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Hope of Israel Ministries (Ecclesia of YEHOVAH):

A Future Antichrist and the Secret Rapture -- A Catholic *HOAX*?

YEHOVAH is not the Author of confusion. He has not given us the Book of Revelation to confound our minds, nor as a Happy Hunting Ground for our imaginations! We should be very careful how we speculate or dogmatize about any prophecy that is as yet unfulfilled. The average Futurist cannot put his finger on a single prophecy in the Book of Revelation that has proved itself to him, by its actual fulfillment, to be the Word of YEHOVAH God. This article shows how this sad state of affairs came about, and how the Catholic Church purposely perverted the interpretation of prophecy.

by John D. Keyser

Many so-called ministers of God and modern "evangelists" have been busy in recent years, teaching with an air of authority that almost amounts to a claim of Divine inspiration, all about the "secret rapture" of the saints -- and what is to expire on this earth after they are gone. According to their theory, Yeshua is to come SECRETLY for his saints: they are to be caught up (raptured) to meet him in the air without the world knowing that anything is happening.

All who are unprepared are to be left on earth in an unsaved state; then an individual known as THE "ANTICHRIST" is to make an appearance on the world scene, assume power as a world dictator, revive the old Roman Empire as a ten-kingdomed confederacy, rule over it, make a covenant with the Jews to allow them to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem and institute Temple worship and, at the end of three-and-a-half years, break the covenant and persecute them. After seven years -- according to this theory - Yeshua is to set up his reign of a thousand years on this earth.

All these things are described in such detail that people are deluded into thinking they are actually taught in the Bible -- and even some sincere, God-fearing people have gotten the impression that the Bible does actually contain them.

It will come as a shock to many of YEHOVAH's people that not only is this teaching *NOT* in the Bible, but that it was originated by the Bible's worst enemies! If YEHOVAH's people would only study YEHOVAH's Word like the Bereans, coming to the Bible with an open mind, instead of coming with their heads full of the teachings of human and fallible men whom they treat as if inspired, they would not so easily be "carried away with every wind of doctrine" that blows their way.

And if they would only accept the teaching of Yeshua that "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit," or the warning given to the prophet Daniel that "none of the wicked shall understand," they would know better than to expect to get (to use an old expression) a clean bird out of a foul nest. The shame is that so many "ministers" and "evangelists" in YEHOVAH's Church choose to remain ignorant of the nest out of which the bird has come and so, "professing themselves to be wise," they proclaim their ignorance, as it were, from the house-tops. To these "blind leaders of the blind," it seems that ignorance is a Pearl of Great Price, and to offer them any truth on historical facts is an attempt to rob them of their Precious Jewel!

If any of them have ever read any of the writings of the Reformers on the subject of PROPHECY, they seldom betray the fact. Being neither willing to admit, nor able to refute the wisdom of all the mighty spirit-led men of YEHOVAH of past ages, our modern "ministers" and "evangelists" studiously ignore them and speak as if THEY THEMSELVES were the originators of truth, and wisdom had been born with *them!* To tell them the truth is to become their enemy.

The Historical Interpretation

When the Bible, after being almost unknown for centuries, was suddenly made accessible to all during the Reformation, the Reformers saw in it a full-length portrait of the great anti-Christian system known as the "Church" of Rome -- with the Pope at its head. They found, in the Book of Revelation, a prophetic account of the fiery trials through which YEHOVAH's church was to pass, and also of YEHOVAH's judgments on her enemies. They recognized the Catholic Church as the spiritual Babylon denounced in that prophecy -- and the Pope as the Antichrist, the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition. They used the prophecy as a "sharp two-edged sword" with which to smite the great religious IMPOSTOR which had usurped the place of the Church of YEHOVAH.

If we list and develop the above characteristics of the Antichrist, the following becomes readily apparent:

- 1) It will rise to be a great power after the fall of the pagan Roman Empire (after 476 A.D.)
- 2) It will be a geographically small nation.
- 3) It will rule over many peoples, nations, and tongues (it will be universal).
- 4) It will be headquartered in the city of seven hills, Rome.
- 5) It will be a religio-political entity -- a political city-state ruled by a priest-king.
- 6) Its priest-king will make great and blasphemous claims.
- 7) It will claim authority over all kings.
- 8) It will claim its power to change the holy times and laws of YEHOVAH as its mark of authority.
- 9) It will be an apostate church, that makes the nations drink her cup of apostate doctrine.
- 10) It will be a "mother" church, with apostate daughters coming from her.
- 11) It will be a persecuting power, killing the faithful saints of Yeshua as heretics.
- 12) It will hold power and authority for 1260 years following the fall of pagan Rome.

13) It will suffer a deadly wound that will end 1260 years of dominance and persecution.

14) It will be revived after the deadly wound, and all the world will wonder at its revival.

In this the "Historical" interpretation, the Antichrist was clearly not merely a single individual, it was a *SYSTEM* of apostasy and persecution that would hold sway for over twelve centuries. The inevitable conclusion of those who studied these prophecies in the Bible -- before and during the Protestant Reformation -- was that there was **only one entity** that fit all the above characteristics: the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church. Is it any wonder that the Catholic Church was so **violently opposed** to the scriptures being available for everyone to read for themselves?

The interpretation of prophecy as a foretelling of actual history which had been -- and was still being strikingly fulfilled -- was largely blessed by YEHOVAH when it came to light during the Reformation.

Now what could the Vatican do? She couldn't tear the Book of Revelation out of the Bible, so she had to find some other interpretation for this Book -- one which could provide her with an alibi and turn aside the accusing finger pointed at her. To accomplish this the JESUITS -- the most UNSCRUPULOUS body of men on the face of the planet -- set to work to find a meaning for the Book of Revelation which would side-track and HIDE the true meaning of YEHOVAH's prophecies. The Jesuits are men whose "moral theology" smells of the bottomless pit -- a body of men whom Loyola had specially convened to undo the work of the Reformation.

Because the Vatican's power was eroding as a result of the Reformation, it initiated what is now known as the Counter Reformation. As a part of this response, Pope Paul III confirmed the Jesuit order and convened the Council of Trent in 1545 to specifically deal with the challenges from the Protestants. Among the decisions made was confirmation of the idea that the Bible must be interpreted by the Church and in its tradition; and the Council resorted to strictly forbidding *anyone* to publish a book without prior censorship, and also prohibited *anyone* from preaching on the subject of the Antichrist. Of course, Catholic leaders also rejected the Protestant teaching that the papacy was described by the beast of Revelation 13.

The Catholic Church soon came to the conclusion that it would not be able to ban or burn all the Bibles, heretical books, and heretics that possessed or preached from them. This oppressive and crude tactic merely *confirmed* their identification as the harlot, persecuting church of prophecy. A new and more subtle approach was needed in order to effectively counter the application of apocalyptic prophecy to the Catholic Church.

One major identifying characteristic the Catholic Church needed to deal with was the time period of 1260 years that the Antichrist power was to rule, according to the Protestant Historical interpretation. There simply is **only one entity on earth** that has ruled for this length of time after the fall of pagan Rome, and that is the Roman Catholic Church. A new "interpretation" would have to be found that deflected attention away from the twelve-century papal rule of the Middle Ages.

The Praeterist Theory

Alcazar, a Spanish Jesuit (1554-1613), came up with the idea that the apostle John could *not* possibly foretell events which were to happen hundreds of years after his own time; that he was merely writing about events that were happening in his own day -- and that his Antichrist was probably the Emperor Nero or some other persecutor. This theory has been adopted by German rationalists and finds favor with many modernists in the churches of today.

In this view, prophecies in Revelation are regarded as largely fulfilled in the events of 70 A.D. when the Roman armies of Vespasian and Titus destroyed the nation of Israel. The Roman Catholic Apostasy is

not the subject of prophecy in this interpretation -- since it did not exist in 70 A.D. Rather, a Jewish application is often given to these passages. In Alcazar's commentary called ***Investigation of the Hidden Sense of the Apocalypse***, which ran to some 900 pages, the following points are highlighted:

- 1) Revelation chapters 1-11 describe the rejection of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.
- 2) Revelation chapters 12-19 were the overthrow of Roman paganism (the great harlot) and the conversion of the empire to the church.
- 3) Revelation 20 describes the final persecutions by the Antichrist, who is identified as Caesar Nero (54-68 A.D.), and judgment.
- 4) Revelation 21-22 describe the triumph of the New Jerusalem, the Roman Catholic Church.

Alcazar found no application of prophecy to the Middle Ages or to the papacy.

The Futurist Theory

Ribera, another Spanish Jesuit (1537-1591), went to *the other extreme* and proposed the theory that the whole Book of Revelation related to events that were to take place JUST at the time of Yeshua's return to this earth and was, therefore, still in the future. The ANTICHRIST was to be a World-Dictator who would appear at the end of this dispensation.

Ribera began writing a lengthy (500 pages) commentary in 1585 on the Book of Revelation entitled, ***In Sacrum Beati Ioannis Apostoli, & Evangelistiae Apocalypsin Commentarij***, and published it about the year 1590. He died in 1591 at the age of 54, so he was not able to expand on his work or write any other commentaries.

Ribera's theory came out within twenty years of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, which was perpetrated by the Jesuits in 1572. In the sight of YEHOVAH the hands of the murderous Jesuits were still deep-dyed with the innocent blood of the French Protestants when they gave their theory to the Christian world.

In order to remove the Catholic Church from consideration as the Antichrist power, and with the sole design of SHIFTING THE ODIUM away from the Pope who had held a festival and even struck a medal in commemoration of the massacre, Ribera proposed that the first few chapters of the Book of Revelation applied to ancient pagan Rome, and the rest he limited to a yet future period of 3 1/2 literal years -- immediately prior to the second coming. During that time, the Roman Catholic Church would have fallen away from the pope into apostasy. Then, he proposed, *the Antichrist*, a *single* individual, would:

- 1) Persecute and blaspheme the saints of YEHOVAH.
- 2) Rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.
- 3) Abolish the Christian religion.
- 4) Deny Yeshua the Messiah.
- 5) Be received by the Jews.
- 6) Pretend to be YEHOVAH.

7) Kill the two witnesses of YEHOVAH.

8) Conquer the world.

So, according to Ribera, the 1260 days and 42 months and 3 1/2 times of prophecy were not 1260 years, but a *literal* 3 1/2 years, and therefore *none* of the book of Revelation had any application to the Middle Ages or the papacy -- but to the future, to a period immediately prior to the second coming, hence the name *Futurism*.

Ribera, as a member of the Jesuits, was nothing less than a murderer in YEHOVAH's sight and, as YEHOVAH has testified: "None of the wicked shall understand;" yet thousands of so-called "ministers" and "Bible Teachers" today strongly maintain that Ribera's idea of a future personal Antichrist is the right interpretation -- and that the Reformers' view of the papacy as the Antichrist is wrong!

For 240 years -- from 1590 to 1830 -- the idea of an individual personal Antichrist to appear sometime in the future was the recognized teaching of the Catholic Church, while the belief that the reign of the Antichrist extended all through the Dark Ages -- from the fourth century to the Reformation -- was universally held by the Protestant churches.

The intent of both Futurism and Praeterism was to be diversionary, to counter or offset the Protestant Historical interpretation, and present alternatives -- no matter how implausible they might be. That this interpretation differed so greatly from that put forth by Alcazar and other Jesuits mattered little. Catholicism, the supposedly divine and infallible interpreter of scripture, was presenting two vastly different and quite incompatible interpretations of prophecy in a *desperate effort* to counter the claims of the Reformers.

Bridging the Gulf

Due to their vicious principles and their encouragement of treachery in undermining orderly and peace-loving governments, the Jesuits have been expelled from almost every civilized country in which they have set foot. Their odious record includes some one hundred expulsion orders issued by different governments. When they were expelled from Chile, Emanuel Lacunza, (pronounced "Lacuntha") a Chilean of Spanish descent who had joined the Jesuits in 1747 at the age of 16, came and settled in the north of Italy where he devoted the remainder of his life to writing a book entitled, ***The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty***.

Lacunza was, of course, steeped in the then current Jesuit teaching that the appearance and reign of the Antichrist was still in the future. To this theory he added his own touch that in order to make room for all the events which were claimed to happen in the future, there would have to be a period of time between the rapture of the saints and the actual appearance of the Messiah in his glory. He conceived the idea that

"when the Lord returns from heaven to earth upon His coming forth from heaven, and much before His arrival at the earth, He will give His orders, and send forth His command as King and God omnipotent: 'with a shout (in the Vulgate *jussu*, i.e. "by the order") with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.' At this voice of the Son of God, those who shall hear it, shall forthwith arise, as saith the evangelist St. John (chapter 5:25) 'those who hear shall live'" (***The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty***, by Juan Josafat Ben Ezra. Dublin: 1833. pps. 10-11).

This is the germ out of which sprang the entire theory that Yeshua was to come TWICE -- once *for* his saints, and again some time later *with* his saints.

Lacunza, largely in bondage to Catholic teaching, vigorously asserted that the Book of Revelation "is wholly directed to the coming of the Lord," and claimed that it DID NOT find any fulfillment in the facts of history during the Christian dispensation. This, of course, is a contention in which ALL futurists and Roman Catholics are in agreement. However, Lacunza was to some extent an independent thinker, and he gave expression to several ideas that could not be anything but ANATHEMA to Rome! He at least hinted strongly that the Antichrist would appear *IN ROME* -- and that he would usurp the place of the Head of the Catholic Church. He also clearly stated that the second beast of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation signified the priesthood, not of some false religion, but of the Church of Rome, which he regarded as the true Church. This priesthood, he claimed, was to apostatize on the appearance of the Antichrist -- just as the Jewish priesthood apostatized when they crucified Yeshua. Thus, according to Lacunza's view, owing to the supposed sanctity of their office, they would be able to seduce the vast majority of the Christian world, and would persecute the true saints of YEHOVAH.

But, most damaging of all from the Pope's point of view, was the fact that Lacunza ventured to call into question the teaching of his own church as to the individual personal Antichrist, with all the supernatural powers for evil which he was to exercise within his few years' reign. He actually BACKED UP the main contention of the Protestants that the Antichrist of the Bible was not one man, but a mighty system or body of men animated by one spirit. Speaking of the teachings of the Catholic doctors regarding the person of the Antichrist, Lacunza refers to their ideas as "so various, so obscure, and so ill-founded," and adds:

"Who knows, but all this variety of notions may have originated in some false principle, which without design, has been looked upon, and received as true? Who knows, but all the evil may have originated, in having imagined this Antichrist as a SINGULAR and individual person, and sought to accommodate to him all the general and particular things which we find in Scripture? This supposition is the thing which has rendered very many of the notices we read in the Scripture, obscure and incomprehensible, to my understanding: which has made things and notions innumerable to be imagined, which, *do not* appear from revelation, in order to supply the place of those which do appear. This, in short, has made the Antichrist to be sought; yea, and found, and **with the eyes of the imagination beheld, where no Antichrist was, and at the same time, neither to be seen, nor recognized, where he actually is**" (*ibid.*, p.92).

The childish notion that Mussolini, or Juan Carlos of Spain, or Prince Charles, or Bill Clinton -- or any other such individual -- can fulfill the Divine predictions concerning the Antichrist, was roundly condemned by Lacunza in words which modern "prophets of God" and so-called ministers might well heed:

"Seeing this beast (the first beast of Revelation 13) is by the confession of all, the Antichrist whom we look for, and seeing by this terrible and wonderful metaphor are announced so many things, so novel, so grand, and so stupendous, as about to happen in those times over all the earth, this Antichrist **ought to be something infinitely different, and incomparably greater than what a single man can be.** There is no doubt that in those dark times shall be seen, now one king, now another, now many at one time in various parts of the world, cruelly persecuting the small body of Christ. But neither shall this king, nor that, nor all conjoined, be anything in reality but the horns of the beast, and the arms of Antichrist.

"If we expect to see accomplished in one man all that is said of the beast, with all that is announced to us in so many parts of Scripture; it is much to be feared, that, all which is written will take place, **and such an Antichrist not appearing, we shall be looking for him when he is already in the house.** Likewise it is to be feared, that this idea which we have formed of Antichrist may prove the chief cause of the very great carelessness in which men shall be found, when the day of the Lord arrives" (*ibid.*, pps. 113-114).

The Two Witnesses

The doctors of the Reformation had unanimously pointed to the terrible persecutions of the Bohemians in Eastern Europe, and of the Waldenses in the West as pertaining to the events surrounding the two witnesses of Revelation. The long-drawn out agony, the burnings, tortures, and unspeakable atrocities committed by the brutal soldiers of one nation after another -- urged on in their murderous work by a line of Popes no better than the most bestial of the assassins -- took place over a period of more than three centuries, and ended in the wiping out of these Bible witnesses just before the Reformation. This, believed the doctors, was the fulfillment of the prophetic description of the sufferings of the "Two Witnesses" and their death at the hand of the beast.

The Jesuits had vehemently asserted that the Two Witnesses were to be two men who should appear during the reign of the Antichrist just before the coming of Yeshua -- and they were almost unanimous in predicting that the two had never tasted death. Lacunza *strenuously opposed* this tenet and argued at length that:

"From the context itself, it is easy to perceive that those Two Witnesses are as far from signifying two single and individual persons, as is the beast to whom they are opposed, and which is to persecute them to the death. It is enough to read attentively what is said of these two witnesses, from the 7th verse to the 14th, in order to perceive that **they are two pious and religious bodies**, or, as it were, **two congregations of faithful and religious ministries of God**, who, filled with the Holy Spirit, and guided by Divine Providence, shall oppose themselves to the abounding iniquity....These [continues the text] the beast shall furiously persecute, but God shall visibly protect them by wonderful interferences, until they shall have fulfilled the days of their prophecy, when they shall be conquered and overcome by the beast himself, with the universal applause and joy of the inhabitants of the earth" (*ibid.*).

A Square Peg in a Round Hole?

Here Lacunza is clearly striking out at the speculations of the theologians of his own Jesuit order. But, if he had lived today and been commenting on the imaginings of our so-called ministers of YEHOVAH and "Bible teachers," he would not have expressed himself in any other terms.

But, at this point, several questions arise that are not so easy to answer. On a number of the main arguments of the Reformers, Lacunza appears to be deliberately giving the Vatican's case away to them in the most obvious manner -- an attitude which appears strange in a Jesuit. Yet, on other aspects, he zealously maintains the Vatican's point of view. In a nutshell, what he does is to take the Reformers' picture and try to fit it into the Vatican's frame -- and the two simply do not fit!

Lacunza agrees with the Reformers in the following points (although without giving the slightest hint that he had ever heard of their tenets, or even knew of their existence):

1) That "the beast" or Antichrist is NOT one man, but a vast world-wide organization animated by one spirit and ruled by one official Head (i.e. the Pope) who was to usurp the place of the Head of the Church (Yeshua), and was to **have his seat in Rome**.

2) That the "two witnesses" **are not two individuals, but two bodies (or congregations)** of faithful ministers of YEHOVAH, who were to oppose the Antichrist, and were to be finally overcome by him.

How Lacunza could describe these events so accurately, yet fail to see the very scene he was depicting -- written in fire and blood across the pages of history -- is quite a mystery.

Then, with all the other Catholic theologians of the Ribera school, he maintains:

- 1) That the appearance of the Antichrist and of the two witnesses, and the fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning them, are still in the future.
- 2) That they will all be fulfilled in a very short period of time -- just prior to the Second Coming of Yeshua.

He then speculates that the whole career of the Antichrist will be run and all these prophecies fulfilled, within a period of time that will elapse between Yeshua's setting out from heaven and issuing the command to his angels to reap the harvest of the saints (Revelation 10 and 14:14), and his actual arrival on the earth with the saints.

An Inconsistent Position

There is an inconsistency between the two parts of Lacunza's picture -- which will instantly strike the logical mind. If, on the one hand, the whole prophecy was to be fulfilled in a short period of time, it would be more reasonable to suppose that it would be carried out under the control of one man (or superman) and that the Antichrist would be an individual world dictator. If, on the other hand, what was prophesied was to be a vast world-wide organization -- opposed by the witness of TWO CHURCHES OR BODIES OF CHRISTIANS -- reason itself would dictate that these would require some time to develop -- and that the prophecy must cover a considerable period of history.

Therefore, Lacunza's half way house is an untenable position. If he could have influenced the Catholic Church to accept the view that the Antichrist was a world-power empowered by one spirit, the inexorable force of logic would compel Roman Catholics to acknowledge that history had ALREADY produced one world-power -- and only one -- to answer the description. In other words, the Vatican would be driven to accept the Protestant viewpoint. But if Lacunza could induce the Protestant world to accept the idea that the Antichrist was to appear only for a few short years at the end of the age, logic would equally force Protestants to picture the Antichrist as an individual person. In other words, the Protestant world would be compelled to accept the Vatican's alibi. WHICH OF THE TWO, THEN, WAS LACUNZA'S OBJECTIVE?

It clearly stood to reason that Lacunza's book would not affect the beliefs of his own church. It would not -- it could not -- be read by faithful Catholics. It differed enough from the accepted teachings of the Vatican, that it was certain to be placed on the "Index" of prohibited books -- and none knew this better than the author. This, however, may well have been part of his plan. But if the book was not to be read by his own church, for WHOM was it written? Did he really expect that a book written by a Jesuit would be read and accepted by Protestants -- even if it came with the commendation of having been condemned by the Pope?

The "Decretals of Isidore"

For some four centuries before the Reformation, the Vatican built up her pretensions on what are known as the "Decretals of Isidore" -- a fictitious collection of Bulls and Rescripts supposed to have been issued by the Bishops of Rome during the first three centuries of the Christian era. These inventions "show" the authority of the popes of that early age and are alleged to have been the results of the researches of Isidore of Seville, one of the most "learned" bishops of the ninth century. Strangely, it took two centuries after Isidore's death for these writings to surface and become known to the world. In the general ignorance that characterized the Golden Age of the Catholic Church, the Decretals were accepted by everyone as authentic -- and men beheld with awe the autocratic power supposedly wielded by Peter and his immediate followers.

At the Reformation the genuine history of these centuries was examined and the forgery was discovered! The "Decretals of Isidore" were exposed as the most audacious lie ever palmed off on an unsuspecting world. Unfortunately, for four centuries they did their dirty work and the Vatican reaped the benefit. What the Vatican has done once, she always expects to be able to do again.

Rabbi Ben Ezra

It may seem to be stretching the truth to suggest that the book *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty* was published with the same goals as Isidore's work, but the facts point that way. Lacunza wrote under the name of "Rabbi Ben Ezra" -- supposedly a learned Jew who had accepted Christ as his Savior and was writing with the view of converting his Jewish brethren. As a result, readers of this book were under the false impression that "Ben Ezra" was a Christian Jew -- not a Jesuit! This is exactly what Lacunza intended people to think. How else could he expect his teaching to gain a hearing -- not to speak of being accepted -- in the Protestant world?

With typical Jesuit cunning and Jesuit thoroughness, Lacunza is hid beneath the cloak of the converted Jew throughout the book. Even the dedicatory prayer at the opening of the book is the prayer of "Juan Josafat Ben Ezra," the converted Jew, pleading with YEHOVAH to use the book for the "enlightenment" of his Jewish brethren. This "Jewish Rabbi" does not placate the priesthood when he adds in his dedicatory prayer the petition that his work would "oblige the priests to shake off the dust from their Bibles," which appear "in these times to have become, to not a few of them, the most useless of all books."

One might suppose that, fearing the displeasure of his own Church for his "errors," he merely wished to hide his identity under a "nom de plume." But we only have to glance at any account of the fierce persecution of the Jews by the Catholic Church in Spain to realize that a bitter hatred existed between the Jews and the Roman Catholics. Lacunza's guise of a Jewish Rabbi was, therefore, the one best suited to secure the *absolute exclusion* of his book from the Catholic Church. Lacunza's views might be tolerated if coming from a Jesuit. The Jesuits, within the framework of the Church, were allowed to air all kinds of views, but something coming from a Jewish Rabbi was certain to be put on the "Index" of prohibited books.

And did Lacunza really think that he could reach the Jews by pretending that the author of his work was a Jewish Rabbi? It is most unlikely that he did. The Jew -- even a converted Jew -- has a mentality of his own which would be futile for any non-Jew to try to impersonate. Lacunza was either ignorant of, or simply did not attempt to copy the peculiar workings of the Jewish mind. He was certainly ignorant of the writings of the genuine Jewish Rabbis, which any learned Jew would have made reference to. Not only that, but the Jewish world is too compact -- and the records of all its Rabbis too well known for any fake Rabbi to go far among them without detection. The unbelieving Jews would only smile at any attempt to influence them in favor of Christianity by foisting a fictitious Jewish Rabbi upon them! Indeed, it would have the OPPOSITE of the desired effect.

So, finally, there remains only the Protestants -- and there can be little doubt that this elaborate forgery was perpetrated for their consumption alone. To lay the groundwork and to get the Protestants dabbling in the theory of a future Antichrist was worth, to the Vatican, the vast amount of time and effort it required.

Had Lacunza lived to see his book in the hands of the public, he might have managed it in such a way that the elaborate plot would never have been uncovered. That, evidently, was his intention. YEHOVAH, however, had different plans!

On the morning of June 17, 1801, Lacunza was found dead by the river-side where he liked to walk. There is, evidently, no record of what caused his death. An abridged version of his book was first

printed in two small volumes at the Isle of Leon, Spain, in 1812 -- during the short period of the democratic Cortez movement, Spain's ill-fated bid for freedom. Shortly afterward, in 1814, the monarchy and the papacy regained power, and Lacunza's book was suppressed. And, as one might suspect, it was once again placed on the Vatican's Index of prohibited books and denounced as such by the Inquisition. This, as it turned out, was the best advertisement the book could have gotten during those volatile days. Immediately after the end of the Cortez period, a number of societies of young men and women were formed in Spain with the express purpose of procuring and reading "those books expressly prohibited by the Inquisition" -- of which they had gotten a taste of under the government of the Cortez. Upon finding the work of "Ben Ezra" mentioned on the list, they quickly made it their business to obtain copies, which they read with obvious delight. Soon after copies or extracts made their way into France and were read by members of the Gallican Church.

In 1816 a complete edition of Lacunza's work (in four volumes) was published in London by the Diplomatic Agent of the Republic of Buenos Aires. Lacunza's identity, though still hidden from the world under the nom de plume of "Ben Ezra," must have been known to those involved in its publication. Otherwise, WHY would the Diplomatic Agent of a South American Republic be interested in the work of "Rabbi Ben Ezra" -- a converted Jew? But, at a time when 95 percent of the entire population of South America was still illiterate and its infant republics were struggling to lift their heads out of the cesspool of Catholic depravity, an important theological work by a native son was something for all of South America to be proud of.

At this time the author's identity could not yet be divulged. Protestant England certainly could not be trusted to give an unbiased opinion of a book known to be written by a Jesuit. The author must, therefore, go before the British public in the disguise of the "converted Jewish Rabbi" -- as he himself had planned to do. When a sufficient number of the English leaders of religious thought had approved of the work -- or accepted its teaching -- and it was too late for them to reverse their verdict -- then it would be time to reveal the identity of the author and give "honor to whom honor was due."

The Canterbury Library

At a time when printing was still in its infancy, the production of a theological work in Spanish (in four volumes) was an important undertaking guaranteed to generate a lot of attention.. The number of people in England at the time who could read this work in Spanish was fairly small; so the number of copies required would be small, and the cost per set correspondingly high. When the four volumes were published, to possess and be able to read the work of this wondrous "Jewish Rabbi" would be quite a mark of distinction and scholarly snobbery among the learned in London.

As a result, there was one library in London that could not afford to be without a copy of this "new" publication -- a theological library that was -- and still is -- probably second to none in England. This was the library of the Archbishop of Canterbury -- maintained not only for his own use but for the whole Anglican Church and the people of England. We can be sure that if the Archbishop himself (or his librarian) did not obtain a copy, the Diplomatic Agent would make sure to place a copy at their disposal - - it must be available to anyone who might wish to read it at this center of theological learning.

Here, then, on the library shelves of the official head of the Anglican Church -- at the very CORE of British Protestantism -- we find these four volumes. The Vatican has done her work well. She has drilled a hole in the Rock of Reformed theology; she has pounded home the plastic explosive; she has attached the fuse; all is set for the blast that will blow the Rock into pieces. How long will it be until the explosion takes place? It may take years, but the Vatican has infinite patience. She is willing to wait.

Dr. Maitland's Bombshell

It took ten years -- a long time, some might think. But what are ten years in the life of the Catholic Church? Ten years is not really a very long time to produce a radical change in the thinking of a seasoned scholar and theologian -- to get the man who was in charge of these volumes so saturated with their teachings that he was himself propelled into authorship!

In 1826, ten years after Lacunza's work was published, Dr. Maitland, librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury, landed a bombshell in the Protestant world by publishing a series of pamphlets on prophecy. These pamphlets propounded the theory (already taught for 240 years by the Jesuits) that the whole book of Revelation refers ONLY to the future, and is to be fulfilled in a short period of time at the return of Yeshua. The Rev. E. P. Cachemaille of Cambridge, England, describes these pamphlets as:

"Energetically ASSAILING the whole Protestant application of the symbols of the Little Horn in Daniel 7, and of the Apocalyptic Beast and Babylon, to the Roman Papacy and Church" (*Historicism, Preterism, Futurism; What Are These?* by E. P. Cachemaille. 1929, p. 44).

"The scheme he [Maitland] advocated was 'even more Futuristic than' the Jesuit Ribera's, for he supposed St. John even in the very first chapter of Revelation to plunge in spirit into (but see the Greek) 'the day of the Lord,' as though 'the Lord's day,' spoken of in Revelation 1:10, could be the great epoch of the Lord's second coming and of the consummation of all things, passing over the whole Christian dispensation without any guidance for God's Church and people, and ignoring the statements as to 'things which must SHORTLY come to pass' in Revelation 1:1 and 22:6" (*ibid.*).

But what Cachemaille failed to notice was that Dr. Maitland was borrowing directly from Lacunza -- not Ribera. This argument about "the day of the Lord" is Lacunza's. And, in fairness to Dr. Maitland, we must believe that he was quite unaware that he was using the ideas of a Jesuit. He could only have known the work as that of "Rabbi Ben Ezra," a "converted Jew." The disguise had clearly done its work. But the force of logic **drove Dr. Maitland back to Ribera's position about the personal Antichrist.** Having accepted the Futurist teaching that the whole Book of Revelation was to be fulfilled in a short period of a few years, the whole idea that the Antichrist was to be one individual World-Dictator followed naturally.

Seeing that Cachemaille selected the argument of Dr. Maitland on the first chapter of Revelation as one point on which he seems to show some originality, we should check and verify that this idea came from Lacunza. Notice what Lacunza himself says on this subject --

"This divine book is an admirable prophecy directed wholly to the times immediate upon the coming of the Lord. The title of the book shows well to what it is all directed; what is its argument, and what is its determinate end: 'The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ' -- 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ'" (*The Coming of Messiah*, Ben Ezra).

"This title till now has been taken only in an active sense, as if it meant only a Revelation which Jesus Christ makes to another of future things. But I read these same words very often in the epistles of St. Peter and St. Paul, and never find them in an active sense, but always in a passive sense, and capable of no other than this -- 'The revelation or manifestation of Jesus Christ in the great day of His second coming.' With this single exception, the word 'Revelation of Jesus Christ' always signifies the coming of the Lord, which we are expecting...

"I say that this divine book is WHOLLY DIRECTED to the coming of the Lord...the very words with which, after the salutation to the Churches, the prophecy begins, carry a very sensible proof of this truth. 'Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also

which pierced Him; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen! Revelation 1:7" (*ibid.*).

These extracts should be sufficient to dispel any reasonable doubt as to *WHERE* Dr. Maitland drew his inspiration. If the most original idea he put forward was the idea of the first chapter of Revelation referring to the day of Yeshua's second coming, we find this exact same thought argued at length by "Rabbi Ben Ezra" and published in London ten years before Dr. Maitland used it. Obviously, then, Dr. Maitland's argument bears the imprint of the master-hand of Lacunza!

The Landslide Towards Rome

Almost immediately after the appearance of the first of Dr. Maitland's pamphlets, a Mr. Burgh in Ireland published a book on the Futurist Antichrist. This was along the same lines as Maitland's pamphlets, and evidently was drawn from the same source. But another seven years were to pass by before THE DISINTEGRATION OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY would begin in earnest. These seven years were needed -- both in England and in Ireland -- for the idea to take root that the Reformers had done the papacy an injustice in regarding it as the Antichrist of the Bible -- and that Catholicism was really a "sister church" and should be so regarded by the Protestants of Britain.

Cardinal Newman's book on the Arians of the Fourth Century, published early in October of 1833, appears to have been the first publication of the new movement for Reunion with Rome, the forerunner of the Tracts from which the Tractarian Movement received its name. The only publications preparing the minds of the English for a return to Rome that were written prior to Newman's book, and which might be said to belong to the Tractarian Movement, were Maitland's and Burgh's pamphlets on the Future Antichrist.

Dr. Maitland's theory of a future Antichrist was one of the main weapons used in the Tractarian defense of the Vatican from the charges leveled against it by the Reformers; and it was this influence that led Newman into the arms of the Pope. It was part of the "Faith of our fathers, holy faith" -- in other words tradition -- which apologists for the Vatican are fond of pitting against the teaching of Scripture, and which Faber enshrined in a hymn to be sung by "Protestant" congregations which he left behind when he, and seven of his monkish brotherhood converted over to the Catholic Church. The Romish monasteries and convents, confessionals, candles, incense, adoration of the host -- and other ritualistic practices smuggled into the Church of England and other churches, are all the FRUITS of this teaching that the Antichrist is still in the future, that the papacy is not the Antichrist but the true Vicar of Christ, and that the papal system is a sister church and not the Babylon of Revelation -- **and the end is not yet.**

There is an imposing array of names of Bible teachers -- Gaebelein, Panton, Scofield, Bullinger, etc. who believed in the "secret rapture" and the future, personal Antichrist. How can all these men be wrong? Because **none of them have found a "secret rapture" or a "future Antichrist" in the Bible by his own independent study of the Bible itself.** These "teachers" all come to the Bible with cut-and-dried theories which they have learnt elsewhere -- and twist and distort scripture to fit the theory. If the spiritual pedigree of these futurist Bible teachers could be traced back, they would all be found to spring from ONE SOURCE -- LACUNZA -- THE JESUIT! The Babylonish system of Antichrist, described by John in chapter 17, is with us today -- and has been since the fall of the Roman Empire. All that remains of Antichrist in the future is the final and complete destruction of his whole system -- pictured in Revelation 17 and 18. The "Rapture of the Saints" occurs in Revelation 14:14 -- and no where else in the Bible!

In what could only be described as a stunning reversal, Protestants have over time actually become the Vatican's greatest ally by spreading its Jesuit spawned propaganda. What irony that Protestants, who originally broke away from what they *clearly* recognized to be the harlot Antichrist led church of

prophecy, now champion the Futurist interpretation from high profile global ministries. Even most of the Churches of God have fallen prey to this aberration. The Catholic hoax of Futurism has, without a doubt, been successful beyond the wildest dreams of its Jesuit authors.

With the advent of the printing press in the 15th century, and the resulting explosive increase of Bibles accessible to the common person from Protestant sources, it soon became readily apparent to those who could now study the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation for themselves, that Bible prophecy identified by symbols a persecuting apostate entity generally known as the Antichrist. The following table shows the common elements from several places in scripture that aid in identifying this Antichrist power:

Characteristics	The Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2:3)	The Sea Beast (Rev. 13)	Woman On the Beast (Rev 17-18)
Source	owes his rise to removal of a hindering power	comes from the "sea," meaning many people (densely populated Europe)	arises in a city with 7 hills (Rome) and rules over many waters (peoples, & multitudes, & nations, & tongues)
Time of Origin	revealed only after the fall of the hindering Pagan Roman Empire	receives power, seat & authority from the Dragon (Satan working through Pagan Rome)	arises among the ten horns (divisions of (Rome) that will hate her
Religio-political Church-State Power	political characteristics not mentioned, but demands and receives worship	composite of Daniel's beasts, which are kingdoms, & wear crowns, that demands & receives worship	the woman is an apostate church -- the beast is the power of the state, hence this is a religio-political power having a priest-king ruler
Blasphemous Presumption	exalts himself above YEHOUAH	has a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies	full of names of blasphemy
Time of Dominance		given power forty and two months (1260 years)	
Warring against YEHOUAH'S people		makes war with the saints and overcomes them	this woman (apostate church) is drunk with the blood of the saints -- in her was found the blood of prophets, & of saints, & of all that were slain upon the earth

Great Power	has all power, signs & lying wonders	who is able to make war with him?	the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth
Demands Divine Homage	sets himself up as YEHOVAH, above all that is worshipped	causes multitudes to worship him	this woman is the apostate "mother" of harlot churches
End	the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, & shall destroy with the brightness of his coming	cast into the lake of fire	utterly burned with fire

The Jesuit-Inspired Futurist Deception Spreads to America's Protestant Churches and Seminaries	
<p>E. W. Bullinger (<i>Companion Bible</i>) C. I. Scofield (<i>Scofield Bible</i>) Oral Roberts Billy Graham Back to the Bible Herbert W. Armstrong (<i>Plain Truth Magazine</i>) Garner Ted Armstrong De Haan (Lutheran Hour) Oliver Green Beirnes' Brothers (<i>The Midnight Cry Magazine</i>) Howard Estep (<i>Prophetic Newsletter</i>) E. M. Ward Carl McIntire Hal Lindsey (<i>The Late Great Planet Earth</i>)</p>	<p>Dallas Theological Seminary Moody Bible Institute Trinity Broadcasting Western Theological Seminary Jack Van Impe Ministries John Hagee Ministries Dave Breese LaHaye Study Bible Grant R. Jeffrey (<i>Prophecy Online</i>) Zola Levitt John Ankerberg (Ankerberg Theological Research Institute) William F. Dankenbring (<i>Prophecy Flash Magazine</i>) Midnight Call Ministries (<i>Midnight Call Magazine</i>)</p>

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