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# A Comparative Study of Some Contemporary Views on the Great Tribulation Period

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# APPROVAL SHEET

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOME CONTEMPORARY VIEWS  
ON THE GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
Western Evangelical Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the  
Diploma in Theology

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by  
Harvey Ernest Bartram  
May, 1952

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY, AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE MATERIAL INTO CHAPTERS

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Jesus, speaking to His disciples, as recorded in the Gospel according to Matthew, makes this statement:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no nor ever shall be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved; but for the elect's sake these days shall be shortened.<sup>1</sup>

In these words, Jesus expresses in a very clear manner a truth that is reflected in the Old and New Testaments alike. In this statement Jesus is giving, almost word for word, a prophecy uttered by Daniel as recorded in Daniel 12:1. Isaiah 26:21 speaks of a time when, "Jehovah cometh forth out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." Thus, by the testimony of the Old and New Testaments, there is proof of a time of tribulation to come upon the world such as has never been.

But there are certain scriptures that have been variously interpreted by different schools of prophecy which have caused much controversy over various phases of this time of tribulation, and questions have arisen such as: What is the

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 24:21,22.

nature of this period; what relation does it have to the Lord's return, and does the Church go through any of this tribulation?

In fact, there have been views so divergent from others and that have so strained the truths of Scripture that it has caused many to fall from the faith and to ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" And there have been those who have brought such disrepute upon the prophetic portions of the Bible and the teachings of them that they have caused many ministers of God to discontinue the use of the book of Revelation, a book, that in the first chapter promises the blessings of God upon the ones reading and the ones hearing its prophecies.

The problem. This investigation was centered around the problem and purpose of studying the various views, comparing interpretation with interpretation, in the light of the Holy Scriptures, in order to come to such a conclusion that convictions might be had as the real teaching of the Word of God on this matter, that the people of God might receive the blessings promised.

## II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

When one pauses to look upon the world of today in the light of what can be seen near at hand and what can be realized by what is seen and heard through the eyes and ears of the press

and radio, one realizes that this world has arrived at a period of time such as it has never before known. In the past 35 years there have been two major wars; the first being far worse than anything until then known and the second being as much worse than the first as the first was worse than anything previous. And, not only so, but it seems that the world is facing a holocaust that promises to wipe out all flesh upon the face of the earth.

It is in times such as these that men who believe in the God of the Holy Scriptures turn to those Scriptures for guidance and reassurance in order that they might gain that strength which is needed for passing triumphantly through times of great travail. God has given the Bible, with its counsel for every phase of life, for the very purpose of saving and feeding the souls of men that they might face the future, any future, with confidence and courage, and in so doing, bring glory to His Name.

Not only has God given the Scriptures that men's souls might be fed, but He has also called men of His own choosing to come apart to study the Scriptures in order that His people might know the truth of what they, the Scriptures, speak.

If men are seeking the truth and God has given that truth, then there is a grave responsibility laid upon those whom God has called to search the Scriptures to determine what He has to say concerning the things to come.

It was with this purpose in mind, and in a spirit of prayer and humility that the study of the aforesaid problem was approached. In this study the American Revised Version of the Scriptures was used, except where otherwise stated.

### III. ORGANIZATION OF MATERIAL INTO CHAPTERS

From the time when Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives and the message of the angels concerning His return was given to the disciples, until the present, men have been looking for the return of our Lord. From the time of the writing of the book of Revelation certain men have seen a relation between the time of trial or tribulation and the second coming.

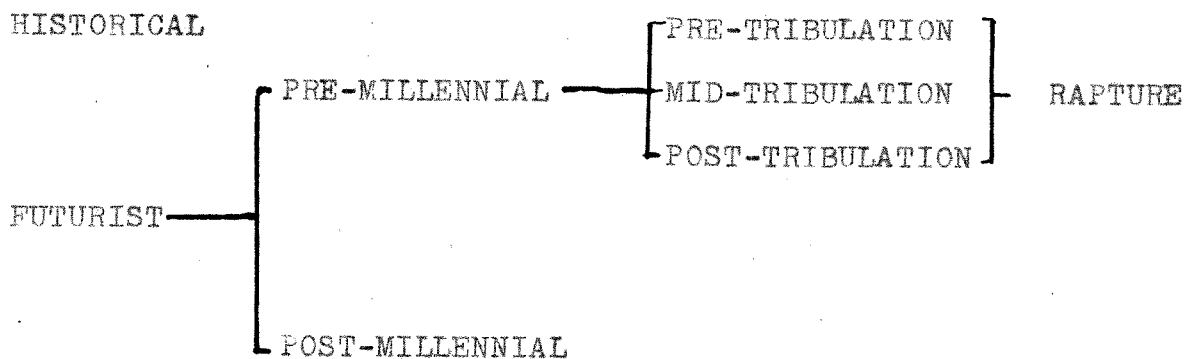
Over the hundreds of years since the ascension of our Lord, these various opinions have gradually fallen into a pattern. At the present time the pattern has assumed very definite outlines and the views held by Bible believers fall into three major fields; namely: The Praeterist (fulfillment past), the Historical, and the Futurist (none has been fulfilled). There is another view that has nothing to do with any times or seasons and which will not be dealt with in this paper, and that is the "Spiritualist" view, which gives a spiritual application to the elements found in the book of Revelation.

The three major interpretations can themselves, be subdivided into lesser divisions of thought and a chart is given on the following page, which clearly sets forth these divisions.

A CHART SHOWING THE DIVISIONS OF THE  
VARIOUS PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATIONS  
OF THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

PRAETERIST

HISTORICAL



SPIRITUALIST

In the remaining chapters of this thesis (chapters II to VIII, incl.) these interpretations and their subdivisions will be discussed in the following order:

#### Chapter II.

It becomes apparent that an effort should be made to determine the meaning of some prophetic terms, and also of the shades of meaning of some Greek words that carry a burden of interpretation. This study was covered in this chapter.

#### CHAPTER III.

A study of some of the Scriptural names for the period of tribulation, with some of its characteristics, where we find references to it in the Scriptures.

#### Chapter IV.

The Preterist.

#### Chapter V.

The Historical.

#### Chapter VI.

The Futurist Pre-Millennial Pre-Tribulation Rapture view. This view is widely held among evangelical believers of the present time.

#### Chapter VII.

The Futurist Pre-Millennial Mid-Tribulation and Post-

Tribulation views are also widely held, and because of their importance were discussed in order.

#### Chapter VIII.

As a result of this study the author arrived at some very definite conclusions. These were presented in this chapter.

#### Chapter IX.

Conclusion.

## CHAPTER II

### A STUDY OF TERMS

It is of great importance to the study of any doctrine to have an understanding of various terms relevant to that subject or doctrine being studied. In the study of eschatology, it is of special importance to come to an understanding of the Bible meanings of some terms that are used in any discussion of the truth of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Since the subject herein being discussed in the period of the "Great Tribulation," the word "tribulation" will be considered first, both as to the meaning of the English word and the word from the original Greek which is translated "tribulation," namely,

Tribulation. (Webster) Latin, "tribulato," to oppress, afflict. French, "tribulum," a threshing sledge. Akin to Latin "terere," "tritum," to rub, a state of distress or severe affliction, a trouble, a trial.

Θλίψις (Thlipsis) a pressing, pressure, oppression, tribulation, distress, straits; Θλίψεων του Χριστου the afflictions which Christ had to undergo (and which, therefore, His followers must not shrink from). Colossians, first chapter and twenty-fourth verse.<sup>1</sup>

The word, Θλίψις, is used a total of forty-three times in the New Testament. Of these forty-three times, it is translated:

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph, Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: Harper and Bros., 1889), p. 291.

affliction . . . . .	17 times
anguish . . . . .	1 time
persecution . . . . .	1 time
tribulation . . . . .	21 times
trouble . . . . .	3 times

Note. - Because Young's Analytical Concordance is based on the Authorized Version, the following study as to the times each word is used will be based on the Authorized Version, with most important differences in the American Revised Version noted.

Of the twenty-one times that the word is translated "tribulation," it is used in the following relationships to persons and occasions.

The Authorized Version translates the word "tribulation," six times when speaking of the period of "great tribulation." Three times in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, once in Mark the thirteenth chapter, once each in the second chapter and the seventh chapter of the book of Revelation. Twice in the thirteenth chapter of Mark, where it is rendered "affliction" in the Authorized Version, it is translated "tribulation" in the American Revised Version. This makes a total of eight times it is used in relation to the period of great tribulation, in the American Revised Version.

Thirteen times the word is translated "tribulation" where it is used in relation to Christians. Two typical examples

are given:

In the world ye have tribulation (θλίψιν) but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.<sup>2</sup>

Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations (θλίψεων) we must enter into the kingdom of God.<sup>3</sup>

Three times it is used in relation to evil persons. One such example is given:

But unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath, and indignation, tribulation (θλίψις) and anguish.<sup>4</sup>

The occasion where the word is translated "anguish" is of interest and is given:

A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish (θλίψεως) for the joy that a man is born into the world.<sup>5</sup>

Of the forty-three times this word is used in the New Testament, it is used three times in relation to evil ones, once in relation to a woman in travail, twice in relation to saints of the Old Testament, and the remaining thirty-seven times is used when speaking of the saved on earth.

<sup>2</sup> John 16:33.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 14:22.

<sup>4</sup> Romans 8:29.

<sup>5</sup> John 16:21.

Elect. (Webster) One chosen or set apart. Theological, one elect. Now only as collective.

Ἐκλεκτός (eclectos) (Thayer) Picked out, chosen, chosed of God.<sup>6</sup>

This word is used twenty-three times in the New Testament. Sixteen times it is translated "elect," and seven times is translated "chosen," in the Authorized Version. The study of this word is most important. For the discourse of Jesus as recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew and the thirteenth chapter of Mark, which is called the "Olivet Discourse," is most important in determining certain characteristics of the time of tribulation. In these two chapters this word is translated "elect" six times. The problem is to determine who it is of whom Christ speaks.

Of the other ten times it is so translated, twice it is used in the second epistle of John, first when he is addressing the "elect lady and her children," and in his closing words when he says, "the children of thine elect sister greet thee."<sup>7</sup>

Once it is used in relation to Jesus as Peter quotes Old Testament prophecy, saying, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Thayer, op. cit., p. 197.

<sup>7</sup> II John 1:13.

<sup>8</sup> I Peter 2:6.

Once it is used in the gospel according to Luke to speak of "God's elect" and seems to be used in connection with Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience those who pass through, a part at least, of the period of great tribulation, and Jesus closes His discourse with these words, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"<sup>9</sup> And references in this epistle have the word "elect" used six times. This word is translated "elect", all of them are speaking of the Church, the body of Christ. The first of these is found in the epistle to the Romans, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"<sup>10</sup> This is of men, but with God elect, precious.<sup>11</sup> among the closing verses of the eighth chapter which describes the life of the sanctified Christian. There can be no doubt about whom Paul is speaking.<sup>10</sup>

Another is found in the epistle to the Colossians. in Paul is speaking to the Christians of the Church at Colosse. "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, an heart full of compassion," etc.<sup>11</sup> Two more representative Scriptures are found in the First Epistle of Peter. The first is found in the first chapter and first verse: "servant, whom I uphold; My chosen (elect), in whom My soul delighteth."<sup>12</sup> This one is a prophecy and

<sup>9</sup> Luke 18:7.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Peter 2:4.

<sup>10</sup> Romans 8:33.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Peter 2:9.

<sup>11</sup> Colossians 3:12.

<sup>14</sup> Isaiah 42:1.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect (ΕΚΛΕΚΤΟΙΣ) who are sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Here Peter is evidently speaking to the Christians scattered abroad by the persecutions.

The second and third references in this epistle have the word ΕΚΛΕΚΤΟΣ translated "chosen" in the Authorized Version and "elect" in the American Standard Version. They are here given according to the American Standard Version:

Unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious.<sup>12</sup>

But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.<sup>13</sup>

Before making special consideration of the chapters in Matthew and Mark that are of interest, it would be well to consider four references in the book of Isaiah in which the Hebrew word "bachir" is translated "elect" in the Authorized Version and "chosen" in the American Standard Version.

These four references are the following:

"Behold My servant, whom I uphold; My chosen (elect), in whom My soul delighteth."<sup>14</sup> This one is a prophecy and

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<sup>12</sup> I Peter 2:4.

<sup>13</sup> I Peter 2:9.

<sup>14</sup> Isaiah 42:1.

very evidently refers to Christ.

"For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel My chosen (elect), I have called thee by thy name."<sup>15</sup> In this passage the prophet is evidently giving a message to Cyrus, and is speaking of the nation Israel.

And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah, an inheritor of My mountains; and My chosen (elect) shall inherit it.<sup>16</sup>

For as the days of a tree shall be the days of My people, and My chosen (elect) shall long enjoy the work of their hands.<sup>17</sup>

These last two passages are speaking of the Israelites in the relation to what some Bible authorities believe to be the millennial period.

Now turning to the references in which the word (ΕΚΛΕΚΤός) is translated "chosen," Young's Analytical Concordance lists seven times that this form is used in the Authorized Version. However, two of these passages are not found in the oldest manuscripts and are not translated and copied in the American Revised Version, and were not discussed here. The passages found in the First Epistle of Peter, the second chapter, ninth and tenth verses have already been discussed on page 13. Therefore, there are only four passages that it was

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<sup>15</sup> Isaiah 45:4.

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 65:9.

<sup>17</sup> Isaiah 65:22.

necessary to discuss.

The first one considered was spoken by the rulers, while Jesus was upon the cross, "Let Him save Himself, if this is the Christ of God, His chosen (ΕΚΛΕΚΤΟΣ)." <sup>18</sup>

The next one is self-evident as to its subject: "Salute Rufus, the chosen (ΕΚΛΕΚΤΟΥ) in the Lord." <sup>19</sup>

The next passage considered is of great interest to the aim of the study of this word (ΕΚΛΕΚΤΟΙ). It is found in the seventeenth chapter of the book of Revelation. It is identifying those who are battling with the Lord Jesus in His fight against the kings who are with the beast. It is hereby given in full, with preceding verses:

And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour. These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast. These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings; and they also shall overcome that are with Him, called and chosen (ΕΚΛΕΚΤΩ) and faithful. <sup>20</sup>

Aside from the six passages in Matthew and Mark, fifteen passages from the New Testament using the word ΕΚΛΕΚΤΟΣ and four passages from the book of Isaiah which translate the Hebrew word "bachir" as "chosen" or "elect", have been considered.

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<sup>18</sup> Luke 23:35.

<sup>19</sup> Romans 16:13.

<sup>20</sup> Revelation 17:12-14.

Of these nineteen passages, four are used in speaking of Christ, three, undoubtedly, are speaking of Israel (however, of these three, all of which are found in the Old Testament, two speak of the Israel of the millennial period), two are speaking of "the elect lady" and "thine elect sister" and of the passages remaining, nine in number, all are used when speaking of those who belong to the Church of Jesus Christ.

There is one other word that is akin to *ἐκλεκτός* and that is the word *ἐκλογή*, which is translated "election." According to Thayer it means; the act of choosing, according to an election which is due to grace. It is used six times in the New Testament, only three of which apply to Israelites as a group. One of these passages is hereby given to show how the words are used.

Even so than at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election (*ἐκλογῇ*) of grace. But if it is by grace, it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. What then? That which Israel seeketh for, that he obtained not; but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened.<sup>21</sup>

Paul, using himself as an example, shows that among the Israelites there were those who did accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and were of the "election," but those Israelites who rejected because of unbelief were cast off.

With this background, the passages found in Matthew, chapter twenty-four, will be examined. The passages found in

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<sup>21</sup> Romans 11:5.

Mark are used in almost identical manner as those in Matthew; so were not discussed. The passages from Matthew are hereby given: (These are the words of Jesus).

For then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's (ΕΚΛΕΚΤΟΥΣ) sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, here: believe it not. For there shall rise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders: so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect (ΕΚΛΕΚΤΟΥΣ).<sup>22</sup>

Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect (ΕΚΛΕΚΤΟΥΣ) from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.<sup>23</sup>

If one is to come to a conclusion as to the people or group spoken of when a certain word is used, by the usage of that word in other places, then it would seem that the safest and most obvious interpretation would be to say that the Lord Jesus, in His discourse as recorded in Matthew, the twenty-fourth chapter, and Mark, the thirteenth chapter, was speaking of those who are members of His church.

*παρουσία.* (Thayer) 1. presence; 2. the presence of one coming, hence the coming, advent, arrival.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Matthew 24:21-24.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew 24:31.

<sup>24</sup> Thayer, op. cit. p. 490.

This word is used twenty-four times in the New Testament; twenty times it is rendered "coming" and twice it is rendered "presence." Of the twenty times it is rendered "coming," in fifteen instances it is used in relation to the second coming of Jesus.

No word in the English language carries the full meaning of this word. The word has been explained as denoting, "both an arrival and a subsequent presence with."<sup>25</sup>

The emphasis that is desired to set forth at this time is this element mentioned of a coming and a subsequent presence. To illustrate this meaning, three passages are given; to use that which can be readily understood to clarify the thought of that which must be understood by faith.

And I rejoice at the coming (*παρουσία*) of Stephanus and Fortunatus and Achaicus; for that which was lacking on your part they supplied.<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, He that comforteth the lowly, even God, comforted us by the coming (*παρουσία*) of Titus.<sup>27</sup>

That your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence (*παρουσία*) with you again.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> J. F. Strombeck, First the Rapture (Moline, Ill: Strombeck Agency, Inc., n.d.), p. 65.

<sup>26</sup> I Corinthians 16:17.

<sup>27</sup> II Corinthians 7:6.

<sup>28</sup> Philippians 1:26.

The Rapture. A term that, by popular use, has come to mean the catching up of the Church out of the world by Jesus, at the time of His coming. The exact term (Rapture) is not found in the English Bible. The theology of the term is based on I Thessalonians, the fourth chapter and the thirteenth to eighteenth verses. In this passage, the word (ἄρπαιξήσθε) that is used in the original Greek to speak of the Christians being caught up means to "convey away suddenly."<sup>29</sup> A supporting passage of the thought of this term is found in I Corinthians, the fifteenth chapter and the fiftieth to the fifty-fourth verse.

The time of the Rapture is largely determined by the character of the Great Tribulation and as to the people who are upon earth during this time. If the Church is not upon earth during this time of trial, then the Rapture will take place prior to the Tribulation; but if the Church goes through a part, or all of the Tribulation, the Rapture will take place at a later date, for the Rapture is the time when the Church is taken out of the world.

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<sup>29</sup> Analytical Greek Lexicon (New York: Harper and Bros., Pub. [n.d.]), page 52.

### CHAPTER III

#### "THE GREAT TRIBULATION"

Because the various views of the period of time popularly called "The Great Tribulation," will be discussed severally in succeeding chapters, this chapter will deal only with some of the characteristics of this period that are accepted by most Bible prophecy expositors.

It will be well, first, to locate some of the important Scriptural sources of information that deal with this subject.

The Book of Jeremiah. While Jeremiah's prophecy deals largely with the immediate future of Judah, yet he did prophecy of a time when Judah and Israel shall return to the land promised to Abraham and there they shall once become a people with the laws of God written upon their hearts. In relation to this return he spoke of a difficult time in these words:

I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. And these are the words that Jehovah spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith Jehovah: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child: Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah 30:3-7.

The Book of Daniel. The prophet Daniel spoke much of last things. Only two passages will be considered at this time. One of these concerns Daniel's "Seventieth Week." This expression is based on the following passage:

Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression. . . . And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abomination shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate.<sup>2</sup>

This final week symbolizes a period of time seven years in length. This conclusion is arrived at from a computation of the period of time covered by the preceding sixty-nine weeks, which was from the first commandment to rebuild Jerusalem until the crucifixion of Jesus. This period of time is not accepted as identical with the period of tribulation by the Fraeterist and Historical views, but the Futurists hold that this seven years will be the final seven years of history of a restored, united kingdom of Judah and Israel in Palestine and will run concurrently with the period of tribulation. Reasons for this view, by the Futurists, are:

1. The language of the passage, such as the words, "desolate," "abominations," etc.
2. The words of Jesus in Matthew and Mark: "When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel 9:24,27.

spoken by Daniel the prophet," etc.<sup>3</sup>

3. The dividing of the seven years into two periods of three-and-one-half years each, which corresponds to expressions of time in the book of Revelation. These expressions are: "forty-two months,"<sup>4</sup> "A thousand two hundred and three-score days,"<sup>5</sup> and "time, times, and half a time."<sup>6</sup>

Another passage from Daniel to be considered and which relates to this time is: "and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time."<sup>7</sup> The entire chapter (Daniel twelve) deals with this period of time. The portion of the passage quoted that was noticed is the part dealing with a unique period that has never happened before.

The Gospel According to Matthew. Jesus, speaking as recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of this record of the gospel, from the fourth to the twenty-eighth verses, gave a prophecy of much tribulation, much of which applies to the period of time under discussion as is evidenced by the identifying phrase, "for then shall be great tribulation, such as

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 24:15.

<sup>4</sup> Revelation 11:2.

<sup>5</sup> Revelation 11:3; 12:6.

<sup>6</sup> Revelation 12:14.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel 12:1.

hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no nor ever shall be."<sup>8</sup>

The Gospel According to Mark. The thirteenth chapter of Mark is very similar to the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew and is identified by a very similar statement of Jesus, as the one quoted above. That statement is hereby given:

For those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never shall be.<sup>9</sup>

The First and Second Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians.

Paul, while at Thessalonica, had spoken of the return of the Lord and of a time of trouble, which time "the man of sin"<sup>10</sup> would be revealed. These words of his show plainly that he had talked of such things to them while with them: "Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you I told you these things?"<sup>11</sup> The fourth and fifth chapters of the first epistle, and the second chapter of the second epistle contain his words of instruction to this church. Given below is an identifying portion of the first epistle:

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. For yourselves

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew 24:21.

<sup>9</sup> Mark 13:19.

<sup>10</sup> II Thessalonians 2:3.

<sup>11</sup> II Thessalonians 2:5.

know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape.<sup>12</sup>

Book of the Revelation. As it was given to John to record the words: "In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world,"<sup>13</sup> so it was given to John to give the most complete information on the great time of tribulation to come upon the world. For the book of Revelation describes a time of trial, tribulation, and judgment such as has never, at least in its fulness, come to pass upon the earth.

Chapters four to nineteen are generally considered to cover the time of tribulation. Chapters four and five are introductory to this scene and give the events in heaven that precede the beginning of the tribulation upon earth. The tribulation proper, begins in the sixth chapter with the opening of the first seal. Several kinds of persons, groups of persons, situations, and characteristics are found in these chapters. The outstanding ones are listed here.

The seven seals. The book of chapter five, verse one, was sealed with seven seals. When these are opened by the only

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<sup>12</sup> I Thessalonians 5:1-3.

<sup>13</sup> John 16:33.

<sup>14</sup> Revelation 5:5,6.

One found who was worthy to open them, namely, the Lamb who is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah,<sup>14</sup> certain events come to pass upon the earth. These are opened in chapter six and chapter eight, verse one.

The Seven Trumpets. When these are sounded by angels from heaven, great judgments are visited upon the earth. These events are recorded in chapter eight, verse one; to chapter eleven.

The Seven Plagues or Bowls. These are the last judgments to be visited upon the earth by God, "for in them is finished the wrath of God."<sup>15</sup> These are recorded in chapters fifteen and sixteen.

The Sealed of the House of Israel. Chapter seven, verses four to eight record the sealing of the one hundred and forty four thousand of the House of Israel.

Saints. There are a number of references to saints of God. It is not always clear just who these are. The following references are those in which groups are mentioned that clearly consist of saints of God.

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<sup>14</sup> Revelation 5:5,6.

<sup>15</sup> Revelation 15:2.

1. Chapter seven, verses thirteen to seventeen.
2. Chapter twelve, verse seventeen.
3. Chapter thirteen, verse eight.
4. Chapter fourteen, verses one to five.
5. Chapter sixteen, verse fifteen.
6. Chapter nineteen, verses one to ten.

The Ungodly. The judgments and plagues of God are upon the ungodly of earth.

The Two Beasts. The fourteenth chapter gives the record of two beasts, one coming up out of the "sea,"<sup>16</sup> and the second coming up out of the "earth" (land)<sup>17</sup>. The first beast is generally identified with the "evil one"<sup>18</sup> spoken of by Paul, and John's "antichrist."<sup>19</sup> The second "beast" turns men to the worship of the first beast and is called the "false prophet."<sup>20</sup>

Babylon. Called, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."<sup>21</sup> This organization or system is called a "woman" and causes

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<sup>16</sup> Revelation 13:1.

<sup>17</sup> Revelation 13:11.

<sup>18</sup> II Thessalonians 2:3.

<sup>19</sup> I John 2:22.

<sup>20</sup> Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10.

<sup>21</sup> Revelation 17:5.

kings and people of the earth to commit all manner of ungodliness. She is pictured as sitting on seven "mountains"<sup>22</sup> and as being the "great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth."<sup>23</sup> (As chapters VI and VII show, some interpreters see two "Babylons," one in chapter seventeen and one in chapter eighteen.)

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<sup>22</sup> Revelation 17:9.

<sup>23</sup> Revelation 17:18.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PRAETERIST VIEW

Those who accept this interpretation of the Scriptures that prophesy of tribulation to come upon the earth, believe that the events prophesied came to pass in the first three centuries of the history of the church. Some narrow the time of fulfillment to the first century of church history. The name "Praeterist" comes from the prefix "preter" which means "before."

This view was not held by any of those who lived in the days, or soon after the days, of the writing of the book of the Revelation. This view has found favor in recent years among liberal groups because they do not believe in revelation or in the foretelling of future events. However, some conservative men have held this view, the most prominent of whom was Moses Stuart, of Andover.<sup>1</sup> His work, "The Apocalypse" has the respect of most students of prophecy.

An outline of the twenty-fourth chapter of the gospel according to Matthew that is representative of the Praeterist interpretation. The exposition chosen was that of Adam Clark as given in his commentaries.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Albertus Pieters, The Lamb, the Woman and the Dragon (Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Church Press, 1937), p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Adam Clark, The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testament, with a commentary and critical notes. Vol. V (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, [n.d.]

Verses one and two are introductory to the prophetic portions of the chapter; verse three contains the questions of the disciples that prompted the prophetic discourse of Jesus.

Verse five; "Many shall come in my name saying, I am the Christ." In the years preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, many came calling themselves "saviours" and trying to persuade the people that they were sent of God to deliver the Jews from the Roman yoke. Some examples were:

Dositheus, the Samaritan, who pretended that he was the Christ foretold by Moses.

Theudas, who prophesied about 42 A.D.

During the days of Felix, procurator of Judea, so many made similar claims that some were taken and killed almost every day.

Verses six to fourteen: Prophesied of the wars of the Jews which included the war with Rome in which Jerusalem was destroyed. These wars were accompanied by great affliction for the followers of Christ. The "whole world" in which the gospel was to be preached was the Roman world.

Verses fifteen to twenty-eight: The "abomination of desolation" was the encompassing of Jerusalem by the Roman armies. Jesus' exhortation to "then let them which are in Judea flee unto the mountains" was obeyed during the siege of Jerusalem. After Cestius Gallus had withdrawn his legions for no logical reason whatever, and as Vespasian was approaching

with his army, the Christians remembered what Christ had told them and fled. No Christians perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. When Jerusalem fell there were about one million, one hundred thousand Jews who perished. Clark believes this to be the tribulation such as never was.

Verses twenty-nine to forty-four: The coming of the Son of Man referred to the apparent judgment of Jesus Christ upon Jerusalem for their rejection of Him. The sending forth of His angels of verse thirty-one is the going forth of the disciples, the messengers of the gospel, to the four corners of the earth. The elect that are gathered are the Gentiles to whom the gospel is declared.

The Praeterists apply much the same method in their interpretation of the book of Revelation and the other Scriptures that deal with the period under discussion.

Chapters five to eleven of the book of Revelation tell of the Church's victory over the Synagogue, or Judaism.

Chapters twelve to nineteen tell of Her victory over pagan Rome.

Chapters twenty to twenty-two tell of the glory of the Church in consequence of its victory over pagan Rome.

Those who take this view refer the larger part of the book to the Neronian persecution, and find in it a prediction of the return of Nero.

The seven kings of chapter seventeen, verse ten, are identified with the Emperors Augustus, Tiberius, Cailugla, Claudius, Nero, Galba, and Otho.

Criticism. The view just given does not fulfill God's prophecies of His divine plan. The consummation of the divine purposes was not reached in the fall of pagan Rome. This interpretation falls far short of being an adequate fulfillment of the prophetic utterances of God's Word.

## CHAPTER V

### THE HISTORICAL VIEW

The historical view of the Tribulation period has been held by groups and individuals who have filled important roles in the course of history. Just a few names given here will illustrate this fact: The Waldenses, Wyclifites, Hussites; and many of the reformers including: Luther, Zwingli, Melancthon, and Calvin.<sup>1</sup>

These men did not always agree on the details or even on some of the main points of their interpretations but in general they are much the same. The view presented is that of Albert Barnes, as taken from his two works: "Notes on Matthew and Mark," and "Notes on the Book of Revelation."

#### Part I

Barnes exposition on the gospel according to Matthew the twenty-fourth chapter.<sup>2</sup> As Jesus and His disciples left the temple in Jerusalem the disciples commented on the beauty of the temple. Jesus stated at that time, that the time was coming when the temple would be completely destroyed. Upon this, the disciples asked three questions, namely:

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<sup>1</sup> W. Graham Scroggie, The Great Unveiling (Glasgow: The Hulbert Publishing Co., Ltd. [n.d.]), pp. 132, 133.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Albert Barnes, Notes on Matthew and Mark (London: George Routledge and Sons, [n.d.]), p. 290.

1. When those things should take place.
2. What should be the signs of His coming.
3. What should be the signs that the end of the world was near.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus, in answering these questions, did not distinctly answer each one individually, but He intermingled the details of His answer in such a way that it is difficult at times to tell to what particular subject it applies.

The following is a brief review of the exposition in its natural divisions.

Verses four to fourteen. Many false prophets to come-- In the days before the destruction of Jerusalem many men claimed to be called of God to deliver the Jews from Roman bondage. There was much unrest in the area around Palestine during the years preceding the destruction of Jerusalem; "wars and rumours of wars." The ones who endured the strife and persecution until God made a full end of Judaism, the same would be saved. By the testimony of Paul<sup>4</sup> the gospel was preached to the ends of the then known world at the time that he wrote.

Verses fifteen to twenty-eight. The prophecy of the "abomination of Desolation" was fulfilled in the encircling of Jerusalem by the Roman armies. All Jerusalem was considered holy and the Roman army was considered to be an abomination.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>4</sup> Colossians 1:6,23.

because it was Gentile and because of the idols it worshipped.

The Christians that were in Judea and Jerusalem, remembering the words of Jesus to "flee to the mountains," fled to Pella, and not one Christian perished in the destruction of the city. This destruction was considered the great tribulation because many perished. A total of one million, three-hundred-and-fifty-thousand people perished in Jerusalem and surrounding provinces. Because of many Christians (elect) in the surrounding provinces, the time was shortened that these might be saved.

Verses twenty-nine to fifty-one. The gathering together of the elect. This has a partial application to the Christians escaping the destruction of the city, but has a more distant application to the return of the Lord for His own, the Church. The parable of the fig tree has its application to the time of the Lord's return.

## PART II

Barnes' exposition on the Book of Revelation. Chapters six to eighteen.<sup>5</sup>

Chapter six, verses one and two, the first seal, the white horse and his rider. Fulfilled in the events taking place in the Roman Empire from the death of Emperor Domitian, 96 A.D., to the accession of Commodus, 180 A.D. This was a period of general prosperity, of triumph and conquest, extending

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<sup>5</sup> Rev. Albert Barnes, Notes on the Book of Revelation (Edinburgh: Gall and Inglis, [n.d.] ), pp. 180-534.

through the reigns of Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the two Antonines.

Chapter six, verses three and four: the second seal, the red horse and his rider. From the death of Commodus, 193 A.D. onward. With the assassination of Emperor Commodus a period of a series of civil wars commenced and continued until approximately 284 A.D. During this time thirty-two emperors and twenty-seven pretenders to the empire, alternately hurried each other from the throne by incessant warfare.

Verses five and six: the third seal, the black horse. From the time of Caracalla, 211 A.D., and onward. A time of severe taxation. The Praetorian prefects and a great number of subordinate officers were committed to the task of collecting, at first a twentieth, but later a tenth, of the value of the four most universal items of produce: corn, barley, oil, and wine. The owners of lands were warned that if vineyards or groves were damaged to escape paying the tax, the penalty was death. The old and the weak, the young and the strong, alike were so afflicted that it was generally a time of famine and affliction. This period and its trials had a great deal to do with the fall of the Roman Empire.

Verses seven and eight: the fourth seal, the pale horse, plagues and death. From the time of Decius, 243 A.D.,

to the time of Gallienus, 268 A.D. During this period the Goths made their first invasion of Italy. Because of previous famine, the result of severe taxation, and this war with the Goths, there was a general condition of ill health in the empire that resulted in a great plague covering the years between 250 and 265 A.D. One historian<sup>6</sup> records the fact that this was a time when the wild beasts of the earth became so great a menace that the Christians were blamed for the calamity.

Verses nine to eleven: the fifth seal, the souls under the altar. A time of great persecution for the Christians, from 268 to 304 A.D. The souls under the altar are those who were persecuted and killed in the ten great persecutions which ended with Constantine's conversion and the subsequent legalizing of the Christian religion.

Verses twelve to seventeen: the sixth seal. The invasions of Rome by the barbarians; Goths, Vandals, etc. of 365 A.D., and onwards.

Chapter seven: the sealing of the one hundred and forty four thousand, and the scene of the great multitude that had come out of the Great Tribulation. The holding of the winds was the restraining of the wars and troubles on earth until the great creeds had been formed to legislate against heresy. This

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

was the sealing of the one hundred and forty four thousand. This also might apply to the preservation of the Church through the Dark Ages. The scene of the great multitude in heaven shows the final triumph of the Church over its adversaries and is given for the encouragement of the Church and of Christians that go through tribulation.

Chapter eight: The opening of the seventh seal, which includes the seven trumpets.

Verse seven. The first angel sounds. Invasion of Rome by Alaric the Goth, 395 to 410 A.D.

Verses eight and nine. The second angel sounds. Invasion of Rome by Genseric the Vandal, 428 to 468 A.D.

Verses ten and eleven. The third angel sounds. The invasion of Rome by Attila the Hun, 433 to 453 A.D. The great star that fell from heaven is symbolical of a great leader and is identified with Attila.

Verse twelve. The fourth angel sounds. Final conquest of the Empire by Odoacer, King of the Heruli, 476 to 490 A.D.

Chapter nine. The last three trumpets. Extending to the end of time.

Verses one to twelve. The fifth trumpet. The great

star falling from heaven symbolizes the birth and rise of Mohammed. The locusts are the forces of the Saracens who were clad in coats of mail. This power was to be active for five prophetic months or actually one-hundred-and-fifty years.

The following is a partial outline of the history of the Mohammedan conquests:

- 570 A.D. Birth of Mohammed.
- 609 A.D. Mohammed began to preach.
- 622 A.D. Hegira, flight from Mecca.
- 721 A.D. Invasion of France by Arabs.
- 732 A.D. Defeat of Saracens by Charles Martel.
- 755 A.D. Revolt of Spain.

Thus, from the time that Mohammed began to preach until the revolt of Spain, which finally broke the power of the Mohammedan conquest, was one-hundred-and-forty-six years.

Verses thirteen to twenty-one. The sixth trumpet.

This is the period of the wars of the Turks. The hour, day, month, year period gives a period of time of three-hundred-and-ninety-one prophetic days; which gives a period of actual time of three-hundred-and-ninety-one years. The conquest of Constantinople was effected in 1453 A.D. Figuring back three-hundred-and-ninety-one years gives the year 1062 A.D. It was in 1055 A.D. that the Turks overthrew Bagdad and came into power. The Turks had colorful coats of mail, which seem to be alluded to by the statement of "having breastplates of fire and of hyacinth and of bromstone."<sup>7</sup> The Turks were among the

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<sup>7</sup> Revelation 9:17.

first to use artillery powered by gunpowder.

The final verses of the chapter speak of men not repenting of their deeds of idolatry and ungodliness. This is known to be true of the worship practices of the Church of Rome. They had practiced iconoclastic worship before the time of the Turks and have continued this to the present time.

Chapter ten. The strong angel; the little book open.

This chapter symbolizes the period of the Reformation. The little book that is open is the Bible given back to the world. The angel crying in a loud voice is symbolical of the Reformation. The seven thunders that are heard but not recorded are the seven anathemas that the Pope hurled against the Reformation.

Chapter eleven. The two witnesses and the final culmination of world history.

Verses one to thirteen. The two witnesses. The two witnesses represent the fact that through a period of one-thousand, two-hundred-sixty years the Roman Church was in control of much of the world and the True Church witnesses under much difficulty and this witness had little influence. The witnesses were effectually "killed." the one-thousand, two-hundred-sixty years are represented by the figures of speech, "forty-two months,"<sup>8</sup> and "one-thousand, two-hundred

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<sup>8</sup> Revelation 11:2.

and three-score days."<sup>9</sup> The "three days and a half"<sup>10</sup> symbolized the period of time that the Lateran Council was in session, from 1513 to 1517, a period of just three years and a half. This Council proclaimed that all opposition to the Papal power had ceased.

The Reformation was the fulfillment of the resurrection of the witnesses. The earthquake symbolizes the shock produced in Europe by the action of the Reformers.

Verses fourteen to nineteen. The seventh trumpet. The beginning of the reign of the saints. The kingdoms of the world to be won for Christ. This reign will never end; not necessarily to last forever on earth, but continually in heaven. The final verses give the final culmination of time with the judgment of the dead.

Chapter twelve. The woman and the dragon. The woman of this chapter is the Church, the man child represents the people of the Church. The catching up to heaven of the man child symbolizes the fact that the church is safely kept by God, and will triumph. The war in heaven is representative of the fact of the great conflict between the forces of God and Satan. The "thousand two hundred and three score days,"<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Revelation 11:3.

<sup>10</sup> Revelation 11:11.

<sup>11</sup> Revelation 12:6.

and the "time, times and half a time,"<sup>12</sup> represents the one-thousand, two-hundred-sixty years of the Church's obscurity during the Papal supremacy.

Chapter thirteen. The two beasts. The first beast coming up out of the sea was like unto the four beasts of Daniel. The four beasts of Daniel are known to represent four kingdoms.<sup>13</sup> These four kingdoms were combined in the Roman Empire. Thus the first beast is the pagan Roman Empire. The dragon, the same one that attempts to devour the man child in chapter twelve, gives the beast its power and authority. The death stroke was the fall of the Roman Empire, but this death stroke was healed.

The second beast was like unto the first beast and has been identified with the Papacy. It was through the power of the Papacy that the Roman Empire was renewed and actually the Papacy and the Roman Church exercised all the authority of the Roman Empire under the Ceasars. The Papacy exercised complete control over the lives of all the people under its authority.

The number of the beast, "six hundred and sixty and six"<sup>14</sup> has been interpreted in various ways. Barnes favors the following interpretation based on the Greek word (lateinos)

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<sup>12</sup> Revelation 12:14.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel 7.

<sup>14</sup> Revelation 13:18.

which means "Latin."<sup>15</sup>

Chapter fourteen. The final triumph. This chapter gives the final scene in heaven. This is a scene of triumph to relieve the gloom of former chapters and to encourage the Christians of all ages. This shows that the gospel will be preached in all nations and that "Babylon," the Papacy, will enter into judgment. Happy are those who die in the Lord. The harvest of the world is indicated.

Chapter fifteen. An introductory chapter to the things that follow. The following scenes show the final triumph of the saved and their presence with God. The angels who have the seven plagues finish the wrath of God upon wicked man.

Chapter sixteen. Represents the judgment of God on the Papacy and the countries under its control. This scene covers much of what happened in the French Revolution. The following is a brief outline of the exposition on the seven bowls of wrath.

Verse two. The first bowl poured out. The atheism, infidelity and general dissolution of society of the days of the French Revolution and the days following it was that symbolized by the "grievous sore upon men."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Barnes, op. cit., p. 443.

<sup>16</sup> Revelation 16:2.

Verse three. The second bowl poured out. Symbolical of the victories of the English navy over the French and Spanish navies, which were under the control of the Papacy.

Verses four to seven. The third bowl poured out. Indicative of the wars of Napoleon in the valleys of the rivers Po, Rhine, and the Alpine streams of Piedmont and Lombardy. These wars were in retribution for the persecution of the Papacy directed toward the Waldenses who had peopled these valleys.

Verses eight and nine. The fourth bowl poured out. This prophecy was indicative of the great European wars after the French Revolution that brought an end to the great power of the Papacy and which took the lives of so many thousands of people.

Verses ten and eleven. The fifth bowl poured out. The attacks against the Papacy that took place in the years 1798 and 1799, in which the Papacy received a very serious blow and which resulted in the capture of the Pope himself.

Verses twelve to sixteen. The sixth bowl poured out. The decline of the Turkish Empire which was visioned as being astride the Euphrates river. The three unclean spirits are probably Mohammedanism, paganism, and the Papacy. The battle of Har-magedon is still in the future. The kings of the east are still future and unidentified.

Verses seventeen to twenty-one. The seventh bowl.

Final and eternal defeat of the beast and Babylon. Babylon is recognized as Rome and as the center of the system which will be done away.

Chapters seventeen and eighteen. The overthrow of Babylon (Rome and the Papacy) given in detail.

How other writers agree with given interpretation.

That the interpretation of Reverend Barnes is representative is shown by the following list of authors' viewpoints.

Of twenty-six most distinguished writers from the Reformation to our own time there is remarkable agreement on the main points.

For example, they agree:

1. That Trumpet Six refers to the Turks . . . . . 21
2. That chapter 11 is the Papal persecution of the saints . . . . . 22
3. That the Beasts are aspects of the Papacy . . . 25
4. That chapter 17 refers to Rome . . . . . 26
5. That chapter 18 is the Papacy . . . . . 26
6. That a day is the symbol of a year . . . . . 19
7. That chapter 12 is the history of the true Church during the Papal ages.. . . . 18<sup>17</sup>

Criticism. While there is an amazing parallel in the events of history with the prophecies of the book of Revelation still there are so many unfulfilled points that this interpretation is not entirely satisfactory. Some of the details on which it is not satisfactory are listed.

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<sup>17</sup> W. Graham Scroggie, The Great Unveiling (Glasgow: The Hulbert Publishing Co. Ltd. [n.d.] ) pp. 135-

1. The trials and tribulations of past history could be repeated. The events of recent years prove that the "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time,"<sup>18</sup> and, "neither shall be,"<sup>19</sup> has not necessarily come to pass. When this time comes it can never, on the testimony of Scripture, come to pass again.

2. On the year-day theory, if it is taken for granted that the last half of Daniel's "seventieth week" really means a year for a day and that the three-and-one-half days are really a period of time of one-thousand, two-hundred-sixty years, then the other sixty-nine weeks would be a period of time of one-hundred-seventy-six thousand, four-hundred years.

3. This school of interpretation narrows the field of activity to Europe and nearby points alone. It does not give a proper world view.

4. History has reflected the fact that most attempts to halt the fulfillment of the salvation of men have been connected in some way with Rome. But the Papacy has not wholly fulfilled these words of Paul:

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.<sup>20</sup>

Even the Pope of Rome recognizes the God of heaven.

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<sup>18</sup> Daniel 12:1.

<sup>19</sup> Mark 13:19. .

<sup>20</sup> II Thessalonians 2:4 A.V.

Conclusion. This view has real value. While it does not show the characteristics of the complete fulfillment of the prophecies of God, yet it truly does give a foreview of things to come. In the words of W. Graham Scroggie:

History repeats itself. All the angles of a pyramid are in harmony, so that we have a large pyramid at the base and a small one at the apex. It is certainly right to look for the fulfillment of the Divine purposes all along the line of history; and, though I do not see with the Historicists that their application of the Apocalypse is the true one, yet it is impossible not to see a wonderful general analogy in the past history with what very many believe to be the yet future fulfillment of the Apocalypse.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Scroggie, op. cit., p. 142.

## CHAPTER VI

### FUTURIST, PRE-MILLENNIAL VIEW

#### PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE

This view was first set forth by John N. Darby, a learned and godly man, the founder of the group known as the Plymouth Brethren.<sup>1</sup> It was also set forth by Joseph A. Seiss, D.D., in his three-volume work, The Apocalypse. It is this view that is set forth in the notes in the Scofield Bible and has come to be widely held in recent times.

The outstanding teaching of this school of interpretation is that the Church will be raptured before the opening of the tribulation period. This view divides the history of the world from the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ until the setting up of the millennial reign into two main periods of time. These two periods are: period one, the church age, from the crucifixion (or from Pentecost) to the Rapture; and period two, the tribulation period which is a period of seven years duration which is the "seventieth week"<sup>2</sup> of Daniel and the time of "Jacob's Trouble."<sup>3</sup> This will be the final period of Jewish history before the setting up of the Millennial reign by our Lord Jesus Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Pieters, Albertus, The Lamb, the Woman and the Dragon (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, [n.d.] ) p.55.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel 9:27.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 30:7.

## PART I

## THE CHURCH AGE

When the Jews rejected Christ as their King and Messiah and crucified Him, the way was opened for the setting up of the Church of Jesus Christ which was to consist of both Jew and Gentile. This Church actually came into being on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples, Peter preached the first sermon of the Church Age, and three thousand people were saved. This Church was to continue until such time as the "Body of Christ" was complete, at which time the Church would be "Raptured." The Church, while upon earth, was to be busy taking "out of them (Gentiles), a people for His Name."<sup>4</sup> This part of God's great plan was not foreseen by the Jews and there was no specific mention of it in the Old Testament.

Unlike the Historical View, the Futurist Dispensation-  
alists do not apply the book of Revelation, from the fourth  
chapter onward, to the history of the church. The messages to  
the seven churches recorded in the second and third chapters  
of the Revelation relate to seven great periods of time in the  
history of the world during the Church Age. That history closes  
with the period of time described in the message to the Church  
of Laodicea. At the close of this period, no man knowing the

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Acts 15:14.

day nor the hour, Jesus shall come and take His Church out of the world as described in the following Scripture:

For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.<sup>5</sup>

The signal for this taking of the Church out of the world, is thought by some adherents of this view, to be simultaneous with the words of the Lord to John, "Come up hither," recorded in the Revelation, chapter four, verse one.<sup>6</sup>

Besides the Scripture given above, the fact of the rapture is assumed from the following Scriptures:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.<sup>7</sup>

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.<sup>8</sup>

Evidences of pre-tribulation rapture. The Scriptures given above are evidence of the fact of the rapture, but they

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<sup>5</sup> I Thessalonians 4:16,17.

<sup>6</sup> J. F. Strombeck, First the Rapture (Moline, Illinois: Strombeck Agency, Ind., 1951), p. 186.

<sup>7</sup> John 14:1-3.

<sup>8</sup> I Corinthians 15:51,52.

do not give any indication of the time of the rapture. There are a number of passages of Scripture that are interpreted as giving the time of the rapture as preceding the period of tribulation. Some of the most important ones were selected as representing the types of proof used.

Rapture to be secret. There are certain Scriptures<sup>9</sup> that speak of the coming of Jesus being like the coming of a thief in the night. From these Scriptures it is believed that Jesus' coming for His Church will be secret and the rest of the world will know nothing of this coming until they realize the Church is gone. Only those who are faithful and are looking for His coming will hear the sound of the trump, the voice of the archangel, and the shout of the Lord. Regarding this belief, Mr. Strombeck, in dealing with statements of those opposing the pre-tribulation view, speaks thus:

Speaking of a secret rapture which is directly related to the secret parousia it has been said: "It is as pure a myth as ever entered the brain of man."

The thought that an innumerable body of sleeping saints shall rise at the coming of Christ as told in I Thessalonians 4:15-17, without making any impression on the world is ridiculed. But why not? All these saints shall be raised with bodies like unto the glorious body of Christ when He arose from the grave. There is no record that He was seen after He arose by anyone except believers. Christ's body passed through closed doors. His body was invisible except at times when He showed Himself to witnesses chosen by God.

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<sup>9</sup> I Thessalonians 5:2; Revelation 16:15.

And what of the living saints? They shall also be changed in the twinkling of an eye into bodies like Christ's. Of course, the world will know that something has happened because all believers shall suddenly disappear from the presence of the unsaved with whom they are when that moment comes.<sup>10</sup>

The Church to escape tribulation. Jesus, speaking to His disciples, as recorded in the gospel according to Luke, chapter twenty-one, in foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and the time of His second coming, spoke of them escaping the trials coming:

But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.<sup>11</sup>

Again in the Revelation Jesus gave a message, through John, to the Church at Philadelphia:

Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown.<sup>12</sup>

These Scriptures are offered as proof that the Church will escape the entire period of tribulation. However, there is a difficulty in connection with the one out of the gospel according to Luke. Another item of proof must be considered before dealing with the difficulty.

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<sup>10</sup> Strombeck, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

<sup>11</sup> Luke 21:36.

<sup>12</sup> Revelation 3:10.

The "elect" of Matthew, chapter twenty-four. To the one holding the pre-tribulation rapture theory, the "elect" of this chapter is applied to Israel, and Israel, only.

The fact that Jesus in verse 15 mentioned the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel shows that He was speaking of something that concerns Israel. He also said: "Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." and again; "But pray ye that your flight be not in winter, neither on the Sabbath day." These statements were addressed to Jews. The elect mentioned in verses 22 and 24 must be the same people to whom He spoke. These elect are obviously not the Church, but Israel.<sup>13</sup>

In the twenty-first chapter of the gospel according to Luke, the author (Luke) was recording the Mt. Olivet discourse, the same discourse that is recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of the gospel according to Matthew. To be consistent, one must believe that what Jesus said to His disciples in one place concerning one subject must apply in the other place concerning the same subject. If the "elect" in Matthew, the twenty-fourth chapter applies to the Jews, then the statement that "ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass"<sup>14</sup> must apply to the Jews also.

The twenty-four elders.<sup>14</sup> In this scene, John, the one who witnessed the scene, saw four "Living creatures" and "twenty-four elders." The twenty-four elders were sitting on

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<sup>13</sup> Strombeck, op. cit., p. 141.

<sup>14</sup> Luke 21:36.

<sup>15</sup> Revelation 4:4-6.

twenty-four thrones round about a throne in heaven, and are arrayed in white garments and wearing crowns of gold. This scene is interpreted to be a scene depicting the Church in heaven. The elders symbolize the saints of the Old and New Testaments.

As the "Elders" are representative of both the Old and New Testament Saints, and the Old Testament Saints are represented by the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and the New Testament Saints by the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, they together make up the 24 representative characters. This distinction is clearly brought out in the description of the New Jerusalem, where the 12 Foundation Stones are named after the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, and the 12 Gates after the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Rev. 21:10-14.<sup>16</sup>

As these "Elders" are seen in heaven before the opening of the first seal, it is believed that the Church has been raptured and is in heaven before the opening of the tribulation period.

The Mission of the Holy Spirit. In the second letter of Paul to the Church at Thessalonica Paul speaks of the revealing of the man of sin.

The day of the Lord. . . will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed . . . And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that He may be revealed in His own season.<sup>17</sup>

The one that restraineth is the Holy Spirit and it is

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<sup>16</sup> Clarence Larkin, The Book of Revelation (Fox Chase, Philadelphia: Published by Clarence Larkin, 1919), p. 40.

<sup>17</sup> II Thessalonians 2:2-6.

believed by the ones holding the pre-tribulation reapture view, that the Holy Spirit is taken out of the world with the Church and that all restraint upon lawlessness will be thus removed. This will allow the man of sin to have full sway and the tribulation period will be ushered in.

## PART II

### THE TIME OF GREAT TRIBULATION

After the rapture of the Church, which in relation to the book of Revelation, occurs between the third and fourth chapter, there are scenes in heaven that are preparatory to the opening of the first seal in chapter six the tribulation period opens. Chapters six to eighteen, inclusive, deal with this time of trouble.

The first four seals are understood as depicting the reign of Anti-Christ. The rider of the white horse is Anti-Christ coming out conquering and setting up his reign. War, famine, and death follow the attempt to set up a reign of civilization and peace upon earth by dictator methods without the help of God. The saints under the altar, as seen with the opening of the fifth seal, are the martyrs of the early part of the tribulation. The sixth seal is the anticipation of the final end.

Chapter seven records the sealing of the "hundred and

forty and four thousand"<sup>18</sup> out of every tribe of Israel and the appearance of the "great multitude."<sup>19</sup>

The hundred and forty four thousand are Jewish Christians who will preach the "gospel of the Kingdom"<sup>20</sup> during the tribulation period.

Gaebelein believes the great multitude before the throne are gentiles who will be saved during the millennial reign and that the throne before which they appear is the millennial, earthly throne of Christ.<sup>21</sup> Seiss believes that they are nominal Christians who have been left behind at the rapture and because they see that they have failed of the first glory, will repent and be saved.

They are people whom the judgment found unprepared, and who consequently were "left" when the rapture of the Church took place. . . . And many, whose repentance comes, alas, too late for eternity's higher glories will turn themselves in sorrowful earnestness to that Saviour whose sublimer offers they let slip for this paltry and perishing world.<sup>22</sup>

Larkin believes that they are the ones that will be saved through martyrdom during the tribulation period.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Revelation 7:4.

<sup>19</sup> Revelation 7:9.

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 24:14.

<sup>21</sup> Arno C. Gaebelein, The Revelation (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope," 1915), p. 59.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph A. Seiss, D.D., The Apocalypse (New York: Charles C. Cook, 1905), Vol. 1, pp. 433-444.

<sup>23</sup> Larkin, op. cit., p. 67.

With the opening of the eighth chapter, the seventh seal is opened and all that happens during the sounding of the seven trumpets is included in the seventh seal. The judgments of God upon an ungodly world are fulfilled in the blowing of the seven trumpets and are recorded in the eighth and ninth chapters.

The "two witnesses" of chapter eleven are understood to be two men. Larkin states positively that they are Moses and Elijah returned to earth for the purpose of witnessing during this period.

If we study carefully what shall happen during the period the "TWO WITNESSES" shall testify, which as we have seen will be the last half of the "Week," or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years, we shall see that the "TWO WITNESSES" can be no other than MOSES and ELIJAH.<sup>24</sup>

Seiss states that they are Enoch and Elijah. Because these two men were translated and did not see death, and as it is "appointed unto men once to die" they will return to earth to witness and to be killed.

Whenever we hear of the last great Anti-Christ and the witnesses who withstand him unto death, Elijah and Enoch, Enoch and Elijah are the names we hear from the lips of the most eminent teachers, bishops, apologists, and martyrs, from the time of the Apostles onward.<sup>25</sup>

Gaebelein states that perhaps they will be two great instruments, manifesting the spirit of Moses and Elijah,

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<sup>24</sup> Larkin, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>25</sup> Seiss, op. cit., p. 196.

endowed with supernatural power. He, however, believes that a larger number of witnesses is in view here.<sup>26</sup>

Various opinions are given for the identity of the "Woman" of chapter twelve. Larkin is positive that she is Israel, and that the "man child" is Christ.<sup>27</sup> Seiss believed that she symbolized the Church of both Old and New Testaments.<sup>28</sup> As it is the duty of the Church to bring men to new birth, the "man child" born to the woman symbolizes the saved of the Church. All of those holding this view of the pre-tribulation rapture believe that the "dragon" is Satan.

The first beast of chapter thirteen is the revived Roman Empire, ruled over by a mighty leader. This leader is the Anti-Christ of John's first epistle. He will have great authority over "every tribe and people and tongue and nation."<sup>29</sup> He is seen as being supernatural, attractive, fascinating and the supplanter of everything divine.

The second beast is the prophet of the first beast. The first beast receives his power from the dragon. Here is the Satanic Trinity. Satan is the unseen and the "Father". The first beast is the "son of perdition," and the second

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<sup>26</sup> Gaebeline, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>27</sup> Larkin, op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>28</sup> Seiss, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 277.

<sup>29</sup> Revelation 13:7.

beast, or false prophet carries into living effect the Satanic will of both the Satanic father and son. These three are "one vital essence, one economy, one administration."<sup>30</sup> Because of the activities of the second beast, the first beast will be worshipped by the people of the whole world, except those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Then will be developed the most complete, the most terrible, tyranny ever to come upon the world.

The "hundred and forty and four thousand"<sup>31</sup> of chapter fourteen are either all of Israel, a perfect completeness of the nation, or the hundred and forty four thousand sealed ones of chapter seven. If they are the sealed ones of chapter seven, the result of their sealing is that they were able to overcome and are called "virgins."

Verses fourteen to twenty of chapter fourteen record the "harvest and the vintage."<sup>32</sup> According to the interpretation given by the view being considered, these both apply to the harvest of the wicked, when the wicked are cast into the winepress of the Wrath of God.

With the exception of verse one, chapter fifteen is not dealt with dogmatically. But verse one, together with chapter

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<sup>30</sup> Seiss, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 417.

<sup>31</sup> Revelation 14:1.

<sup>32</sup> Larkin, op. cit., p. 136.

sixteen is the account of the pouring out of the seven vials, or bowls of wrath, with which the wrath of God is finished. The seven bowls give in detail all that happens to the ungodly when they are cast into the winepress of the wrath of God.

The Woman of chapter seventeen is identified as being related to the Papacy of the Roman Church, is the bride of Anti-Christ and is called "Mystery, Babylon the Great."<sup>33</sup> This bride of Anti-Christ will be composed of the followers of all false religions. This religious system will fall a victim to the "ten kings".<sup>34</sup>

Babylon, the city of the nineteenth chapter, is truly Babylon, on the Euphrates river. The prophecies concerning the destruction of ancient Babylon as recorded in Isaiah, Chapters fifty and fifty-one, were never completely fulfilled, therefore this is held as proof that Babylon will be rebuilt and become the seat of the rule of Anti-Christ, and then it will be completely destroyed.

Chapter nineteen. The marriage supper of the Lamb. This is the glorious scene in heaven, after the judgment of the members of the Church for rewards, when the wedding supper of the Lamb is held. The actual marriage was at the rapture and this is the celebration. The guests will not be the members

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<sup>33</sup> Revelation 17:5.

<sup>34</sup> Revelation 17:12,16.

of the Church, but will be the Old Testament saints and all of those who are saved out of the Great Tribulation.

After the wedding feast the Lord returns to earth with His bride and destroys the wicked nations and sets up the millennial reign.

## CHAPTER VII

### FUTURIST

#### PRE-MILLENNIAL

#### POST-TRIBULATION RAPTURE VIEW

The Post-Tribulation view is so called because the belief is that the Church, as well as the Jews, go through the seven-year period of tribulation. That period is so close with the second coming of Jesus with His holy angels to gather His Church out of the world and to judge all nations.

Two authors were selected as representatives of this view. They are Henry W. Frost, D.D., and S. D. Gordon. Because of differences in their expositions, each one was briefly outlined to show the trend of thought in this interpretation.

### PART I

#### MATTHEW TWENTY FOUR AND THE REVELATION

Henry W. Frost, D.D.

### SECTION I

#### MATTHEW TWENTY-FOUR

The period of time Jesus had in view, in His discourse to the disciples in this chapter, was the seven-year period of Jewish history which is synchronous with the tribulation

period.

The time which Christ has in view throughout the chapter, is, as we believe, the future seven-year period in which the Antichrist is to live and reign on the earth. This period had been defined and described in the Old Testament (Dan. 9:25-27; 11:23-45; 12:1-13).<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Frost divided this chapter into three main sections according to the following outline:

I	THE INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1-3.
1.	The place . . . . .	1
2.	The occasion . . . . .	2
3.	The question . . . . .	3
II	THE PROPHECY . . . . .	4-41.
1.	The first half . . . . .	4-14
	(The dividing verse, 15)	
2.	The second half . . . . .	15-41
III	THE CONCLUSION . . . . .	42-51.
1.	The exhortation . . . . .	42-44
2.	The promise . . . . .	45-47
3.	The warning . . . . .	48-51 2

Of these three divisions, only the second, with its two subdivisions was considered in this study of the great tribulation.

Jesus was speaking to His disciples as to Jews and Christians. And in answering their questions of "when"<sup>3</sup> and "what"<sup>4</sup> He answered the first with the prophecy as recorded in verses four to fourteen, and the second in that recorded in verses sixteen to forty-one. The first period is a period of

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<sup>1</sup> Henry W. Frost, D.D., Matthew twenty-four and the Revelation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Frost, Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 24:3.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 24:3.

"tribulation"<sup>5</sup> and the second period is one of "great tribulation."<sup>6</sup>

It is to be observed that the whole of the seven years of the Antichrist is a period of tribulation, for the same Greek word ( ) is used to describe both the first and second half of that time.<sup>7</sup>

The first half. Verses four to fourteen. "Tribulation."

The Lord opened His prophecy with an impressive mention of the apostasy to come and that would precede His coming. He also indicated that the peril of false teaching was to steadily increase until the end. Many saints will be deceived by the increase of iniquity. The tribulation that the people of God are to undergo in the first three-and-one-half years will be indirectly caused by a "time of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and social and family upheaval."<sup>8</sup>

The fifteenth verse.

When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand).<sup>9</sup>

This event is the mid-point of Daniel's "seventieth week" as is shown by the fact that it is synchronous with

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 24:9.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 24:9.

<sup>7</sup> Frost, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> Frost, Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 24:15.

with Daniel, chapter nine, verse twenty-seven; and also with Daniel, chapter twelve, verse eleven. This event is that in which Anti-Christ sets himself up in the temple of God.

The second half. Verses sixteen to forty-one. "Great Tribulation." During the last three-and-one-half years of the seven-year tribulation period, the Lord's elect suffer as a direct result of Anti-Christ's deification of himself, and his hatred of God and of all who name the name of Christ. When Anti-Christ has done his worst, Christ will appear with the angels to gather His own and to destroy the Evil One.

Conclusion of study of Matthew twenty-four. Dr. Frost believed that if the Jews had accepted Christ as their Messiah, that the order of events would possibly have been as follows:

The crucifixion; the resurrection; the ascension; the outpouring of the Spirit (Pentecost); the revelation and reign of Antichrist; the tribulation; the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom in the midst of persecutions; the sign of the Son of Man; the sending forth of the angels to gather the elect; the appearing of the Son of Man; and finally, the establishment of the kingdom. But it will be seen from this outline that the experiences of the seven-<sup>10</sup> year period would have been subsequent to Pentecost. . . .

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<sup>10</sup> Frost, op. cit., p. 66.

## PART I

## SECTION II

## THE REVELATION

Henry W. Frost, D.D.

The following is Dr. Frost's outline of the book of Revelation.<sup>11</sup>

1. The letter period, seven letters . . . 1:9 to 3:22
2. The seal period, seven seals . . . . 4:1 to 6:17,  
8:1
3. The trumpet period, seven trumpets . . 7:1 to 9:31,  
11:15
4. The thunder period, seven thunders . . 10:1-11
5. The vial period, seven vials . . . . 11:1 to 16:21
6. The judgment period, seven judgments .. 17:1 to 20:15
7. The new-things period, seven new things  

. . . . 21:1 to 22:5

1. The letter period. Seven letters to seven churches.

The seven churches for whom John received messages, and to whom he wrote the seven letters, were actually seven churches that are to be in existence during the seven-year period of the rule of Anti-Christ upon the earth. This first division of the prophecy is a preview of the life of these churches during this period. Dr. Frost believed that through a readjustment of

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<sup>11</sup> Frost, Op. cit., pp. 80-83.

political alliances and nations of the Near East, the churches named in the second and third chapters will be rebuilt and the prophecies concerning them will be completely fulfilled.

This is the only division that covers the full seven years, the other six divisions covering only portions of the seven-year period.

2. The seal period. Seven seals opened. The reign of Anti-Christ begins with the opening of the first seal. The riders of the four horses all represent the Anti-Christ, symbolizing him as a man of peace, of war, of famine, and through these things, a man who brings death to many. The martyrs under the altar, as seen with the opening of the fifth seal, are those faithful ones to Christ, who have been slain during the first four seals. God begins to move in judgment with the opening of the sixth seal.

3. The trumpet period. Seven trumpets. This period begins with chapter seven, with an introduction to the things about to come to pass. God's judgment began in period two and continues on in period three, increasing in intensity until the end of the seven-year period brings the final and terrible judgment of God. The sounding of the seventh trumpet is of long duration and is the "last trump" that sounds when Jesus comes again. The period of the seven thunders and the period

of the seven vials, both occur under the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

4. The thunder period. The seven thunders. While thunder in Scripture is ordinarily expressive of the wrath of God, there is no direct indication of what is the content of the seven thunders.

This period is the midpoint of the seven-year period, or in the midst of the "week."

5. The vial period. The seven vials of wrath. This period covers chapters eleven to sixteen. Chapters eleven to fifteen are introductory chapters to the events that take place during this period.

The two witnesses of chapter eleven were believed to be Moses and Elijah.

The woman in chapter twelve was Mary; the man-child was Christ. Mary was the representative of the Church, for the Church is to give spiritual birth to persons who become members of the body of Christ.

The first beast of chapter thirteen is seen rising up out of the "sea." This "sea" is symbolical of the nations, or Gentiles. This beast is the Anti-Christ, is a Gentile, and a ruler over ten kingdoms. The second beast is a Jew, and the prophet of the first beast. The dragon, the first beast, and

the second beast together form the satanic trinity that shall rule the world. Dr. Frost gives no interpretation of the number "six hundred and sixty six,"<sup>13</sup> except that it expresses a perfect incompleteness.

Chapter fourteen is divided into three parts;

Which may be described, in the phraseology of Leviticus as follows: first, the first-fruits (14:1-5); second, the harvest (14:14-16); and third, the vintage (14:17-20).<sup>14</sup>

The first-fruits are the "hundred and forty and four thousand"<sup>15</sup> and are the same ones represented by this number in chapter seven. They are Christian Jews who have been translated and are seen to be around the throne of God.

The harvest is the translation of the Gentile Christians and is the Rapture.

The vintage represents the pouring out of the wrath of God upon the world.

These three events are fore-views of what actually occurs in the nineteenth chapter, the harvest being the actual coming of Christ for His saints and the vintage being the coming of Christ with His saints. Verse seven of chapter ten is the pivotal verse of the Rapture, chapter fourteen is the pivotal

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<sup>13</sup> Revelation 13:18.

<sup>14</sup> Frost, op. cit., p. 231.

<sup>15</sup> Revelation 14:1.

chapter of the Rapture, but both actually have their fulfillment in chapter nineteen.

With the opening of chapter sixteen the vial period proper begins.

6. The judgment period. The seven judgments. The first judgment is that of "mystical Babylon" or the false church and is revealed in the seventeenth chapter. Ancient Babylon, with its Baal worship is a type of the new actual Babylon, which is to be rebuilt on the river Euphrates, and which will contain every false religion that man can devise. Rome and Jerusalem will also be united in some way in this apostasized, mystical union. These three cities will form a trinity of cities from which Anti-Christ will rule the world. The first judgment falls upon this false religious system.

The second judgment is revealed in the eighteenth chapter and falls upon the rebuilt city of Babylon which will be the center of world trade. In the destruction of this city the prophecy of Isaiah<sup>16</sup> in regard to the destruction of Babylon will be fulfilled.

Following is a list of the seven judgments:

1. On mystical Babylon . . . . . 17:1-18.
2. On commercial Babylon . . . . . 18:1-24.
3. On the church . . . . . 19:1-10.

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<sup>16</sup> Isaiah, chapters 13 and 14.

4. On Anti-Christ and the false prophet . . 19:11-20.
5. On the nations . . . . . 19:21 to 20:1-9
6. On satan and his angels. . . . . 20:10
7. On the wicked dead . . . . . 20:11-15.

## PART II

### SECTION I

#### EXPOSITION ON MATTHEW TWENTY-FOUR<sup>17</sup>

S. D. Gordon

In his exposition of the words of Jesus concerning the time of great tribulation as recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, Mr. Gordon divides the subject matter into four divisions or paragraphs.

1. Paragraph one. Verses four to eight. This paragraph cautions against men coming under the pretense of being Christ and gives general characteristics of the beginning of the tribulation, which characteristics will include wars, rumours of wars, famines, and earthquakes.

2. Paragraph two. Verses nine to fourteen. In this passage Jesus told of great tribulation coming to His followers. These followers are Christians. The Church will go through

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<sup>17</sup> S. D. Gordon, Quiet Talks About Our Lord's Return, (new York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1912), pp. 30-46.

this time of trouble which will be a great time of testing and sifting, and will end when the gospel of the kingdom is preached in all nations.

3. Paragraph three. Verses fifteen to eighteen. This paragraph gives the opening event of the tribulation which refers to something or someone called "the abomination of desolation." When this is seen standing in the Holy Place of the temple of Jerusalem, that will indicate the beginning of the tribulation.

4. Paragraph four. Verses twenty-nine to thirty-one. These verses give the closing events of the tribulation which include the disturbances in the heavens, the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens and the sending forth of the angels to gather the redeemed from the four corners of the world.

## PART II

### SECTION II

#### EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION<sup>18</sup>

S. D. Gordon

Mr. Gordon, for the purposes of exposition, divided the book of Revelation into five divisions, as given in the following

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<sup>18</sup> Gordon, Ibid., pp. 114-144.

outline:

Introduction . . . . .	1:1-8
Vision of glorified Jesus . . . . .	1:9-20
Message to followers on earth . . . . .	chaps. 2-3
Group of coming events . . . . .	4 to 22:5
Closing personal paragraphs . . . . .	22:6-21

Of these divisions, only one deals directly with the tribulation period, thus was the only one considered; namely, "Groups of coming events." This division is further divided into an introduction and seven visions. Each of these visions covers the same period of time (the tribulation) but each emphasizes a different aspect of that time. Visions 1, 2, 3, and 5 close with a great earthquake.

Group of coming events. Chapters four and five are introductory chapters to the group of coming events. These two chapters describe a scene in heaven of great dazzling glory. There is a throne set and the One sitting on the throne has a sealed roll in His right hand. Only One is found who is worthy to open that roll and this One proves to be the Lord Jesus.

To understand the meaning of this scene it is necessary to study the symbolism of Jeremiah, chapter thirty-two. There allusion is made to the simple, primitive custom of the Hebrew people in the exchange of real estate. When property was purchased the deed to the new owner was made out in duplicate, an

open copy and a sealed copy. The sealed copy was the personal copy of the purchaser, and as such was proof of his ownership.

This sealed roll could belong to no one but Jesus, for no one else had rightful claim to it. "For Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with Thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation."<sup>19</sup> When the first seal is opened the tribulation period opens and Jesus begins the task of dispossessing the unrighteous people who have been in possession of the earth.

Vision one. Opening of the sealed roll. Chapters six and seven. The going forth of the conquering one is followed by war, famine, death, and persecution, and the killing of Christ's followers. This is followed by a great earthquake, and disturbances of heavenly bodies, and mourning among men. This is a final scene and coincides with the closing event of the tribulation period, as described in the Olivet talk.

Chapter seven is a parenthetical chapter containing the record of the sealing of the one hundred and forty four thousand of Israel. This symbolizes the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on all of Israel. The number, one hundred and forty-four thousand being a number of composite completeness.

The vision of the great multitude in heaven is a scene of the saved of earth after the rapture.

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<sup>19</sup> Revelation 5:9.

These two items in the parenthesis occur in connection with the earthquake and the shaking of the heavens. In connection with the closing of the tribulation time occurs this double event, the conversion of the Jews down upon earth, and the catching away from earth to heaven of the followers of our Lord Jesus.<sup>20</sup>

Second vision. Chapters eight and nine; eleven, verse fifteen to close of chapter. The seven trumpets. Chapters eight and nine contain a scene of great woes coming upon the earth. This scene begins with a period of silence that seems to answer to the hush of the great sounds of praise in chapters four and five. This takes the thought back to the same starting point as that of the first vision.

There is a parenthetical break running from chapter ten, verse one, to chapter eleven, verse fourteen. This section contains two subdivisions. First, in chapter ten there is found a group of three items:

1. The seven thunders that John is not allowed to record,
2. A solemn declaration that there will be no further respite, and
3. A personal word for John.

The second portion of the parenthetical section is chapter eleven with the account of the two witnesses. This proves, also, to be the third vision. The witnesses are not

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<sup>20</sup> Gordon, op. cit., p. 129.

identified with any special names or groups, but are evident proof that there will be an unbroken witness for God through the tribulation.

Both visions, two and three, end with a great earthquake in the closing verses of chapter eleven.

Fourth view. Chapters twelve to fourteen. This vision covers the same period of time as the other visions, but is a sketch of the career of the "lawless one"<sup>21</sup> of Paul's writings and the "Anti-Christ" of John.<sup>22</sup>

The woman of chapter twelve is Israel, who gave birth to Jesus in the person of Mary. The Church is the "rest of her seed."<sup>23</sup> This is a time of persecution of the Jewish nation, which continues for forty-two months.

The sketch of the career of the "Beast" is recorded in chapter thirteen. In him are combined all of the evil traits and all the power of the Evil One himself. The second beast is an assistant to the first, having great influence over crowds and doing miraculous things. This is a time of great tribulation for the people of God, the Church of Christ. It is the great testing time of the saints. Then right at the height of the trial, there is a new sight before the throne.

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<sup>21</sup> II Thessalonians 2:8.

<sup>22</sup> I John 2:18.

<sup>23</sup> Revelation 12:17.

A great multitude is before the throne surrounding the Lord Jesus. The thing that has happened is that when things are their devilish worst, Jesus returns for His own and has caught away His believing followers. This group is the hundred and forty four thousand of chapter fourteen. The end is quickly told in the language of the harvest.

Fifth vision. Chapters fifteen and sixteen. The fifth view makes up chapter sixteen, with chapter fifteen as an explanatory introduction. This view does not cover the whole period, but events near its close, therefore, chapter fifteen connects back to the tribulation martyrs and events of other views. Chapter sixteen gives the account of final events of the tribulation ending with a great earthquake as in other views.

Sixth view. Chapter seventeen. Mr. Gordon believed that the woman of chapter seventeen, called "Mystery, Babylon the Great" is symbolical of the external organization with the Holy Spirit having been removed. It is the tree of the Church, the Roman Church being the main stem, the Greek Orthodox being the first branching out, and the rest of the denominations branching out in order. The Church as an organization has gone over to the enemy.

Seventh view. Chapter eighteen. The last look is at

the city of Babylon. This is the ancient city rebuilt and has become the head of the religious system. This view closes with the final destruction of this city. The destruction will be the final fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah in regard to the destruction of Babylon.

### Conclusion.

The remainder of the book of Revelation can be quickly, briefly gathered up. Chapter nineteen begins with a great burst of praise by the multitudes in heaven. The Lord Jesus comes out of the opened heavens, riding to war against the assembled hosts of evil on the earth. A word from His lips decides the conflict, the lawless one and his court-preacher are taken captive, Satan himself bound, the resurrection of dead believers takes place, and Christ's own people reign with Him a thousand years.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Gordon, op. cit., p. 142.

## CHAPTER VIII

### AUTHOR'S VIEW

The author had no intention of becoming a setter forth of new doctrines, but merely to give expression to the conviction he had come to in an effort to harmonize the difficulties of the various views.

The Scriptures plainly tell us that "evil men and imposters shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived,"<sup>1</sup> and that they will get to the place where they shall be "denying even the Master that bought them,"<sup>2</sup> until the people of God will "be hated of all the nations for"<sup>3</sup> the sake of the name of Jesus.

This tribulation shall get worse until such time as it will be headed up in that one that shall deny God and set himself up as God. When the time seems hopeless for the Church and those Jews who, though they have never accepted Jesus, yet have never ceased to look for the coming of their Messiah, Jesus will come and send His angels to gather the Church from the four winds and they, the Church, shall be caught up to be with Him, and these Jews will look upon Him whom they pierced

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<sup>1</sup> II Timothy 3:13.

<sup>2</sup> II Peter 2:1.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 24:9.

and accept Him and shall go away into a place prepared for them.

Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, Jehovah cometh forth out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.<sup>4</sup>

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days.<sup>5</sup>

The nations will then be allowed to destroy one another in extreme wickedness until such time as God says it is enough, then will be a great earthquake, great hail will fall and Jesus will return with His saints to set up the millennial reign.

Scriptural evidence. The importance of the place in prophecy held by the words of Jesus as recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew is shown in the words of Dr. Frost.

The twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew occupies a unique place in the prophetic writings. This is the case for two reasons. In the first place, apart from the Revelation, it is the fullest presentation of the period in view to be found in the Word of God; and in the second, it is evidently the model after which all later prophecies, including the Revelation, are patterned, the mold into which they are run, the key by which they are

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<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 26:20-21.

<sup>5</sup> Revelation 12:6.

unlocked. . . The chapter then, has a paramount claim upon all students of prophecy.<sup>6</sup>

It has been noticed that when Jesus answered the three questions of the disciples, He did not explicitly say to which questions the various elements of His answer applied. He answered as if there was only one question to answer. Apparently He knew that one answer would cover the questions.

In reality, there were only two questions asked, as follows:

1. When shall these things be: (The destruction of the temple).
2. What shall be the sign of thy coming (παρουσία), and the end of the world (age)?<sup>7</sup>

Jesus answered the first question by telling of events that would come to pass, and did come to pass, in the destruction of Jerusalem. In this the Praeterist interpreters are correct.

But there were some elements of this answer that were not fulfilled at that time: .

1. The gospel had not been preached in the whole habitable world. To interpret this as meaning the then known world, is not sufficient.

2. At the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus did not

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<sup>6</sup> Henry W. Frost, Matthew Twenty-four and the Revelation (New York: Oxford University Press, American Branch, 1924), p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 24:3.

come "as lightning," neither did He fulfill the words of the angels as they spoke to the disciples who were standing looking up when Jesus ascended.<sup>8</sup>

3. The "elect," whether they be Jew or the Church, were not gathered by the angels from the four winds and from one end of heaven to the other.

If Jesus was answering more than the first question, His answer must apply to the second question, "What is the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world?" The "sign" is the subject of the sentence, therefore Jesus' answer must give the sign of His parousia. The sign of the fig tree is not sufficient to answer this question and to apply the elements not fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem. Therefore, it seemed reasonable to believe that the destruction of Jerusalem must have been a pattern or shadow of the events that were to come to pass preceding and at the time of His coming.

Of the various events that happened in the destruction of Jerusalem, one especially was of great interest. That was the escape of the Christians from besieged Jerusalem. Gestius Gallus first surrounded Jerusalem with his troops and laid siege against it with good prospects of success. At that time Jerusalem had many Christians in it. Then, for no apparent

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<sup>8</sup> Acts 1:11.

reason Gallus started to retreat with his troops and as a result was pursued by the Jewish armies and many of his soldiers lost their lives.<sup>9</sup> The Christians, remembering the words of Jesus, took advantage of the lifting of the siege and fled Jerusalem and escaped. After a brief respite, Jerusalem was again besieged by the Romans under Titus and not a single inhabitant of Jerusalem escaped. All either were killed or taken prisoner.<sup>10</sup> Therefore it can be truly said that out of the midst of tribulation the saved of the Lord escaped.

Another point that is of greatest importance in the interpretation of Matthew twenty-four, is the question of the identity of the elect. Was Jesus talking to the disciples as Jews or as representatives and seed of the Church? The use of the Greek word, (electos) has already been discussed in Chapter II. Another clue as to the identity of the "elect" was found in the chronological order of the calling of the twelve apostles. Jesus did not choose the twelve until it was very evident that the rulers of Jerusalem had rejected Him and intended to put Him to death. Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the fact that after Jesus healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath the Pharisees and the Herodians took

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<sup>9</sup> Flavius Josephus "Wars of the Jews" Translated by William Whiston, A.M. (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co. [n.d.] ), Book II, pp. 700-703.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Book VI, pp. 831-832.

counsel against Him, how they might destroy Him;

And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.<sup>11</sup>

Mark and Luke both record that it was almost immediately after this that Jesus, after spending the night in prayer, called the twelve.

Of the views studied, all except the Futurist Pre-millennial, Pre-tribulation Rapture group interpreted the "elect" to be the Church.

The preponderance of the evidence is toward considering the "elect" to be the Church. If this is true, then the coming of the Son of Man, and His sending of His angels to gather the elect is the rapture and the same event as that of I Thessalonians, the fourth chapter and the thirteenth to seventeenth verses.

With this as a key, the study was turned to the book of Revelation. Before entering a textual examination of the book of Revelation, a few outstanding characteristics of the book were noticed. First, there is an interesting series of "twos" in the book.

#### Of the faithful.

1. In chapters four and five are seen the twenty-four elders which immediately suggest the twelve tribes of Israel

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<sup>11</sup>Mark 3:6.

and the twelve apostles. These two groups are mentioned in this order in chapter twenty-one.<sup>12</sup>

2. In chapter seven, there are found two more groups, the one hundred and forty-four thousand of Israel, and the great multitude before the throne, of every tribe and tongue and nation.

3. Chapter eleven contains the vision of the two witnesses.

4. Chapter twelve tells of the "woman" and the "the rest of her seed;" both persecuted by the dragon.

5. Chapter fourteen, verses fourteen to twenty, tells of two harvests, or rather a harvest and a vintage. Another Scripture similar to this is found in Joel the third chapter, the thirteenth verse.

Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, tread ye; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.<sup>13</sup>

In connection with this Scripture in Joel, two more pairs are found, as follows:

I will execute judgment upon them there (1) for my people and (2) my heritage Israel.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Revelation 21:12,14.

<sup>13</sup> Joel 3:13.

<sup>14</sup> Joel 3:2.

But Jehovah will be a (1) refuge unto his people, and a (2) stronghold to the children of Israel.<sup>15</sup>

This harvest and vintage also parallels very closely the parables of Jesus in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, concerning the harvest of the tares and the grain; and the drawing of the net that gathered every kind, and the good was gathered into vessels and the bad cast away. If this interpretation reflects the truth as the Lord intended it, then the harvest is the Lord gathering His own, and the vintage is the casting away of the wicked. Therefore, in chapter fourteen, there is found, as in chapter seven, the hundred and forty four thousand of Israel and the gathering of the righteous of the Lord.

6. Chapter fifteen records a scene of a group that sing two songs, the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

It seemed possible to the author that these two groups could be, in all instances, Israel and the Church.

Two divisions of the book of Revelation from chapter four to chapter eighteen. The subject matter of these chapters divides very well into two divisions of parallel accounts of the same period of time. The characteristics of these two periods are shown in chart form on the following page.

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<sup>15</sup> Joel 3:16.

THE TWO DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK OF THE  
REVELATION FROM CHAPTER FOUR TO CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

<u>Section One</u>	<u>Parallel Characteristics</u>	<u>Section Two</u>
Chapters 4-11 As seen from heaven		Chapters 11-18 As seen from earth
Chapters 4 and 5	Introduction	Chapter 12
Chapter 6	Beginnings of tribulation	Chapter 13
Chapter 6:9-11	Great trial for God's people	Chapter 13:8,17
Chapter 7	Protection of Israel, and the Rapture	Chapter 14
Chapter 10:5-7	Angel bringing good tidings and warnings of judgment	Chap. 14:6,7
Chapters 8, 9 11:15-19	Great tumult upon the earth	Chap. 14:6,7
Chapter 9:13-21 Under sixth trumpet	Battle of Armageddon	Chapter 16:16 Under sixth bowl of wrath
Chapter 10:6 "delay no longer" To be completed in days when seventh angel sounds	End of God's longsuffering	Chapter 16:17 "It is done." Under seventh bowl of wrath
Chapter 11:19	Earthquake and great hail	Chapter 16:18,21

The Book of the Revelation. The tribulation opens with the opening of the first seal of chapter six. The fifth seal bears record that fellow-servants of those that had been slain for the Word of God were still upon the earth and were to be killed as those whose souls were under the altar.

Under the sixth seal were seen the signs in the heavens, and chapter seven tells of the sealing of the hundred and forty four thousand of Israel, and of the great multitude in heaven. The sealing of the Israelites represents them going into the place prepared for them. The great multitude represents the raptured Church of all ages including those who have a part in the first resurrection, for they are out of "every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues."<sup>16</sup> When did this happen? Below is given a table of parallel passages.

#### SELECTED VERSES FROM

##### MATTHEW TWENTY-FOURTH

##### CHAPTER ..

When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, then let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains: let him that is on the housetop not go down to take out the things that are in his house: and let

##### LUKE SEVENTEEN

##### CHAPTER

And they shall say to you, Lo, there! Lo, here! go not away, nor follow after them: For as the lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven, shineth into the other part under heaven: so shall the Son of Man be in His day. . . . In that day, he that shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house,

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<sup>16</sup> Revelation 7:9.

him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak. . . . For then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or here; believe it not. . . . For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

let him not go down to take them away and let him that is in the field likewise not return back. . . . I say unto you, in that night there shall be two men on one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left. There shall be two women grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. And they answering say unto Him, Where Lord? And He said unto them, Where the body is, thither will the eagles also be gathered together.

#### REVELATION CHAPTER SIX

And I saw when He opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; And every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth. . . . and every bondman and free man hid themselves in caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains; and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand.

With the Church gone and the faithful Jews gathered into a place apart, the scene opens on the beginning of the wrath of God. Chapter eight opens with silence in heaven for half an hour. No singing of angels, no rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Silence, Awe. For even the patience and long suffering of Almighty God has come to an end. In chapters eight and nine, and in chapter eleven, verse fifteen to the end of the chapter, the seven trumpets are sounded which bring woe upon the earth and bring the culmination.

Chapter nine, verses thirteen to nineteen tells of the great battle upon earth that is parallel to the battle of Armageddon, as recorded in chapter sixteen.

In chapter ten it is seen that an angel brings the message that there will be delay no longer.

And the angel that I saw. . . .sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever,. . . . that there shall be delay no longer; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then if finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which He declared to His servants the prophets.<sup>17</sup>

Also, in this chapter, John is given the commandment to prophesy "again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."<sup>18</sup> Seeing that John did not write another book of prophecy, this statement could mean that John is to give this

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<sup>17</sup> Revelation 10:5-7.

<sup>18</sup> Revelation 10:11.

prophecy again. Chapters twelve to eighteen seem to fulfill this prophecy.

Chapter eleven tells of the two witnesses who testify under great trial. The period of their testimony is a thousand two hundred and threescore days, or three years and a half. These two witnesses are, in the opinion of the author, Israel and the Church. At the close of the period of their testimony, their witness or influence is "killed" by official decree from the seat of authority of Anti-Christ.

Chapter twelve takes the scene back to the birth and ascension of Lord Jesus, for the woman "arrayed with the sun, and moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars"<sup>19</sup> fits the nation Israel better than any other one figure of history. Church history is not mentioned, but has come to pass between verses five and six of this chapter. Satan, the great red dragon, persecutes Israel and when she is protected by God, he turns to persecute the Church, who is "the rest of her seed that keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus."<sup>20</sup>

Chapter thirteen tells of the beast and the false prophet. The beast is the head of the world empire and the false prophet the head of false world religion. It is to be a time

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<sup>19</sup> Revelation 12:1.

<sup>20</sup> Revelation 12:17.

of dire straits for the people of God. Verse eight states:

And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, everyone whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain.<sup>21</sup>

Verse seventeen tells what will happen to those who do not worship the beast.

And that no man should be able to buy or sell, save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast or the number of his name.<sup>22</sup>

Chapter fourteen repeats the story of chapter seven. With the opening of the chapter, the hundred and forty four thousand are seen again, this time in a blessed relationship to the Messiah of Israel, the Christ of the Church. Verses six and seven mention the angel that proclaims good tidings and the warnings of judgment to come. Verses fourteen to sixteen tell of the harvest at the end of the world (age). The Lord gathers the righteous to Himself. Verses seventeen to twenty tell of the harvest of the wicked. This harvest is a foreview of the judgments as they are recorded in chapter sixteen.

The seven bowls of wrath that finish the wrath of God are poured out in chapter sixteen. Verse sixteen tells of the gathering for the battle of Armageddon, and when the seventh

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<sup>21</sup> Revelation 13:8.

<sup>22</sup> Revelation 13:17.

bowl is poured out in verse seventeen, a voice from the throne is heard saying, "It is done." Verses eighteen and twenty-one tell of the great earthquake and great hail that is the sign of the final culmination. Verse nineteen is a foreview of the destruction of Babylon which comes to pass in chapters seventeen and eighteen.

Babylon the system of world religion is destroyed in chapter seventeen and Babylon the great world commercial system is destroyed in chapter eighteen.

Chapter nineteen records the marriage supper of the Lamb and His coming to the earth with His saints to set up the millennial reign.

## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSION

#### I. SUMMARY

The purpose of study, as stated in chapter one of this thesis, was to arrive at a conviction on what the Scriptures had to teach on the subject of the "Great Tribulation." After the study was completed it was realized that the words of W. Graham Scroggie expressed a great truth:

No one mind, or system of interpretation, has a monopoly of truth, but all who are serious, devout, and studious have some contribution to make towards the more perfect understanding of the Word.<sup>1</sup>

Every interpretation studied presented some truth as well as some difficulties.

Some truths and difficulties presented in the views studied.

Praeterists. While it is true that the events that happened in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem fulfilled some of the prophecies Jesus uttered in His discourse to the disciples in the Olivet talks, yet they did not fulfill all of the details of that prophecy. As the Praeterists interpret the thirteenth to nineteenth chapters of Revelation to be

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<sup>1</sup> W. Graham Scroggie, The Great Unveiling (Glasgow: The Hulbert Publishing Co., Ltd., 1925), p. 79.

speaking of Nero and the Neroian persecution, this makes it necessary for the book of Revelation to have been written before 60 A.D., for it to be a book of prophecy. The book of Revelation was actually written approximately 90 A.D.; so could not apply to the Neroian era. (A.D. 54-68).

Historicists. There are many parallels between history and prophecy as presented by this interpretation. However, many of the points presented are weak in their application and deal with very small areas of countries as was noticed in the conclusion of Chapter V. This view does not adequately fulfill the prophecies.

Futurist: Pre-millennial, Pre-Tribulation Rapture view.  
The Futurist interpretation does give more adequate provision for the fulfillment of prophecy and, as the views of the Preterists and Historicists do not give adequate place for complete fulfillment, there must be a place in the future for fulfillment, if one believes the Bible to be the Word of God.

But the pre-tribulation view presents some problems of interpretation. The interpretation that the "elect" of Matthew, twenty-four; and Mark, thirteen, is Israel is very difficult to prove. If it does not apply to Israel, then it must apply to the Church, and the Church will go through tribulation.

Another point of difficulty is the question of the "tribulation saints." All of the views studied agree that

there will be saved Gentiles on earth during the tribulation. If the Church is raptured before the tribulation, there is difficulty in determining by what method they are saved. One of the arguments of this view is that the Church is to reign with Christ, and that the twenty-four "elders," of chapter four have crowns while the "Great Multitude" of chapter seven only have palms in their hands. But mention is made of the multitude in chapter twenty, verse four, where they are said to reign with Christ a thousand years. Surely, not without crowns.

Futurist, Pre-millennial, Post-tribulation Rapture. In order to solve the difficulties of the former view, this view believes that the "elect" of Matthew twenty-four, to be the Church. The Church goes through all of the tribulation, and at the end the Son of Man comes, takes the Church out of the world and immediately, or after a very short period of time, He comes all the way to earth with His saints and sets up the millennial rule. The Church is to go through such events as those recorded in chapters eight, nine, and sixteen of the book of Revelation. This is difficult to accept, because these chapters appear to record the coming of the wrath of God upon men and the Scriptures definitely say that the Church will escape the wrath of God. Also, there are no indications in these chapters that the saints are on earth at this time.

From the study of these various interpretations the author came to the conclusion that the Church will go through the tribulation, but will not be upon earth when the wrath of God begins upon the earth. There must be a distinction made between tribulation and wrath.

Author's view. In making the distinction between tribulation and wrath, and assuming that the Church goes through tribulation, but not wrath, some problems are solved. The method by which the saints of the tribulation are saved is readily seen. The saints are of the Church. This view harmonizes with the seemingly apparent fact that the "elect" are the Church, and yet the Church does not experience the wrath of God.

One problem that arises with this view is the difficulty in explaining the Scripture that states that the two witnesses after being "killed" their bodies are allowed to lie in the street of "the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified."<sup>2</sup> The voice calling them to "come up hither"<sup>3</sup> could be the rapture.

In summing up the complete study, the following words of Dr. Ironside are very fitting:

Others have written far more fully and more ably on this

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<sup>2</sup> Revelation 11:8.

<sup>3</sup> Revelation 11:12.

question than I. May it be ours to search the Scriptures daily whether these things be so, and to live in the power of that Blessed Hope.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Harry A. Ironside, Not Wrath but Rapture (New York: Loizeaux Bros., [n.d.]), p. 48.

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