

Chapter Nine

The Futurist Viewpoint

*Basic Premise: The Book of Revelation is primarily prophecy about the final days leading to the end of the world. Apart from those who hold a historical view of the letters to the seven churches, the Futurists believe the prophecies of Revelation are yet to come. They generally believe in a literal thousand year reign of Jesus Christ who will return to rule in His physical resurrected body from Jerusalem. They also believe in a rapture of believers before a seven year tribulation that comes before **Jesus' millennial rule**, though some believe the rapture is after that tribulation or in the midst of it. Thus we have Pre-tribulation, Mid-tribulation and Post-tribulation end-time theorists among those who hold to the Futurist point of view.*

Futurists assert that their perspective comes from a literal approach to interpreting Revelation. At the same time they accept that much of the book is symbolic. In this they appear to have a balanced approach with their viewpoint and have therefore found wide support in recent decades. They take the **statement from Revelation 1:19 that says, “. . . what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later”, to be their licence to divide the various chapters into different time periods. The letters to the seven churches describe the state of the church in the latter part of the first century. Chapters 4-19, wherein we find the seals, trumpets, and bowls, refer to a seven-year tribulation immediately prior to the end of the age during which God's judgments are poured out on mankind. Chapter 13 describes the final world empire represented by the two beasts. Chapter 17 pictures a harlot who represents the church in apostasy. Chapter 19 refers to Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon followed by a literal thousand-year rule of Christ upon the earth in Chapter 20. Chapters 21-22 are events that follow the millennium: the creation of a new heaven and a new earth and the arrival of the heavenly city upon the earth. The above summation with a few variations with regard to the finer details is typical of most Futurists.**

There is a great debate between the Preterists and the Futurists. Correction: there is a huge debate **between the Preterists and the Futurists. No, I still haven't got it right: there is a humungous debate** between the Preterists and the Futurists. Along with the Preterists, the Futurists contend that their interpretation of Revelation finds its roots in the ancient church fathers. They say evidence of this teaching, including a future Messianic Millennial Kingdom, are found in the early church writings of Clement of Rome (96AD), Justin Martyr (100-165AD), Irenaeus (115-202AD), Tertullian (150-225AD), Eusebius (~260-340AD) and others. If you check a few Futurist websites you will find these names are prominent. We will examine some of these writings to see what we shall see.

Type the following link into your browser if you are interested in personally accessing some of their comments: <http://persweb.wabash.edu/facstaff/royaltyr/earlychurch.htm>

The web page is entitled “Early Church Fathers on the Apocalypse” and it has links embedded leading to translations of the writings that are pertinent to this subject. First of all we will look at Tertullian, who did write something that could be possibly be linked to modern day futurism:

Tertullian *Adv. Marc.*3.24 (Vision of the New Jerusalem)

But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the

divinely built city of Jerusalem, “let down from heaven,” which the apostle also calls “our mother from above;” and, while declaring that our citizenship is in heaven, he predicates of it that it is really a city in heaven. This both Ezekiel had knowledge of and the Apostle John beheld. And the word of the new prophecy which is a part of our belief, attests how it foretold that there would be for a sign a picture of this very city exhibited to view previous to its manifestation. This prophecy, indeed, has been very lately fulfilled in an expedition to the East. For it is evident from the testimony of even heathen witnesses, that in Judaea there was suspended in the sky a city early every morning for forty days. As the day advanced, the entire figure of its walls would wane gradually, and sometimes it would vanish instantly.

“Even heathen witnesses” were supposed to have seen this vision in the sky over a period of “forty days.”

To my knowledge, this report of Tertullian regarding the vision he mentions is totally unsubstantiated. **He says Ezekiel had knowledge of this “divinely built city” but no hint of a heavenly Jerusalem can be found anywhere in the Book of Ezekiel for his writings clearly mention the fact that sacrifices for sin were to be offered in the temple he was describing (Ezekiel 42:13; 44:29; 45:19). The Sacrifice for Sin has been accomplished once and for all through our Lord Jesus Christ. There will be no going back to sacrificial lambs in a Heavenly Millennial Jerusalem. Tertullian’s support of the millennium and the heavenly Jerusalem is fanciful to say the least.**

Alternatively, if Tertullian was not equating the temple Ezekiel described **with the “divinely built city of Jerusalem”, he was simply claiming that “Ezekiel had knowledge” without any evidence to back his assertion.** This kind of exegesis is typical of many of the so called church fathers who derided others for their heresies yet became heretics themselves.

Concerning this example of Tertullian appealing to the authority of the prophet Ezekiel, in the course of my research I have discovered that this disturbing practice, which ought not to be in Christian circles, is common to this very day. Advocates of a particular theological bent are apt to give references in support of their position, either scripture references or references to other authorities in order to add credibility to their reasoning. I have found many examples of appeals to authority giving references to **certain ‘church fathers’ that** when you follow through on the suggested reference, the support is often **non-existent, or like the reference to Tertullian’s writing, spurious at best. They must be counting on** people being lazy and not actually reading the references and checking what they say about them. Or perhaps their ability to think logically is deficient. I happen to make a habit of checking out quotes and references and consequently I have on several occasions found them to be practicing what appears to **be deceitfulness. It’s a sorry state of affairs.** That said, we will follow through on these referenced characters and see what else they actually wrote about the Book of Revelation and the Millennium that the Futurists consider to be supportive of their position.

Eusebius is often quoted in support of the Futurist Viewpoint, mainly because of his mention of when the writer of Revelation was supposed to have been seen alive; i.e. post 70AD, thereby giving credence to the claim that it was written after the fall of Jerusalem and is therefore a future prophecy. However, his mention is but a quote of Ireneaus (Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 3:18), whose credibility we have already found to be suspect with his false appeals to authority. As mentioned in the chapter discussing the Preterist Viewpoint, Ireneaus is hardly a reliable reference to substantiate anything as he is a proven unreliable witness who is on record saying that Jesus died at around age fifty and claiming apostolic confirmation of his assertion. That said, what follows is what Eusebius wrote on the Book of Revelation and the Millennium. The context has him quoting the experiences and letters of another character called Dionysius who was historically recognised as one of the Popes of Alexandria from 248AD to about 264AD.

Eusebius Hist. Eccl. 7:24-25

Chapter 24. Nepos and his Schism.

1. Besides all these the two books on the Promises were prepared by him. (Dionysius) The occasion of these was Nepos, a bishop in Egypt, who taught that the promises to the holy men in the Divine Scriptures should be understood in a more Jewish manner, and that there would be a certain millennium of bodily luxury upon this earth.

2. As he thought that he could establish his private opinion by the Revelation of John, he wrote a book on this subject, entitled *Refutation of Allegorists*.

3. Dionysius opposes this in his books on the Promises. In the first he gives his own opinion of the dogma; and in the second he treats of the Revelation of John, and mentioning Nepos at the beginning, writes of him in this manner:

4. But since they bring forward a certain work of Nepos, on which they rely confidently, as if it proved beyond dispute that there will be a reign of Christ upon earth, I confess that in many other respects I approve and love Nepos, for his faith and industry and diligence in the Scriptures, and for his extensive psalmody, with which many of the brethren are still delighted; and I hold him in the more reverence because he has gone to rest before us. But the truth should be loved and honored most of all. And while we should praise and approve ungrudgingly what is said aright, we ought to examine and correct what does not seem to have been written soundly.

5. Were he present to state his opinion orally, mere unwritten discussion, persuading and reconciling those who are opposed by question and answer, would be sufficient. But as some think his work very plausible, and as certain teachers regard the law and prophets as of no consequence, and do not follow the Gospels, and treat lightly the apostolic epistles, while they make promises as to the teaching of this work as if it were some great hidden mystery, and do not permit our simpler brethren to have any sublime and lofty thoughts concerning the glorious and truly divine appearing of our Lord, and our resurrection from the dead, and our being gathered together unto him, and made like him, but on the contrary lead them to hope for small and mortal things in the kingdom of God, and for things such as exist now — since this is the case, it is necessary that we should dispute with our brother Nepos as if he were present. Farther on he says:

6. When I was in the district of Arsinoë, where, as you know, this doctrine has prevailed for a long time, so that schisms and apostasies of entire churches have resulted, I called together the presbyters and teachers of the brethren in the villages — such brethren as wished being also present — and I exhorted them to make a public examination of this question.

7. Accordingly when they brought me this book, as if it were a weapon and fortress impregnable, sitting with them from morning till evening for three successive days, I endeavored to correct what was written in it.

8. And I rejoiced over the constancy, sincerity, docility, and intelligence of the brethren, as we considered in order and with moderation the questions and the difficulties and the points of agreement. And we abstained from defending in every manner and contentiously the opinions which we had once held, unless they appeared to be correct. Nor did we evade objections, but we endeavored as far as possible to hold to and confirm the things which lay before us, and if the reason given satisfied us, we were not ashamed to change our opinions and agree with others; but on the contrary, conscientiously and sincerely, and with hearts laid open before God, we accepted whatever was established by the proofs and teachings of the Holy Scriptures.

9. And finally the author and mover of this teaching, who was called Coracion, in the hearing of all the brethren that were present, acknowledged and testified to us that he would no longer hold this

opinion, nor discuss it, nor mention nor teach it, as he was fully convinced by the arguments against it. And some of the other brethren expressed their gratification at the conference, and at the spirit of conciliation and harmony which all had manifested.

In the above passage we find that the Millennium Doctrine did not find favour with the writer and a conference was held where the issue was discussed. This resulted in a proponent of this teaching fully renouncing his stance. (As an aside: I love the manner in which they gathered to resolve the difference in doctrine.) It seems the brethren gathered together for three days and were all in agreement after searching and reasoning from the scriptures that this teaching was to be rejected. And this is used as support for the Futurist camp?

Eusebius continues:

Chapter 25. The Apocalypse of John.

- 1. Afterward he speaks in this manner of the Apocalypse of John. Some before us have set aside and rejected the book altogether, criticising it chapter by chapter, and pronouncing it without sense or argument, and maintaining that the title is fraudulent.*
- 2. For they say that it is not the work of John, nor is it a revelation, because it is covered thickly and densely by a veil of obscurity. And they affirm that none of the apostles, and none of the saints, nor any one in the Church is its author, but that Cerinthus, who founded the sect which was called after him the Cerinthian, desiring reputable authority for his fiction, prefixed the name.*
- 3. For the doctrine which he taught was this: that the kingdom of Christ will be an earthly one. And as he was himself devoted to the pleasures of the body and altogether sensual in his nature, he dreamed that that kingdom would consist in those things which he desired, namely, in the delights of the belly and of sexual passion; that is to say, in eating and drinking and marrying, and in festivals and sacrifices and the slaying of victims, under the guise of which he thought he could indulge his appetites with a better grace.*
- 4. But I could not venture to reject the book, as many brethren hold it in high esteem. But I suppose that it is beyond my comprehension, and that there is a certain concealed and more wonderful meaning in every part. For if I do not understand I suspect that a deeper sense lies beneath the words.*
- 5. I do not measure and judge them by my own reason, but leaving the more to faith I regard them as too high for me to grasp. And I do not reject what I cannot comprehend, but rather wonder because I do not understand it.*
- 6. After this he examines the entire Book of Revelation, and having proved that it is impossible to understand it according to the literal sense, proceeds as follows:*

Having finished all the prophecy, so to speak, the prophet pronounces those blessed who shall observe it, and also himself. For he says, 'Blessed is he that keeps the words of the prophecy of this book, and I, John, who saw and heard these things.'
- 7. Therefore that he was called John, and that this book is the work of one John, I do not deny. And I agree also that it is the work of a holy and inspired man. But I cannot readily admit that he was the apostle, the son of Zebedee, the brother of James, by whom the Gospel of John and the Catholic Epistle were written.*

8. For I judge from the character of both, and the forms of expression, and the entire execution of the book, that it is not his. For the evangelist nowhere gives his name, or proclaims himself, either in the Gospel or Epistle.

9. Farther on he adds:

But John never speaks as if referring to himself, or as if referring to another person. But the author of the Apocalypse introduces himself at the very beginning: 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which he gave him to show unto his servants quickly; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John, who bore witness of the word of God and of his testimony, even of all things that he saw.' Revelation 1:1-2

10. Then he writes also an epistle: 'John to the seven churches which are in Asia, grace be with you, and peace.' Revelation 1:4 But the evangelist did not prefix his name even to the Catholic Epistle; but without introduction he begins with the mystery of the divine revelation itself: 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes.' 1 John 1:1 For because of such a revelation the Lord also blessed Peter, saying, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my heavenly Father.' Matthew 16:17

11. But neither in the reputed second or third epistle of John, though they are very short, does the name John appear; but there is written the anonymous phrase, 'the elder.' But this author did not consider it sufficient to give his name once and to proceed with his work; but he takes it up again: 'I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and in the patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.' Revelation 1:9 And toward the close he speaks thus: 'Blessed is he that keeps the words of the prophecy of this book, and I, John, who saw and heard these things.'

12. But that he who wrote these things was called John must be believed, as he says it; but who he was does not appear. For he did not say, as often in the Gospel, that he was the beloved disciple of the Lord, or the one who lay on his breast, or the brother of James, or the eyewitness and hearer of the Lord.

13. For he would have spoken of these things if he had wished to show himself plainly. But he says none of them; but speaks of himself as our brother and companion, and a witness of Jesus, and blessed because he had seen and heard the revelations.

14. But I am of the opinion that there were many with the same name as the apostle John, who, on account of their love for him, and because they admired and emulated him, and desired to be loved by the Lord as he was, took to themselves the same surname, as many of the children of the faithful are called Paul or Peter.

15. For example, there is also another John, surnamed Mark, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, whom Barnabas and Paul took with them; of whom also it is said, 'And they had also John as their attendant.' (Acts 13:5) But that it is he who wrote this, I would not say. For it is not written that he went with them into Asia, but, 'Now when Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.' (Acts 13:13)

16. But I think that he was some other one of those in Asia; as they say that there are two monuments in Ephesus, each bearing the name of John.

17. And from the ideas, and from the words and their arrangement, it may be reasonably conjectured that this one is different from that one.

18. For the Gospel and Epistle agree with each other and begin in the same manner. The one says, 'In the beginning was the Word'; (John 1:1) the other, 'That which was from the beginning' (1 John 1:1). The one: 'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father' (John 1:14); the other says the same things slightly altered: 'Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes; which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of life — and the life was manifested.' (1 John 1:1-2)

19. For he introduces these things at the beginning, maintaining them, as is evident from what follows, in opposition to those who said that the Lord had not come in the flesh. Wherefore also he carefully adds, 'And we have seen and bear witness, and declare unto you the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also.' (1 John 1:2-3)

20. He holds to this and does not digress from his subject, but discusses everything under the same heads and names some of which we will briefly mention.

21. Any one who examines carefully will find the phrases, 'the life,' 'the light,' 'turning from darkness,' frequently occurring in both; also continually, 'truth,' 'grace,' 'joy,' 'the flesh and blood of the Lord,' 'the judgment,' 'the forgiveness of sins,' 'the love of God toward us,' the 'commandment that we love one another,' that we should 'keep all the commandments'; the 'conviction of the world, of the Devil, of Anti-Christ,' the 'promise of the Holy Spirit,' the 'adoption of God,' the 'faith continually required of us,' 'the Father and the Son,' occur everywhere. In fact, it is plainly to be seen that one and the same character marks the Gospel and the Epistle throughout.

22. But the Apocalypse is different from these writings and foreign to them; not touching, nor in the least bordering upon them; almost, so to speak, without even a syllable in common with them.

23. Nay more, the Epistle — for I pass by the Gospel— does not mention nor does it contain any intimation of the Apocalypse, nor does the Apocalypse of the Epistle. But Paul, in his epistles, gives some indication of his revelations, though he has not written them out by themselves.

24. Moreover, it can also be shown that the diction of the Gospel and Epistle differs from that of the Apocalypse.

25. For they were written not only without error as regards the Greek language, but also with elegance in their expression, in their reasonings, and in their entire structure. They are far indeed from betraying any barbarism or solecism, or any vulgarism whatever. For the writer had, as it seems, both the requisites of discourse — that is, the gift of knowledge and the gift of expression — as the Lord had bestowed them both upon him.

26. I do not deny that the other writer saw a revelation and received knowledge and prophecy. I perceive, however, that his dialect and language are not accurate Greek, but that he uses barbarous idioms, and, in some places, solecisms.

27. It is unnecessary to point these out here, for I would not have any one think that I have said these things in a spirit of ridicule, for I have said what I have only with the purpose of showing clearly the difference between the writings.

In this second passage Eusebius continues with the discourse of Dionysius, who after having refuted the private opinions of Nepos regarding the Millennial Doctrine, proceeds to make it clear that he is not taking sides when it comes to the debate over the validity of the Book of Revelation. He notes that Dionysius is reluctant to dismiss it and the reason he gave is revealing: it was on account of the fact that

many brethren hold it in high esteem, which seems to me to be a little man pleasing and not particularly forthright, OR he was employing clever diplomacy. He had already made a point of mentioning the fact that there were some who had already rejected the book altogether:

Some before us have set aside and rejected the book altogether, criticising it chapter by chapter, and pronouncing it without sense or argument, and maintaining that the title is fraudulent. For they say that it is not the work of John, nor is it a revelation, because it is covered thickly and densely by a veil of obscurity. And they affirm that none of the apostles, and none of the saints, nor any one in the Church is its author,

He then goes to great lengths to point out that there is nothing in the Apocalypse that has anything in it that would convince him that it was written by the same person who wrote the Gospel of John and the Letters of John. This stance of his is actually delegitimising the Book of Revelation as the commonly applied test to ascertain the validity **of any writings was to ask the question, “Was it written by one of the Apostles?” Only apostolic works were recognised as inspired, and so he carefully evades making a statement from himself and focuses at length on the differences between the writings of the Apocalypse compared to the Gospel and Letters of John. Very diplomatic and quite clever.**

He finalises his comments by confessing that he himself does not understand what it means. He “examines the entire Book of Revelation” **and proves that “it is impossible to understand it according to the literal sense”. Although he finds it incomprehensible, he says, “I do not reject what I cannot comprehend.” It’s hard to tell whether this last comment is his actual stance or that he is being obtusely sarcastic and is letting the evidence be the deciding factor in the ears of those who heard him. One thing is apparent, it is not a clear endorsement of the Millennium Doctrine, nor the Book of Revelation. So for the Futurist, this particular reference to an early church writing is not helpful to their cause.**

Yet another claim of support from the Futurist camp to quotes of the early ‘church fathers’ is their reference to the writings of Clement. On that web page entitled “Early Church Fathers on the Apocalypse”, you will find this link: “Clement’s *Paed 2:13*” in which the writer mentions the jewelled walls of the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21), however, if you read the article (for the sake of brevity I won’t quote this one) you will find it is actually a tirade against women wearing jewellery! So while it obviously admits the existence of Revelation and by extension acknowledges it as worthy of being quoted, it really says nothing of import about the meaning of the Book of Revelation at all.

By now it should be obvious that a major part of the humungous Futurist Preterist debate revolves around the doctrine of the millennium, both its existence and or its nature, and that this dispute goes back to the post apostolic church. However, the great debate in the early church about the millennium had nothing to do with either Preterism or Futurism as neither of these philosophies had yet been formed. The doctrinal dispute among the believers was all to do with their understanding of the Kingdom of God that Jesus had brought into being, a Kingdom that would be within your very spirit and soul so that your body would become the temple of the Holy Spirit. He had come in the flesh and was not returning **except to gather us to Himself in the air on the ‘last day’** (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54), having sent the Holy Spirit which He declared was better for His disciples (John 16:7). The Comforter would come and manifest the presence of the Father and the Son on the inside of the Believer (John Chapters 14-16). Those who grasped this spiritual dimension in its fullness rejected the idea of a physical presence of the Lord in this world as being carnal and thus they rejected the idea of a Millennial Messianic Age.

There are a number of passages in the Hebrew Scriptures that speak of a future time of prosperity and blessing for both Judah and Israel which are interpreted as support for Messianic Millennialism. (Ezekiel 38 and 39; Isaiah 65:17-25; Zechariah 14:16-21; Isaiah 2:1-4 and many others) Combined with Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 which both make reference to a thousand years being as a day (and a day

being as a thousand years), an elaborate theology evolves **that declares that mankind's time on earth** will be limited to seven thousand years, the last thousand being a type of Sabbath when the earth will be ruled by Messiah. A form of this kind of teaching was first found amongst some apocryphal Jewish books: in the Book of Enoch 91-93; in the Psalms of Solomon 17 and 18; in 4 Ezra 7:28 it says Messiah will reign for 400 years; Baruch 36-**40 declares Messiah's reign will last till the world's end.** Similarities to millennialism also appear in Zoroastrianism, a monotheistic religion which arose in ancient Persia around 500BC. We also find this kind of thinking in the New Age Astrology that speaks of the Age of Aquarius. Taking these apocryphal apocalyptic writings, referred to by Peter and Paul as fables (IMO), and **combining them with the Scriptures that speak of Israel's future restoration,** led the majority of the Jews to an expectation of a natural kingdom that did not have a spiritual dimension. They simply could not see what Jesus meant when He made it known that you must be born again. They were not looking for an out pouring of His Spirit that would literally transform the inner man. They wanted a king to throw off the yoke of the Greeks and later the Romans. They were not looking for a King who was going to throw off the yoke of Satan. Thus it is that Millennialism is known to be a thoroughly established theology rooted in Judaism, but not found in the Hebrew canon, long before Christ came and this was what was being disputed in early church times.

A central tenant of modern day Futurism is the belief in a secret resurrection of the saints (rapture) that is supposed to occur before the end of the age, prior to their Millennium. However, Jesus and the Apostles made it clear that the resurrection was at the last day (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54), at the end of this world (Matthew 13:36-43; 13:47-50; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Peter 3:1-13). Note that Jesus, in His explanations of His parables found in Matthew 13, makes it very clear that the wicked and the just are harvested TOGETHER, without any thousand year interval. This runs contrary to the teachings of the Futurists and is also contrary to a literal interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6.

Although the Futurists are quite right about many of the failings of the Preterist Viewpoint, their own viewpoint is also full of holes and completely unable to sail the seas of truth as it relies heavily on interpretation and is thus subject to the imaginations of man. The Futurist claim of being based on a literal approach is unfounded for they shy away from the accepted laws of comprehension and twist the meaning of the words in the very first verse of the Apocalypse that clearly speak about the imminency of the prophecy, an imminency that is maintained right throughout the Book of Revelation, an imminency that clearly indicates the time frame John of Patmos intended to communicate happened a long time ago, regardless of the exact date of when it was written.

By placing all the various visions of the Apocalypse into the future, the Futurist can deflect all criticism of their viewpoint and claim that it will all surely come to pass some time. However, the Futurists have great difficulty explaining away the fact that the writings of John of Patmos were to be understood by the seven churches that he wrote to. When he declared to these seven churches that these things were going to happen shortly, surely it was to be understood by those same churches that the message meant what it said and they were to expect the things that were written were actual events that they were going to experience shortly, i.e. in their immediate future.

Critics of the Futurist Viewpoint note that many people who are caught up in this interpretation find themselves constantly looking at current events and the present day religious-geopolitical scenario, trying to make the visions of Revelation fit with the contemporary news and consequently they are incessantly proclaiming that the end of the age is near. This has resulted in many date **setting 'prophets'**. Others simply say emphatically that we are in the last days. However, Jesus actually warned us not to believe the many who would come saying exactly that phrase (Luke 21:8), and he gave us some simple signs that would be in the sky. When we see what Jesus said about the sun, moon and stars beginning to fail (Matthew 24:29), along with the signs from Daniel about the antics of the last kingdom (Daniel 7:23-25), when these two things coincide, then and only then are we look to up in expectation of the consummation of our redemption. Then and only then will the Resurrection and Rapture truly be near.

Historically, the Futurist Viewpoint also has its origins during the Protestant Reformation and is also a response to the Historicist accusation about the Papacy being the manifestation of The Antichrist. In 1585, Francisco Ribeira, another Spanish Jesuit priest, became known for promoting this interpretation which is now accepted by most contemporary evangelical writers on the subject of eschatology. His interpretation was expounded upon and expanded upon in the dispensational teaching of J N Darby in 1830. It was Darby who promoted the idea of a secret Rapture followed by a seven year tribulation followed by a thousand year reign of Christ upon the earth which has become the basic understanding of the Futurists to this day. As mentioned above, some Futurists believe the Rapture comes in the middle of that seven year tribulation and yet others believe it comes at the end of the tribulation. Further divisions among them are about the thousand year reign of Christ mentioned in Revelation 20.

A very much overlooked factor in the Preterist Futurist debate is the reality of the origins of both these interpretations. The Preterist Viewpoint and the Futurist Viewpoint were both the inventions of members of the Catholic Community called The Jesuit Order, or The Society of Jesus, simply called Jesuits, which was founded by Ignatius of Loyola, born Ignatius of Loyolain in 1491. He created The Society of Jesus under the banner of Roman Catholicism with several of his companions in 1534 and it was officially commissioned and sanctioned by Pope Paul III in 1540. Right from the start they began ruthlessly taking over schools and colleges in order to change teachings. The Pope also commissioned Ignatius to reorganize the "Bank of Rome". Here we have an excerpt from The Jesuit Oath, as taken from Political and Economic Handbook by Thomas Edward Watson in 1916, p. 437

"I do declare from my heart, without mental reservation, that the Pope is Christ's Vicar General and ... He hath power to depose Heretical Kings, Princes, States ... that they may safely be destroyed. Therefore, to the utmost of my power I will defend this doctrine ... I do further declare the doctrine of the Church of England, of the Calvinists [sic], the Huguenots, and other Protestants to be damnable and those to be damned who will not forsake the same. I do further declare that I will help, assist, and advise all or any of His Holiness agents in any place wherever I shall be; and to do my utmost to extirpate [exterminate] the heretical Protestant doctrine, and to destroy all their pretended power."

A more complete version of The Jesuit Oath of Induction is recorded in the Congressional Record of the U.S.A. (House Bill 1523, Contested election case of Eugene C. Bonniwell, against Thos. S. Butler, Feb. 15, 1913, pp. 3215-3216) It can also be found in the book entitled, "Subterranean Rome" by Charles Didier translated from the French and published in New York in 1843. If you get to read the whole thing **it's absolutely shockingly evil**. The primary purpose of the Jesuit Order was that they become the Pope's Counter-Reformation agents against the Protestant Reformation. Their plan was and is to bring the **'errant churches'** back to the Catholic Church. With a boldly stated oath like that above, why would we receive anything from them as doctrine? Clearly the roots of both the Preterist and Futurist Viewpoints are seriously tainted.

In summary: Putting all the prophecies in the Apocalypse off into the future may make it easy for some to take this viewpoint onboard, but for others it requires a leap into the illogical and a rejection of what Jesus and the Apostles conveyed to us in the New Testament about the signs of the times immediately preceding the end of the age. When subjected to the laws of grammar and comprehension, the Futurist claim of being mainly a literal approach lacks credibility when it comes to the internal references about the imminent fulfillment of that which is prophesied. The Futurist view known as pre-millennialism that proclaims a rapture of the saints followed by a thousand year reign of Christ ruling the world from Jerusalem cannot be found in either the Old or New Testaments. To support such a scenario requires one to twist the scriptures and read into the passages a preconceived notion. And when its roots are examined, we find that the Futurist Viewpoint is the concoction of the Jesuits, filled with their nefarious motivations. Besides all the above, it relies much on the imagination and has all the hallmarks of a fantasy mystery. As such it should be rejected by all those who possess a sound mind.