Augustine's comment on Psalm 9:19 – 'Arise, O Lord, let not man prevail!' There, he argues that the appearance of man – viz. 'the man of sin' – was as then yet future.

For he observes⁷⁷ there that "the future judgment is being prayed for. But before it comes, 'Let the heathen...be judged in Your sight!' ... He seems to me to point out **Antichrist** – of whom the Apostle says 'when the man of sin shall be revealed' [Second Thessalonians 2:3].... **Antichrist** will seem to man [to be] blessed to that degree that he will even be thought [to be as] God."

Augustine further comments⁷⁸ on Psalm 83:2f's words 'Your enemies have sounded, and they who hate You have lifted up the head'.... This "seems to me to signify the last days when these things that are now repressed by fear, are to break forth....

"They are to come even to the point that they shall have that head which 'is lifted up above all that is called God and is worshipped'.... Then, He to Whom it is said 'Keep not silence nor grow mild, O God!' – shall 'slay him with the Breath of His Mouth, and shall destroy [him] with the brightness of His coming' [Second Thessalonians 2:4-8]."

Also on Psalm 106:33, Augustine observes:⁷⁹ "The Apostle Paul says 'that [the] **man of sin** shall be revealed'.... And a little after, he says 'then shall that wicked one be manifested whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His Mouth'....

"Through that **Apostate**, through him who exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, it seems to me that the carnal people of Israel will suppose that prophecy to be fulfilled where it is said 'Deliver us, O Lord, and gather us from among the heathen!'"

Finally, on Psalm 69:28f, Augustine adds:⁸⁰ "In the Apocalypse – what says the Spirit of God, when...the Scripture was speaking of the oppressions that would be from **Antichrist**? 'All they who have not been written in the book of life, shall give consent to him.'" Revelation 13:8.

Augustine of Hippo on the predictions by John & Paul, and Augustine's own *City of God*

It was about 416 when Augustine gave his *Homilies on the Gospel of John*. There, at 7:8, he quotes Christ's words – 'he who speaks from himself, seeks his own glory.' Then Augustine next comments:⁸¹ "This will be he who is called **Antichrist** – 'exalting himself,' as the Apostle says, 'above all that is called God and that is worshipped' [Second Thessalonians 2:4]....

"In **Antichrist**, however, there is unrighteousness, and he is not true. Because he will seek his own glory, not His by Whom he is sent.... Therefore let all of us who belong to the body of Christ, not seek our own glory – so that we not be led into the snares of **Antichrist**!"

In his famous *City of God*, completed in the years 413-426, Augustine states⁸² that "Jesus Himself shall extinguish, by His presence [cf. Matthew 28:20], that last persecution which is to be made by **Antichrist**. For so it is written, that 'He shall slay him, with the Breath of His Mouth, and empty him with the brightness of His presence'....

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"He shall kill **Antichrist** with the breath of His Mouth [Second Thessalonians 2:8]. Then, even this is not the Last Judgment of the wicked." Note well!

Further: "I can on no account omit what the Apostle Paul says, in writing to the Thessalonians [II 2:1-11], 'We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Christ' *etc.* No one can doubt that he wrote this of **Antichrist** and of the Day of Judgment...; nor that he declared that this day would not come, unless he first came who is called **the apostate** – apostate, to wit, from the Lord God.... Some think that in this passage, **Antichrist** does not mean the prince himself alone, but his whole body – that is, the mass of men who adhere to him along with him their prince....

"Some [preteristically!] think that the Apostle Paul referred to **the Roman Empire**, and that...he alludes to **Nero** – whose deeds already seemed to be **as** the deeds of **Antichrist**.... But I wonder that men can be so audacious in their **conjectures!**

"Yet it is **not** absurd to believe that these words of the Apostle – 'Only he who now withholds, let him keep on withholding until he be taken out of the way' – refer to **the Roman Empire**. As if it were said – 'Let him who now reigns, only keep on reigning until he be taken out of the way!' And 'then the wicked one shall be revealed.' No one doubts that this means **Antichrist**."⁸³

Moreover, "**Daniel** prophesies about the Last Judgment in such a way as to indicate that **Antichrist** shall **first** come.... In prophetic vision, he had seen four Beasts signifying four Kingdoms – and the fourth conquered by a certain king who is recognized as **Antichrist**....

"Some have interpreted these four Kingdoms as signifying those of the Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, and **Romans**. They who desire to understand the fitness of this interpretation – may read **Jerome's** book on Daniel, which is written with a sufficiency of **care** and **erudition**....

"He who reads this passage even half asleep, cannot fail to see that the kingdom of **Antichrist** shall fiercely – though for a short time – assail **the Church** before the Last Judgment of God.... As for the **ten kings**, whom, it seems, **Antichrist** is to find in the person of ten individuals when he comes – I acknowledge...he may come unexpectedly, while there are not [yet] ten kings living in **the Roman World**."⁸⁴

Augustine of Hippo on the validity of baptisms by Antichrist as a 'mediating Bishop'

Very significantly, Augustine also makes provision for the validity of triune baptism administered by heretics. Such would then include even that given by the later Papal Church of Rome.

Thus he states:⁸⁵ "The offspring of **Antichrist**...are all who oppose themselves to Christ.... If we discern this Name [of the Triune God] in it – we do better to distinguish the words of the Gospel from heretical error; and approve what is sound in them, correcting what is faulty....

"Saturninus of Abitini said: 'If **the Antichrist** can give to anyone the grace of Christ – then can heretics who are called **antichrists** also baptize.' What if another were to say: 'If a murderer can give the grace of Christ – then, can they that hate their brethren also baptize?' For certainly, he would seem in a way to speak the truth; and yet they can baptize. In like manner, therefore, can the heretics, as well!"

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So then, Augustine – who died in A.D. 430 – clearly believed that **the Antichrist** would come in what was then still the future. Such, he seemed to sense, might even be a **mediating Bishop**.

Thus, in his comment on First John 2:1, he observes:⁸⁶ "If John had said, 'If any man sin, **I** will pray for him' (as Parmenian in one place makes **the Bishop** the mediator between the people and God) – where is the faithful Christian that would tolerate it? Who would not view him rather as **Antichrist** than as an Apostle?"

John Cassian the Scythian on the decline of the fifth-century Church

Perhaps around A.D. 435, John Cassian the Scythian described the decline of the fifth-century Church. In his *Institutes* and in his *Conferences*, he describes her gluttony, her fornication, her covetousness, her vainglory, and her pride. And in his *Seven Books on the Incarnation of the Lord Against Nestorius* (IV:2f cf. III:12) – a work of great christological orthodoxy – he infinitely elevates Christ above both His Own mother Mary and also His Own Apostle Peter.

In his *Conferences* (VIII:2:4), Cassian reminds his readers that the "idol of Jupiter...was placed in the temple in Jerusalem [by the Pagan Romans], and...is again to stand in the Church through the coming of **Antichrist**" See Daniel 9:27. And in X:2:2, Cassian notes that "letters are sent from the **Bishop**...through all the churches...by which the beginning of Lent and the day of Easter are pointed out" He says: "This was received...with such bitterness, owing to their simplicity..., that the aforesaid **Bishop** ought to be **abhorred** by the whole body of the brethren, as tainted with heresy of the **worst kind** – because he seemed to **impugn the teaching of Holy Scripture**."

In his *Conferences* II:15:9, Cassian seems to warn against the rise of 'Metropolitan Archbishops' and 'Popes.' "It says in Deuteronomy [13:1-3]: 'If there rise up in the midst of thee a "prophet" or one who says that he has seen a dream and declare a sign and a wonder, and that which he has spoken does not come to pass, and he says to you "Let us go and follow after other gods whom you do not acknowledge, and let us serve them!" – you shall not listen to the words of that "prophet" or of that dreamer!'.... And in the Gospel [Matthew 24:24] it says, 'There shall arise false-Christ and false-prophets, and shall give great signs and wonders, so that if it were possible even the elect would be led astray!'"

Indeed, in his *Seven Books* (V:10), after citing First John 4:2f against the Antichrist, Cassian then challenges his readers: "Do you recognize that it is plainly and markedly spoken of **you**?" And: "Take care lest any one may even term you **Antichrist**! Do you think that I am reviling and cursing? What I am saying, is not my own idea. For lo, the Evangelist says: 'Every one who lets go of Jesus, is not of God; and this is **Antichrist**!'"

Theodoret & Leo the Great & Evagrius interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Perhaps around 450, Theodoret of Cyrus in Syria explains the four kingdoms and the little horn in Daniel chapters 2 and 7 historicalistically – just as did the preceding Church Fathers. In Second Thessalonians 2, he regards the apostasy as that of **Antichrist**, the greatest apostasizer from the truth; and the temple of God in which he would sit, as **Christian churches** where he would usurp the primacy as if the Lord Himself.

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As to the period of **Antichrist's** continuance, Theodoret considered Daniel 9:24-27 & 12:7-12 and Revelation 11:3-9 & 12:14 & 13:5f to make that determination. He concluded (like the A.D. 380 Tichonius before and the 540 A.D. Primasius after him) – that it may last for **1260 years**.⁸⁷

After the time of Theodoret, the Church drifted more and more into idolatry and worldliness. As Samuel Taylor Coleridge once remarked:⁸⁸ "The Pastors of the Church...had gradually changed the life and light of the Gospel – into the very superstitions they were commissioned to disperse. They thus **paganized Christianity** – in order to **christen Paganism!**"

It seems the *circa* 400-61 Leo makes no mention of Antichrist. Yet as the rot progressed, around 590 one finds the Church Historian Evagrius of Syria writing:⁸⁹ "**The Roman Emperors** are being driven from their kingdoms; wars rage; all is commotion; **Antichrist** must be at hand!"

Gregory the Great of Rome interpreted the Biblical predictions historicalistically

Now Gregory the Great was Bishop of Rome from 590-604. In his letter to bishops Eulogius and Anastasius, he says:⁹⁰ "Eight years ago in the time of my predecessor...Pelagius [Bishop of Rome], our brother and fellow-bishop John in the city of Constantinople...held a Synod in which he tried to call himself '**Universal Bishop**'....

"Not one of my predecessors has ever consented to use this so profane a title! Since, forsooth, if one Patriarch is called 'Universal' – the name of...the rest is derogated.

"But far be this! Far be it from the mind of a Christian – that anyone should wish to seize for himself that whereby he might seem in the least degree to lessen the honour of his brethren! While, then, we are unwilling to receive this honour when offered to us – think how disgraceful it is for anyone to have wished to usurp it to himself perforce! Therefore, let no one ever be called 'Universal [Pope]!'"

Nevertheless, Gregory himself was soon the first man in history – (unsolicitedly yet) successfully – to get called **Sole Pope** alias Universal Father. A godly man, he then immediately repudiated that title as indicative of **the Antichrist**.

Responded Gregory:⁹¹ "Whosoever...called himself or sought to be called 'Universal Bishop' or 'Universal Priest' – that man was the likeness, the precursor, and the preparer for **Antichrist**." Indeed, Gregory regarded the very name '**Universal Bishop**' as openly blasphemous. For he did not hesitate to connect it to **the ten-horned beast** in Revelation 12:3f & 13:1-5f & 17:3f.⁹²

Asked Gregory: "What else is intimated, but that the days of **Antichrist** are already **near?**"⁹³ "None of my predecessors [as Bishops of Rome] ever desired to use this **profane** term!"⁹⁴ "To consent to that **impious** term – is nothing else than to lose the faith!"⁹⁵

"Everyone that calls himself or desires to be called '**Universal Priest**,' insists Gregory – "is...a forerunner of **Antichrist**."⁹⁶ "None ever wished to be called by such a name."⁹⁷ Indeed, to Bishop Eulogius of Alexandria, Gregory insists:⁹⁸ "**Though I prohibited** you – **you** have taken care to write a word of proud signification by calling me '**Universal Pope!**'"

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Ominously, Gregory held that **Antiochus Epiphanes** was a forerunner of **Antichrist** – whom he identified with the **little horn** in Daniel 7:8f and with Paul's **man of sin** in Second Thessalonians 2:3f.⁹⁹ Gregory also said¹⁰⁰ that in Revelation chapter 13, "John narrated that the First Beast is **Antichrist**.... After him, also the other Beast (from the Earth) is said to arise – because after him, his multitude of preachers are glorified by power." Yes, he added, "the times of **Antichrist** are **already near at hand!**"¹⁰¹

The simultaneous rise of the Islamic and Papal Antichrists

It is extremely significant the life of Mohammed exactly coincides with the first time ever that the Western Bishop of Rome was called Sole Pope. Shortly after that time, the Eastern-Orthodox Archbishop Andreas of Caesarea (perhaps around 632) seems to reflect this, in his *Commentary on Revelation*.

It is indeed a mystery that some modern Preterists have claimed that Andreas was a Preterist. They do so, chiefly because he states on Revelation 7:1-2 that "these things are referred by some to those sufferings which were inflicted by the Romans upon the Jews.... Although these things happened in part to Jewish Christians who escaped the evils inflicted on Jerusalem by the Romans – yet they more probably refer to **Antichrist**."

The emphases above, are mine – F.N. Lee. They show that the Preterists here very conveniently ignore the words we have here emphasized. Those clearly show that even as regards Revelation seven, Andreas was not a Preterist but a Historicalist.

This becomes even more apparent at Revelation thirteen – where Andreas holds that the first beast is **Antichrist**, and the second beast is the **False-Prophet**. Then, on Revelation sixteen, he adds that the "kings of the East" would prove to be Gog and Magog – from "across the Euphrates." This, very non-preteristically, would anticipate the constant later movements of the Islamic Turks toward the West.

Revelation seventeen, Andreas of Caesarea claims, describes the old Rome "which – having been held constantly under the seven chief wicked rulers from the A.D. 95 Domitian till the A.D. 290f Diocletian – at length came under the control of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine the Great (in A.D. 313f). Constantine, indeed, after all those tyrants from Domitian to Diocletian had been destroyed, moved "the ornaments of the Christian Kingdom to New Rome" alias 'Constantinople.' That city would later get conquered by the Islamic Turks – who would then corrupt its name to 'Istanbul.' Moreover, the beast's eight head – believed Andreas – would prove to be **Antichrist**, the King of **Rome**. Cf. Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* 106:336 & 380f.

Pseudo-Methodius wrote from 676 to 678 – after the rise of Islam, and even as it was spreading with great rapidity. He claimed the Bible predicted that the "Ismaelites" would break forth and overflow everything. Cf. Revelation 9:2-14f. But he also predicted the final triumph of Christ over Islam, thereafter. Cf. Revelation 16:12f. All of this manifests Pseudo-Methodius to have been 0% Preterist and 100% Historicalist.

One of Andreas's successors in his same Archbishopric of Caesarea, was Arethas (860-912). In his *Commentary on Revelation* chapters six to seven, Arethas states that **some** claim these events occurred

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before the A.D. 70 Fall of Jerusalem. We agree, and we further concede that Arethas (just like we ourselves) also gave an early date for the inscripturation of the Book of Revelation. But none of this has anything at all to do with a preteristic interpretation of Revelation – as certain modern Preterists indeed misallege.

At Revelation 9:12*f*, Arethas historicalistically speaks of the "palace of the **Saracens**" as still being in the East – either in Babylon, or Baghdad. At Revelation 11:7, he says that the beast from the bottomless pit would be **Antichrist**. And at Revelation thirteen, he regards the first beast as the **Saracens** and the second as '**Antichrist**'– who would prove to be the "Emperor of **Rome**" as the forerunner of the Antichrist. See Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* 106:649-72.

Clearly, there is no Preterism here! Andreas, Pseudo-Methodius and Arethas – great scholars in the Eastern Church from the seventh century onward – were all **Historicalists**.

The papal successors of Gregory historicalistically acted like the predicted Antichrist

Soon after Gregory the Great died in 604 – the various many successive Bishops of Rome started to demand that they be called '**Pope**' alias '[Universal] Father.' The evil new Emperor Phocas conceded to Pope Boniface III (the Bishop of Rome from A.D. 607-608), what Gregory by no means demanded – *viz.*, that Rome should be the head of all the churches. And just two years after England herself succumbed to Romanism at the Synod of Whitby – **by A.D. 666**, all the Bishops of Rome revelled in their usurped title of '**Vicar of Christ**.' Alas, the Antichrist had now come to our great planet Earth!

Himself under pressure from the new factor of the advancing Muslims, Pope Gregory II (715-731) with the help of Charles Martel filled up the vacuum left by the Byzantine collapse in central Italy. Said Gregory II in 727: "All the kings of the West reverence the Pope as a god on Earth."¹⁰²

His successor, Pope Gregory III (731-41), gave Martel "the keys of the Confession of St. Peter." And Gregory III's successor, Pope Zachary I (741-52), grabbed jurisdiction over the churches of France. The **tyranny** of the Roman Bishop was established. Daniel's **little horn** now became stout.

No wonder that the greatest of all 'Eastern-Orthodox' theologians, John of Damascus, declared in 750:¹⁰³ "It should be known that **the Antichrist** is bound to come.... The angel teaches Daniel [11:37], saying these words, 'Neither shall he pay regard to the God of his fathers.' And the Apostle says [in Second Thessalonians 2:3*f*], 'Let no man deceive you!... The man of sin shall be revealed...who exalts himself above all that is called God' in the temple of God.... Therefore he is called Antichrist."

By 754, Pope Stephen II had anointed Pepin Emperor and "Patrician of the Romans." In that same year, Pepin grabbed land from Lombardy – and gave it to the Pope.

By 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the whole '**Holy Roman Empire**' (*sic*). Just think this through! The **Pope** (as the greater) crowned the **Emperor** (as the lesser)!

By 850, the *Pseudo-Isidorean Decretals* and the bogus *Donations of Constantine* were being used falsely to try to legitimize the Vatican's power grabs – *ex post facto*. Indeed, even the great Romish Church Historian Professor J. Döllinger declared (before he was excommunicated): "Without the pseudo-Isidore, there would have been no Gregory VII" alias Pope Hildebrand!

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Yet, during that whole time – as Daniel's **little horn** became "**more stout**" than any other political leader in the '**Holy Roman Empire**' and extended his stranglehold over all the nominally-Christian World – he did meet with some real resistance from theologians. Thus, around 840, the cleric Walafred Strabo identified Paul's predicted apostasy precisely with the spiritual condition of the Roman Church.¹⁰⁵

By 985, **Popes** and sometimes even **Antipopes** were being **crowned**. They, in turn, endeavoured to 'uncrown' one another. And in 990, the Romish Bishop Arnulf of Orleans identified the **Papacy** as **Antichrist**.¹⁰⁶

By 1054, the *Filioque* Controversy split the Eastern from the Western Church. Indeed, by 1070, Archbishop Theophylact of Achrida – apparently reflecting on the Pope – was pointing out that Second Thessalonians 2:3f had predicted that **the Antichrist** would not sit in any Judaistic temple in Jerusalem, but in the **Church Catholic**.¹⁰⁷

By 1073, Gregory VII alias Pope Hildebrand forced the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV to crawl on his knees through the snow. In 1154, Pope Adrian gave Ireland to England. Indeed, in 1216, Pope Innocent III excommunicated King John of England and all of his subjects – and proclaimed transubstantiation Romanism's official doctrine.

As Bishop Edward Elliott correctly observes,¹⁰⁸ under the grossly-misnamed Pope Innocent, "it is '**God's Vicegerent**' on Earth – **the Pope** – that received the attendant prelates' reverence and adoration.... By his **transubstantiating power**, he is the **God-maker**, and thereby in a manner exalted **above God**. It is surely fitting that he should exhibit such his superiority, [even] **seating** himself...upon **God's high altar** under the dome of St. Peter's, there to receive the adoration of his cardinals. So, in the most solemn manner, to use St. Paul's language [in Second Thessalonians 2:4], 'sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself as god'; to use Daniel's [[11:27f], 'exalting himself above every god.' Thus did **the Pope** act out the part of **Antichrist**."

The Waldensians denounced the Romish Papacy as the Antichrist predicted by the Bible

Also the Waldensians, in their 1120 work *On Antichrist*, said "the fourth iniquity of **the Antichrist** is...his being the Fourth Beast formerly described by Daniel – and **the Whore of Revelation**. Yet he adorns himself with the Authority, Power, Dignity, Ministry, Offices and the Scriptures – and makes himself equal with the true and holy **Church**.... **Antichrist's** works are the **sacraments**, especially that of the **Eucharist**, which he worships equally with God and Christ.... The Ministers of **Antichrist** or **Papal Rome** or **Babylon** or the **Fourth Beast**, [are] as clouds without water."¹⁰⁹

Indeed, it certainly seems from their 1180f standard work the *Noble Lesson* – that they believed **the Antichrist** was a past as well as a present and also a future entity.¹¹⁰ For also in the 1280f *Vaudois Treatise on Antichrist*, one reads:¹¹¹ "The Lord is already destroying the felon by the Breath of His Mouth, through many men of good intentions; dissipating his possessions and places; and dividing the city of **Babylon**."

Also in their *Treatise of the Papacy and Roman Church being the very Babylon and Harlot of the Apocalypse*, the Waldensians state:¹¹² "**Antichrist** is the falsehood (doomed to eternal damnation),

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covered with the appearance of the truth and righteousness of Christ...being administered by false apostles; and...adorned itself outwardly with the beauty and piety of Christ's Church.... Such a Congregation is called **Antichrist**, or **Babylon**, or the **Fourth Beast**, or the **Harlot**, or the **Man of Sin**, or the **Son of Perdition**.

"It is called **Antichrist** because being covered & adorned with the semblance of Christ...it opposes itself to the salvation **wrought** by Christ.... There is no other cause of idolatry than a false opinion concerning grace, truth, authority, invocation, and intercession; which this **Antichrist** had taken away from God in order to ascribe them to ceremonies and authorities and a man's own works, to the saints, and **purgatory**."

Joachim, Eberhard, Grosseteste, & Matthew Paris: the Papacy is the Antichrist

Around 1200, Abbot Joachim of Floris historicalistically saw the Roman reprobate as the harlot of the Apocalypse. He announced the evangelical age of the spirit at her downfall – at the end of Daniel twelve's 1290 day-years.

Indeed, Joachim stated also postmillennially: "**The Church of Rome** is the fleshly Synagogue of Satan. The Church of Rome shall be destroyed.... **A spiritual Church** shall from thenceforth succeed, till the end of the World."¹¹³ **The Church** is **Babylon**.¹¹⁴ **The Papal Church of Rome!**

In 1240, at the Romish Council of Ratisbon, Eberhard Archbishop of Salzburg declared¹¹⁵ that **the Popes**, under a shepherd's skin concealed the **wolf**. Indeed, he stated that Hildebrand alias Pope Gregory VII had laid the foundations of the **Babylonian Empire of Antichrist**.

Eberhard also stated that the old Roman Empire had long ago been taken away from the Earth, according to Second Thessalonians 2. Indeed, ten horns had risen in its place as the new Western Empire. From among and over them, "the **Pontifical little horn** had arisen with its intelligent eyes and its blasphemous sayings." Daniel 7 & Revelation 13.

Around 1250, the Bishop of Lincoln, Robert Greathead (Grosseteste), repeatedly made that same identification.¹¹⁶ Also his contemporary, Matthew Paris of St. Albans, denounced the Court of Rome as a "strumpet"¹¹⁷ – alias the whore of Revelation seventeen.

Pierre d'Olivi, Ubertino of Casale & Arnold of Villanova: the Papacy is the Antichrist

Pierre Jean d'Olivi of France concluded around 1290 that **Antichrist** was then ruling the Romish Church, which he called the '**Babylon**' of Revelation chapter seventeen.¹¹⁸ Indeed, in his *Postils on the Apocalypse*, he specifically states¹¹⁹ that "**the Church of Rome** was the Whore of Babylon, the Mother of harlots – the same that St. John beheld sitting upon a scarlet-coloured Beast, full of names of **blasphemy**, having seven heads and **ten horns**," and the chief and proper **Antichrist**.

It was stated by the 1294-1303 Pope Boniface VIII¹²⁰ that "it was **essential to the salvation** of every human being to be **subject to the Roman Pontiff**." What bare-faced effrontery!

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So, in 1304, Ubertino of Casale went and identified the Popes as the Beasts of the inspired Book of Revelation.¹²¹ Then, around 1310, Arnold of Villanova dated Daniel twelve's 1290 day-years as terminating during that fourteenth century.¹²²

Wycliffe and the Wycliffites Brute, Oldcastle, Purvey & Huss: the Papacy is the Antichrist

That indeed came to pass in 1360 – exactly 1290 day-years after the 70 A.D. Roman destruction of the Hebrew temple in the same generation as the death of Jesus Whom it had prefigured. For in 1360, God raised up John Wycliffe to assert that "**the Pope is Antichrist here on Earth.**"¹²³ In fact, after quoted Daniel 7:8-25 on the **little horn** that would become very **stout**, Wycliffe says: "Foresee the **lord pope**, as it is said of the eighth blaspheming **little head!**"¹²⁴

The Cumbrian or Yorkshireman John Wycliffe's follower, the Welshman Walter Brute – was a graduate of Oxford University. He was even more specific. For in his 1391 accusation by the Romish Bishop John of Hereford, it was charged:¹²⁵ "The said Walter has oftentimes said and commonly avouched that **the Pope is Antichrist**, a seducer of the people, and utterly against the Law and life of Christ."

Indeed, Walter Brute responded:¹²⁶ "**Antichrist** be already come.... That **Antichrist**...is the high **Bishop of Rome**, calling himself the Servant of God and the chief Vicar of Christ in this World.... The **Pope's law** is contrary to **Christ's Law**.... Who else may so well be **Antichrist** and [also] a seducer of the people? For there is no greater pestilence, than a 'friendly' enemy!"¹²⁷

The Wycliffite Sir John Oldcastle alias Lord Cobham was martyred by the Romanists in 1417. On trial for his life, he bravely stated:¹²⁸ "**The Pope...be the great Antichrist**, the Son of Perdition, the open Adversary of God, and the Abomination standing in the holy place.... Both Daniel and Christ prophesied that such a troublous time would come."

It is very important to note who wrote the preface to a later edition of the Wycliffite John Purvey's 1390 *Commentary on Revelation*. It was nobody less than Martin Luther.

There, Luther wrote:¹²⁹ "This preface...was written by us for this reason – so that we might make known to the World that we are not the first who interpret the Papacy as the kingdom of Antichrist. For many years prior to us, so many and so great men (whose number is large and their memory eternal) have attempted this clearly and openly....

"This author [*viz.* John Purvey] was...hindered by the defectiveness of the time and the reign of darkness. He could neither speak these things so purely nor think so clearly as in this our age we [may] speak and think. Yet, he rightly and truly pronounces **the Pope Antichrist** (as he is)." And postmillennially, **after** predicting the destruction of Antichrist, Purvey stated that there would be a **period of peace** and quiet for **the Church**.

These Wycliffite views were carried from Britain into Bohemia. There (at the end of Daniel's 1335 day-years in A.D. 1405), just before he was martyred, Huss maintained that **the great Antichrist** was the **Pope of Rome**. The latter was the head and his followers were the tail of the dragon which "always conceals the abomination of the beast **Antichrist**.... The Lord shall destroy the head and the tail – that

is, **the Pope** and **his prophets**...who under the false pretext of sanctity conceal the abominable Beast."¹³⁰

Luther denounced the Papacy as Antichrist and understood prophecy historicistically

As already stated, Luther but continued in the tradition of the Wycliffites (both in Britain and later in Bohemia). And they, in turn, continued in the early-historicalistic understandings of the Ancient Hebrews; the Early Judaists; and especially the Early Church before the origin of the Papacy from A.D. 605 onward.

For full particulars, see our essay *Luther on Islam and the Papacy* – and also see our other essay *Calvin on the Papacy* (for an exhaustive discussion of the views of the genius of Geneva).¹³¹ In fact, both Luther and Calvin believed that **the papal Antichrist** will **yet** be demolished – **before** the final return of Christ – by the **powerful Protestant preaching** of the **Holy Bible** as the **Spirit of God's Mouth** (Second Thessalonians 2:8).

Proclaimed Dr. Martin Luther in 1521: "**The abominations of the Pope**, with his whole kingdom, must **be destroyed**; and the Lord does this without hand, by **the Word** alone. The subject exceeds all human comprehension.... I cherish **the best hopes!**"

Again, in 1523, Luther added: "The kingdom of Antichrist, according to the Prophet Daniel [8:25], must 'be broken without hand.' That is – the Scriptures will be understood...and every one will **preach** and speak **against papal tyranny from the Word of God**, until this 'man of sin' is **deserted** by all his adherents and he **dies** of himself....

"Let those who sincerely **preach** the Gospel, be protected! ... This is **the way in which Christ will destroy Antichrist** – by the **Breath of His Mouth**" alias by the **Spirit of His Word** (*cf.* Second Thessalonians 2:3-8).

"**The Pope** is the last blaze in the lamp which **will go out** and ere long be extinguished.... The Spirit of God's Mouth hath seized on him.... He shall increase no more, but rather **decrease!**"¹³²

Calvin denounced the Papacy as Antichrist and understood prophecy historicistically

It was now 1550 – four years after the death of Rev. Professor Dr. Martin Luther. Rev. Professor Dr. John Calvin then wrote¹³³ on Second Thessalonians 2:4-8: "Anyone who has learned from Scripture what are the things that belong particularly to God, and who on the other hand considers well what the Pope usurps for himself – will not have much difficulty in recognizing **Antichrist**, even though he were a ten-year-old boy....

"Paul sets Antichrist in the very sanctuary of God. He is **not** an enemy from **outside** but from [inside] the **household of faith**, and opposes Christ under the very **name** of Christ.... It is **the temple of God**" – *viz.* **the Church** – "in which **the Pope** holds sway....

"The name '**Antichrist**' does not designate a single individual, but a single kingdom which extends throughout **many generations**.... He [the Apostle Paul, earlier in Second Thessalonians chapter two,]

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had predicted the **destruction** of the reign of **Antichrist**; and now describes the **manner** of his destruction. He will be **annihilated** by **the Word of the Lord**....

"Paul does **not** think that Christ will accomplish this **in a single moment**." Yet nevertheless, sooner or later, "**Antichrist** **would** be **completely** and utterly destroyed...."

"**Christ** will scatter the darkness in which **Antichrist** will reign by the rays which He will emit **before** His coming – just as the sun, **before** becoming **visible** to us, chases away the darkness of the night with its bright light. This **victory of the Word** will therefore be seen **in** the World. For [the Spirit or] 'Breath of His Mouth' simply means His Word – as in Isaiah 11:4, the passage to which Paul appears to be alluding...."

"True and sound **doctrine**...is represented as being **sufficient** to put an end to all ungodliness, and as destined at all times to be **victorious** over all the devices of Satan. It is also a **commendation**, when a little further on the **preaching** of this doctrine is referred to as Christ's 'coming' to us."

Lutheran Confessions denounce Papal Antichrist and understand prophecy historicistically

It remains only to add that **all** of the Lutheran and **all** of the Calvinistic Confessions of Faith are neither preteristic nor futuristic but historicalistic. We close this essay by giving relevant excerpts from the three leading Lutheran and the ten leading Calvinistic Confessions.

The Lutheran *Augsburg Confession* of 1531 says¹³⁴ "that the **Pontiffs**, trusting in the power of the keys, have...appointed **new** kinds of service and **burdened** men's consciences." Indeed, they "have also endeavoured to transfer **worldly kingdoms** from one to another, and to **despoil emperors** of their power and authority."

The 1537 *Articles of Smalcald* are polemic – against the mass, purgatory, the invocation of saints, and **popery**. They involve¹³⁵ "all that we teach and do **against the Pope**, the Devil, and all the World." Purgatory is a "Satanic delusion." And the Pope is "**the true Antichrist**" predicted by Paul in Second Thessalonians 2:3.

In their 1575 *Formula of Concord*, the Lutherans declare "our Christian Faith especially **against** the **Papacy** and its idolatrous rites and superstitions"; viz the "*Augsburg Confession*...and the *Smalcald Articles*." Indeed: "We reject and condemn...**the papistical transubstantiation**...[and also] **the papistical sacrifice of the Mass**."¹³⁶

Romanism's futuristic and preteristic responses to Protestantism's Historicalism

Smarting under all this, Rome gave a twofold response. In 1585, the Jesuit Ribera of Salamanca argued that Antichrist was still future – and therefore could not be the Papacy! And from 1574 onward (published posthumously in 1614), the Jesuit Alcasar of Seville argued that the Antichrist of Scripture appeared already in the first century – and therefore could not be the Papacy!

Ribera's views were later followed also by futuristic dispensationalism; and Alcasar's preterism, by the modernism of German neology. Interestingly, even today, some Romish prognostications (*e.g.* The *Fatima Prophecies*) maintain that a future "Black Pope" will prove to be the Antichrist.

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But mainline Protestantism has been faithful to the Biblical and **historicalistic faith of all ages**. It has held the line boldly and without compromise against these errors of both preterism and futurism – and all of their modern daughters.

Thus we now pass on in conclusion to the ten Calvinist Confessions of Faith which shed light on preterism, futurism, and historicalism. **All** ten Standards – the *French*, *First Scots*, and the *Belgic Confessions*; the *Thirty-Nine Articles*; the *Second Swiss* and *Second Scots Confessions*; the *Irish Articles*; the 'T-U-L-I-P' *Decrees of the International Synod of Dordt* in Holland; the *British Westminster Standards* (the *Confession*, the *Directory for the Public Worship of God*, and the *Larger Catechism*); as well as the *Savoy Declaration* – are **strongly historicalistic**.

The *French* and the *First Scots* and the *Belgic Confessions* are strongly historicalistic

The *French Confession* of 1559, written by Dr. Calvin and his pupil Jean de Chandieu, states:¹³⁷ "We believe...that all imaginations of men concerning the intercession of dead saints, are an abuse and a device of **Satan**.... Purgatory is an illusion proceeding from the same shop from which have sprung also monastic vows..., indulgences, and all such things....

"We condemn **the papal assemblies**.... All superstitions and idolatries are in them.... Some trace of the Church is left in **the Papacy**, and the...and substance of baptism remains.... But, on account of its corruptions – we cannot present children to be baptized in **it**, without incurring pollution."

Calvin's views were expounded in Britain especially by his student John Knox – together with the rest of the 'six Johns' – in the 1560 *First Scots Confession*. There,¹³⁸ the Protestants' "True Kirk is distinguished from the filthy synagogues" of **Romanism** alias "the **horrible harlot**; the **false kirk**." Especially against the latter, the *Scots Confession* sounds the trumpet blast: "Arise, O Lord, and let Thy enemies be confounded.... Give Thy servants strength to speak Thy Word in boldness, and let all nations cleave to Thy true knowledge!"

The 1562 *Belgic Confession* of the Dutch Presbyterian Church teaches¹³⁹ that "the True Church must be distinguished from all sects which call themselves the Church.... The True Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself....

"As for **the false church** – she ascribes more power and authority to herself and her ordinances than to the Word of God, and will not submit herself to the yoke of Christ. Neither does she administer the Sacraments as appointed by Christ in His Word, but adds to and takes from them.... She relieth more upon men than upon Christ, and persecutes those who live holily according to the Word of God and rebuke her for her errors, covetousness, and idolatry."

The *Second Swiss Confession* and the *Thirty-Nine Articles* are strongly historicalistic

In the *Second Swiss Confession* of 1566, it is stated that "Christ will return unto judgment...when **Antichrist**, having corrupted true religion, **shall**...most cruelly waste the Church.... Christ shall return to redeem His, and to abolish Antichrist....

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"We must condemn the Donatists who pinned up the Church within the corners of Africa. Neither do we assent to **the Roman clergy**, who vaunt **the Church of Rome alone**.... We do not allow of the doctrine of the **Romish prelates**, who would make **the Pope** the general pastor and supreme head of the Church Militant...and the very **Vicar of Jesus Christ**....

"By **taking away the Romish head**, we do not bring any confusion or disorder into the Church. For we teach that the government of the Church which the Apostles set down, is sufficient.... **From the beginning**...it **lacked** such a **Romish head** as is **now** pretended....**The Romish head** [the Pope] maintains indeed his **tyranny and corruption** which have **been brought into the Church**....

"We know what manner of assemblies the primitive Church **formerly** had in secret corners – being under **the tyranny of Roman Emperors**.... **In ancient times** there were **no** such things as canonical hours...as **the Papists'** manner is....

"They have **many absurd things**.... As for **Popish** visiting with the extreme unction, we...do not like it – because it has many **absurd** things in it, and such as are **not approved by the canonical Scriptures**."¹⁴⁰

The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England of 1571, succinctly insists that "the **Church of Rome hath erred**.... The **Romish** doctrine concerning purgatory...is...vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture but [is] rather **repugnant** to the Word of God....

"Transubstantiation...is **repugnant** to the plain words of [Holy] Scripture.... The '**sacrifices**' of Masses...were **blasphemous** fables and **dangerous deceits**."¹⁴¹ This well reflects the views of the earlier Anglicans Tyndale, Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, Philpot, Bradford, Jewel and Becon; and anticipates the identical views also of later Anglicans like Sandys, Whitgift, Hooker, Andrews, Ussher & James I – all of whom denounced the **Pope** as **Antichrist**.¹⁴²

***Second Scots Confession, Irish Articles and Decrees of Dordt* are all strongly historicalistic**

The *Second Scots Confession* of 1580 declares¹⁴³ that "we abhor and **detest** all contrary religion and doctrine; but chiefly all kind of **Papistry** in general and particular heads – even as they are now damned and confuted by the Word of God and Kirk of Scotland. But in special, we detest and refuse the usurped authority of that **Roman Antichrist**, upon the Scriptures of God."

We detest and refuse: "all his tyrannous laws made upon indifferent things against our Christian liberty; his erroneous doctrines...; his five bastard sacraments; with his rites, ceremonies, and false doctrine...; his cruel judgment against infants departing without the Sacrament...; his blasphemous opinion of transubstantiation...; his cruelty against the innocent divorced; his devilish Mass; his blasphemous priesthood; his profane sacrifice for the sins of the dead...; his canonisation of men, calling upon angels or departed saints; worshipping of images, relicks, and crosses...; his purgatory, [and] prayers for the dead."

It then further condemns Rome's "praying or speaking in a strange language; his processions and blasphemous litany; his multitude of advocates or mediators...with auricular confessions...; his holy water, baptizing of bells..., [and] his erroneous...[1545f] Decrees made at Trent...against the Kirk of God...or against the Word of God and doctrine of this True Reformed Kirk.... Seeing that many are

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stirred up by Satan – and that **Roman Antichrist**...use the holy Sacraments in the Kirk deceitfully...to corrupt and subvert secretly God's true religion within the Kirk...under vain hope of **the Pope's dispensation** devised against the Word of God to his greater confusion and their double condemnation in the day of the Lord Jesus – we, therefore, willing to take away all suspicion of hypocrisy and of such double dealing with God and His Kirk, protest!"

Archbishop James Ussher was perhaps the most renowned Commissioner appointed by England's Parliament to attend the Westminster Assembly. Earlier, in his *Body of Divinity* (4th ed. p. 412), he wrote: "As Christ is the Head of the Church which is His Body, so Antichrist is the head of the Romish Church which is his body.... This Antichrist is one who, under colour of being for Christ, and under the title of His Vice-gerent: exalteth himself above and against Christ; opposing himself unto Him in all His offices and ordinances both in Church and Commonwealth; bearing authority in the Church of God; ruling over that city with seven hills which did bear rule over Nations and put our Lord to death; a man of sin; a harlot; a mother of spiritual fornications to the kings and people of the Nations; a child of perdition, and a destroyer; establishing himself by lying-miracles and false-wonders. All [of] which marks together, do agree with none but the Pope of Rome."

Also in his 1615 *Irish Articles of Religion*, he stated:¹⁴⁴ "**The Pope**, neither of himself nor by any authority of the Church or See of Rome or by any other means with any other, hath any power or authority to depose the King.... **The Popish doctrine** of Equivocation and Mental Reservation, is ungodly – and tendeth plainly to the subversion of all human society....

"The **Church of Rome** hath erred not only in those things which concern matters of practice and points of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith. The power which **the Bishop of Rome** now challengeth to be supreme head of the universal Church of Christ and to be above all emperors, kings and princes – is a usurped power contrary to the example of **the Primitive Church**....

"The **Bishop of Rome** is so far from being the supreme head of the universal Church of Christ, that his works and doctrine do plainly discover him to be that 'man of sin' foretold in the Holy Scriptures [Second Thessalonians 2:3f], 'whom the Lord shall consume with **the Spirit of His Mouth**'.... The doctrine of the **Church of Rome** concerning *Limbus Patrum*, *Limbus Puerorum*, Purgatory, Prayers for the Dead, Pardons, Adorations of Images and Relics, and also Invocation of Saints – is vainly invented without all warrant of Holy Scripture...and is contrary unto the same."

At the 1618-19 International Synod, the famous Preamble to the *Decrees of Dordt* speaks about the Reformed Church of the Protestant Reformation. It declares that also in the Netherlands¹⁴⁵ "the Church was delivered by the mighty hand of God from the tyranny of **the Romish Antichrist** and the terrible idolatry of **the Papacy**."

The Westminster Standards and the Savoy Declaration are both strongly historicalistic

Finally, we come to the Westminster Standards – as the last great statement of Biblical truth from the Protestant and Calvinistic perspective. They were endorsed by the famous commissioners to the Westminster Assembly, which included such theological giants as: Baillie, Burgess, Burroughs, Byfield, Calamy, Chambers, Cheynel, Coleman, Gattaker, Gillespie, Gipps, Gouge, Henderson, Herle,

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Hoyle, Jackson, Lightfoot, Marshall, Reynolds, Rutherford, Seaman, Spurstow, Staunton, Temple, Twisse, Wilkinson – and many others.

According to the Westminster Assembly's *Westminster Confession of Faith*,¹⁴⁶ "**popish monastical vows** of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are...sinful snares." Thus they are matters "in which no Christian [whatsoever] should entangle himself."

Again:¹⁴⁷ "It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates.... Much less hath **the Pope** any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and least of all to deprive them of their dominion or lives, if he should judge them to be hereticks or upon any other pretence whatsoever. Second Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:15-17"

Note that the *Confession* here cites **the '666' passage** Revelation 13:15-17 (*cf.* v. 18). Indeed, it does so – with reference specifically to **the Papacy!**

Once more:¹⁴⁸ "Such as profess the true reformed religion, should not marry with infidels, **Papists**, or other idolaters. Neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies. Second Corinthians 6:14."

As to deformed churches, the *Confession* further states¹⁴⁹ – that "some have so degenerated as to become **synagogues of Satan**. Revelation 18:2; Romans 11:18-22.... **The Pope of Rome**...is that **Antichrist**...that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ and all that is called God. Matthew 23:8-10; Second Thessalonians 2:3-4,8-9; Revelation 13:6." Here, one should carefully note the application of Second Thessalonians 2:3-9 and Revelation 13:6 & 18:2 specifically to **the papal Church** and its **Pontiff!**

Moreover:¹⁵⁰ "The **popish sacrifice** of the '**Mass**' – as they call it – is most abominably injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect. Hebrews 7:23-27; 10:11-18. Private masses..., worshipping the elements, the lifting them up or carrying them about for adoration..., are all contrary to the nature of this Sacrament and to the institution of Christ. First Corinthians 10:6; Mark 14:23; First Corinthians 11:25-29; Matthew 15:9....

"The doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of Christ's body and blood (commonly called '**transubstantiation**') by consecration of a priest or by any other way – is **repugnant** not to Scripture alone but even to common sense and reason; overthroweth the nature of the Sacrament; and hath been and [still] is the cause of **manifold superstitions**, yea, of **gross idolatries**. Acts 3:21; First Corinthians 11:24-26; Luke 24:6,39."

Also the Calvinistic *Westminster Larger Catechism* implies that, in the Lord's Prayer, the petition 'Thy Kingdom come!' is a plea for the destruction also of the ecclesiastical **Antichrist** – and indeed precisely through the good works of the Spirit-empowered Church as Jesus Christ's own spiritual weapon. "We pray that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed – the Gospel propagated throughout the World, the Jews called, the fullness of the Gentiles brought in, [and] **the Church** furnished with all Gospel-officers and...**purged from corruption**."¹⁵¹ Further, "we pray that **God would so over-rule the World and all in it**...[so] that our sanctification and salvation may be perfected [and] **Satan trodden [down] under our feet**. Romans 16:20!"¹⁵²

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That is to be brought about also through earnest preaching and praying. Consequently, in the **Calvin-istic Public Prayer Before the Sermon** in the 1645 *Westminster Assembly's Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, "the Minister who is to preach, is to endeavour to get his own and his hearers' hearts rightly to be affected."

He is also "to pray for the propagation of the Gospel and Kingdom of Christ to all nations; for the **conversion of the Jews**; the **fulness of the Gentiles**; the **fall of Antichrist**; and...[also] for the deliverance of the distressed churches abroad from the tyranny of the **antichristian faction**" *etc.*¹⁵³

Last, there is the 1658 *Savoy Declaration* owned and practised in the Congregational churches in England. It was prepared by such profound Puritans as: Bridge, Caryl, Goodwin, Howe, Greenhill, Manton, Nye, and the unexcellable Dr. John Owen.

States this illustrious *Savoy Declaration*:¹⁵⁴ "The **Pope of Rome...is that Antichrist...that exalteth himself in the Church** against Christ and all that is called God, whom the Lord shall destroy.... The Lord is in care and love toward His Church.... According to His promise, we expect that in the latter days – Antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the Kingdom of His dear Son broken – the churches of Christ, being enlarged and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this [earthly] World a more...peaceable and **glorious** condition."

We could also point to a whole host of godly theologians **after** the *Westminster Standards* and the *Savoy Confession*, all of whom were neither Preterists nor Futurists but solid Historicalists. Such would include: Cotton; Durham; Tillinghast; Thomas Goodwin; Pierre Jurieu; J.H. Alsted; John Cocceius; Samuel Mather, Increase Mather, Cotton Mather; Robert Fleming; Daniel Whitby; Charles Daubuz; Sir Isaac Newton; William Lowth; Matthew Henry; Jonathan Edwards; Bengel; John Gill; Bishop Thomas Newton; John Wesley; Samuel Hopkins; Timothy Dwight; Bellamy; Isaac Backus; G.S. Faber; Thomas Scott; Andrew Fuller; James Bicheno, Adam Clarke; David Brown; Alexander Keith; Edward Bickersteth; T.R. Birks; Bishop Edward Elliott; Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge; Thornwell; Symington; Bonar; Fairbairn; Albert Barnes; W.G.T. Shedd, *etc. etc.* But enough!

Church History teaches neither Preterism nor Futurism but only Historicalism is Biblical

We summarize. Neither Preterism nor Futurism but only Historicalism is Biblical. Not only does the Bible as a whole itself so teach – prelapsarianly; postlapsarianly; and ultralapsarianly. But so too do the three great eschatological passages of the Holy Scriptures, *viz.*: the Book of Daniel; Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians; and the Book of Revelation.

So too do the various Bible-believing authorities throughout Church History, that we have referred to above – in the Early Church; the Mediaeval Church; and the Reformation Church. Whether amillennial, postmillennial or premillennial – such were all Historicalists. For none believed with the Preterists that Nero was the Antichrist. But all believed that the Antichrist was or would be the Romish Papacy down throughout Church History, and that the Antichrist would arise only centuries after the Apostolic Age.

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In the Early Church, such was the view of the Apostolic Fathers – as reflected in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* and in the *Epistle of Barnabas*. Such was also the view of the Ante-Nicene Fathers – such as Justin Martyr of Samaria, Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian of Carthage, Hippolytus of Portus, Origen of Alexandria, Cyprian of Carthage, Dionysius of Alexandria, the *Pseudo-Sybilline Oracles* (for whatever they might be worth), Victorinus of Pettau, Lactantius of North Africa, and the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

Such was the view also of the Nicene Fathers Eusebius of Caesarea and Athanasius of Alexandria. And such was the view too of Cyril of Jerusalem, Hilary of Potiers, Ambrose of Milan, Tichonius of North Africa, Chrysostom of Constantinople, Jerome of Bethlehem, Sulpitius Severus of Gaul, Augustine of Hippo-Regius, Cassian of Scythia, Theodoret of Cyrus, Leo the Great of Tuscany, Evagrius of Syria, and Gregory the Great of Rome. Interestingly, also the latter truly believed the Antichrist was soon to appear (in what was then the very near future) – and himself rejected the offered title of 'Universal Father' (which he rightly regarded as a mark of the Antichrist).

Yet in the Mediaeval Church – after the simultaneous rise of the Islamic and Papal Antichrists and the historicalistic testimonies of Andreas of Caesarea, Pseudo-Methodius, and Arethas of Caesarea – all subsequent successors of Gregory in the Bishopric of Rome gloried in the title of Pope. Such included Popes Sabinianus, Boniface, Gregory II & III, Zachary, Stephen, Gregory VII (alias the infamous Hildebrand), Adrian, and the very much misnamed Innocent III..

Yet even during those awful times the Papacy was considered to be the Antichrist by: Theophylact of Achrida; Waldo and his Waldensians; Joachim of Fiore; Eberhard of Salzburg; Grosseteste of Lincoln; Matthew Paris of St. Albans; Pierre d'Olivi of France; Ubertino of Casale; and Arnold of Villanova. Indeed, exactly the same position was taken by John Wycliffe of Cumbria or Yorkshire; Walter Brute of Wales; Sir John Oldcastle of Hereford; John Purvey of Oxford; and Jan Huss of Bohemia.

At the time of the great Protestant Reformation and thereafter, this Historicalism was unanimously embraced by Martin Luther, John Calvin, and all the Reformers without any exception whatsoever. When the Lutheran Confessions emphasized this, Rome dually reacted with Ribera of Salamanca's futurism and Alcazar of Seville's preterism. But all to no avail. For against Rome, Historicalism was then championed by all ten of the leading Reformed symbols: the *French Confession*, the *First Scots Confession*; the *Belgic Confession*; the *Second Swiss Confession*, the *Thirty-nine Articles*; the *Second Scots Confession*, the *Irish Articles*; the *Decrees of Dordt*; the *Westminster Standards* (the *Confession of Faith*, the *Larger Catechism*, and the *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*); and the *Savoy Declaration*.

Thus the Old Testament Church, the New Testament Church, and the Patristic Church were all neither preteristic nor futuristic but strongly historicalistic. Since the rise of the Papacy from A.D. 600 onward, the deformed part of the Church gradually sank into both futurism and preterism – in spite of many vigorous orthodox-historicalistic protests from both inside and especially outside the Church of Rome.

From the Protestant Reformation onward, whether Lutheran or Calvinist – all of its Confessions have always been exclusively historicalistic. For such is the orthodox doctrine of the Church of all ages

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from the coming of the first Adam into the garden of Eden right down to the final coming of the Second Adam at the very end of history. "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus!"¹⁵⁵

One last question. Why would God ever allow the centuries-long Antichrist – both in its A.D. 632f Islamic and in its 666f Romish format – to plague His Church?

The answer is threefold. 1), to punish His wayward bride for falling into idolatry. 2), to purge His folk from their corruptions. 3), to force God's true people, down till the very end of history, to pursue Christ's Great Commission vigorously and victoriously. For eschatologically, "the Earth shall [yet] become full of the glory of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea!"

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- 64) Cited in the Puritan T.R. Birks's *The Apostasy of the Latter Times*, Richard Bishop, London, 1641, pp. 191f. Birks then adds: "I have heard of another exposition which fits our turn for the beginning of the apostasy no less than the Fathers. Namely, that by **ten kingdoms** may be meant the full plurality of **the Roman provinces**. So much whereof as three is of ten, would fall under the dominion of the **Antichristian Horn** who **would** act the sovereignty of the latter times or the last sovereignty of that Kingdom. Now it is most true that the **Pope's** patriarchdom in the West holds just that scantling of the ancient territory of the **Roman Empire** which a man may judge by his eyes or compasses in a map."
- 65) See too Elliott's *op. cit.* I:390 n. 4, who gives Jerome's original Latin as follows: "*Ergo dicamus, quod omnes scriptores ecclesiastici tradiderunt, in consummatione mundi, quando renum destruendum est Romanum, decem futuros reges qui orbem Romanum inter se dividant; et undecimum surrectum esse regem parvulum, qui tres reges de decem regibus superaturus ist: quibus interfectis etiam septem alii reges victori colla submittent.... Idcirco Romanum delebitur imperio quia cornu illud loquebatur grandia. In uno Romano imperio, propter Antichristum blasphemantem, omnia simul regna delenda sunt" etc.*
- 66) Elliott's *op. cit.* I:390 n.4 cites Jerome's original Latin on Jer. 25:26 thus: "*Eum qui tenet Romanum Imperium ostendit: niso enim hoc destructum fuerit sublatumque de medio juxta prophetiam Danielis, Antichristus ante non veniet" etc.*
- 67) Elliott's *op. cit.* I:390 n. 4 cites Jerome's original Latin to Algasia (Q. 11) thus: "*nisi prius Romanum deleatur Imperium...nisi fuerit desolatum....ut omnes gentes quae Romano Imperio subjacent recedent ab iis...ut cunctarum gentium deos, sive probatam omnem et veram religionem suo calcet pede...in ecclesia ut verius arbitramur.*" See too Elliott's *op. cit.* IV:321 and nn. 4 & 5 (citing Jerome's comment on Matt. 24:5).
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- 104) J.J.I. von Döllinger: *The Pope and the Council*, Rivingtons, London, 1870, p. 109 (written pseudonymously). He was excommunicated by Rome in 1871, when he refused to accept the Pope's *ex cathedra* 1870 doctrine alleging his own infallibility.
- 105) From: *op. cit.*, I:538f.
- 106) Declared Bishop Arnulf of Orleans: "What in your eyes, reverend fathers, is that **Pontiff**, seated on a throne, and clad in purple and gold? If he hath not charity, and be puffed up only with his learning – **he is Antichrist** sitting in the temple of God...in the words of the Apostle [II Thess. 2:3f].... The name of God is degraded with impunity...and the observance of His holy religion is despised **by the sovereign pontiffs themselves.**" Thus in A.F. Villemain's *Life of Gregory VII*, Richard Bentley & Son, London, 1874, I:175f.
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- 110) *La Nobla Leyczon*, Geneva Manuscript, lines 455-60, as cited in Elliott's *op. cit.* II:566, viz. "Sinon en segre Yeshu Xchrist, e far lo seo bon placer, E gardar fermament ezo qu'el a comanda, E

esser mot avisa cant venre l'Antexrist, Que nos non crean ni a son fait ni a son dit. Car, segont l'Escriptura, son ara fait moti Antexrist. Car Antexrist son tuit aquilh que contrastan a Xrist."

111) See Elliott's *op. cit.* II:395 n. 2.

112) *Ib.*, n. 4.

113) Joachim of Floris : *Prophecyes*, as cited in *A Breffe Chronycle Concernynge the Examyynacyon and Death of the Blessed Martyr of Christ Sir Johan Oldecastell the Lorde Cobham*, collected by Johan Bale, C. Davis, London, 1729, p. 68.

114) Joachim of Floris, as cited in Elliott's *op. cit.* IV:413 & n. 4.

115) Eberhard of Salzburg, as cited in Elliott's *op. cit.* IV:429 & n. 4.

116) When the Pope tried to force his own nephew into Lincoln Cathedral, Bishop Robert Greathead refused – even when the Pope then excommunicated him after Greathead had pointed out that "Antichrist" is so "abominable to our Lord Jesus Christ as to mortify and destroy souls by defrauding them of the offices and ministry of their pastors." See Froom's *op. cit.*, I:621-34. Froom gives many similar examples of very brave late-mediaeval leaders who fearlessly stood up to the Papal Antichrist.

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120) Boniface VIII's *Unam Sanctam*, as cited in Elliott's *op. cit.* III:190 & 1.

121) Ubertino of Casale: *Arbor Vitae Crucifixae Jesu*, De Bonettis de Papia, Venice, 1485, sig. F5r; and *cf.* too E.G. Gardner's *Dante and the Mystics*, J.M. Dent & Sons, London 1913, pp. 220-22.

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- 130) Froom: *op. cit.*, II:52-117.
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- 134) *The Augsburg Confession*, art. VII, in P. Schaff's *The Creeds of Christendom*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1983 rep., III:59.
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Francis Nigel Lee was born in 1934 in the Westmorland County of Cumbria (in Great Britain). He is the great-grandson of a fiery preacher whose family disintegrated when he backslid. Though Lee's father was an Atheist, he married a Roman Catholic who raised her son in that faith.

At the onset of the Second World War, Lee's father was appointed by the Royal Navy as Chief Radar Officer (South Atlantic). So the family then moved to South Africa. There, Lee became a Calvinist; had the great joy of leading both of his parents to Christ; and became a Minister of God's Word and Sacraments in the Dutch Reformed Church of Natal.

Emigrating to the U.S.A., Lee transferred his ministerial credentials to the Presbyterian Church in America and pastored in Mississippi and Florida. He was too: Professor of Philosophy at Shelton College in New Jersey; Visiting Lecturer at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson Ms.; Staley Distinguished Visiting Lecturer at Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis; Scholar-in-Residence at the Christian Studies Center in Memphis; and Dean of Graham Bible College in Tennessee.

Preacher, Theologian, Lawyer, Educationist, Historian, Philosopher and Author, Lee produced more than 330 publications (including many books) – and also a multitude of long unpublished manuscripts. Apart from an honorary LL.D., he has twenty-one earned degrees – including eleven earned doctorates for dissertations in Education, Law, Literature, Philosophy and Theology.

Dr. Lee rises at 5 a.m.; reads God's Word in ten languages; then walks a couple of miles before breakfast. He has been round the World seven times; has visited one hundred and ten countries (several repeatedly); and also every Continent (except Antarctica). He is in demand as a Promoter of Doctoral Students in Australia, England, Germany, South Africa and the United States. He has lectured or preached in all of those countries, as well as Brazil, Scotland, Korea, Japan, Namibia, New Zealand, and Zambia.

A diehard predestinarian, Lee now lives in Australia – where he is the Professor of Systematic Theology and also Caldwell-Morrow Lecturer in Church History at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College. He retired in 2000.