

APPENDIX 2

Mammon and the Pretribulational Rapture

At the commencement of Appendix 1 we mentioned that “socio-economic” considerations would be in order in so far as those who embrace the Pretribulational Rapture is concerned—that time has come.

Prior to this analysis, however, I would heartily recommend the studies and research of one, Dave MacPherson, whose books have thoroughly addressed the theological, historic, and sociologic implications associated with those who affirm a pretribulational rapture of the Church, and why this doctrine is both devious in its Origins and ultimately damaging to God’s people (*The Rapture Plot, The Great Rapture Hoax, The Incredible Cover-up*, Millennium III Publishers, Simpsonville, SC¹).

The subjectivity of my analysis does not preclude that there are numerous evangelicals among the pretribulational camp who embrace the cross of Christ, know His grace, and **“look for a city whose builder and maker is God.”** However, the immediate and overwhelming popularity (i.e., during the last two centuries) of the pretribulational rapture of the Church, especially within the English-speaking world, and in particular, the UK and the USA, bears an uncanny attachment to mammon, abundance, greed, spiritual pride and a host of other carnal pursuits—all justified by spurious theological convolutions!

The “theological smokescreen” of dispensationalist’s distinction between Israel and the Church and its concomitant theological corollaries (e.g., that pertain to Israel’s sole involvement in the “Tribulation” and the Church’s absence from earth and in the heavens viewing Jewish chastisement; the “man child” of Revelation 12 being a “picture” of the Church’s rapture prior to the Tribulation; the doctrine of “imminence” and the secret rapture; of John’s view from the heavens in Revelation 4 as a type of the Church’s rapture prior to the Tribulation; the entire Tribulation being the “wrath of God” and, hence, believers are spared from such “wrath,” etc.) were, and are, being manipulated by theologians, evangelical writers, and ultimately, the “merchants of the earth” for ill-gotten gain, in an effort to secure and justify the West’s acquisition of the wealth of this world!

This author, for the past ten years, has agonized over the theological blindness that seems to have affected some of the most sincere brethren regarding their unflinching embrace of such a doctrine of the pretribulational rapture of the Church. In October of 1993 a prophecy conference was held in Sacramento, California at Capitol Christian Center. It was at this conference that one of the

guest speakers, Dr. David Hocking, who at the time was the “voice” of the famous radio broadcast, the Biola Hour, gave a sterling and inspiring address concerning Israel’s place in Bible Prophecy—while simultaneously ridiculing those who embrace posttribulation Premillenarian theology. He chided: “I don’t even eat Post-Toasties!”

This cavalier, nonchalant, superficial and ludicrous remark was met by hilarious laughter amongst this large, affluent, evangelical American audience—and by any stretch of the imagination they would be considered “affluent” compared to the vast majority of the world’s population. He concluded his deprecation of those who aspire to suffer for Christ in this manner by joining with his post-trib brethren if they were proven correct, and he awoke in the midst of the Tribulation—then, and then only, would he adjudge them accurate. In point of theological fact, Dr. Hocking considered those who embrace such post-tribulation considerations, at best as irrelevant, and at worst, as “spiritual masochists.”

Pretribulationists ignorantly and superficially point out that the difference between “us and them” is as follows: “We look forward to the coming of Christ, and, you Posttribulationists look forward to the coming of Antichrist!” This deprecating retort belies the clever disguise that most Pretribulationists view the “Blessed Hope” (as George Eldon Ladd brings out in his book, *The Blessed Hope*) as a Pretribulation rapture of believers in a secret coming of Jesus; however, the “Blessed Hope” is the “*glorious appearing of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ*” (Titus 2:13) at His second coming. Christ Himself is our Blessed Hope not relief from tribulation or the Great Tribulation!

Again, why is there this attitude, even derisive jest, held forth against Post-tribulationists, especially in the West, and specifically in America?

Listen to the antithesis of Hocking’s remarks in a published letter sent to Dave MacPherson (noted evangelical historian) by Ruth Graham, wife of Evangelist Billy Graham (excerpts):

“The news from around the world of Christians suffering unbelievably is bound to make a ‘pre-tribber’ do some serious thinking. Of course, I am sure they would say that the tribulation they have undergone is nothing to be compared with the ‘great tribulation’ and they may be right. However, I would rather prepare myself to go through the tribulation and be happily surprised by an unexpected rapture, than expect to be raptured only to find myself going through tribulation. Perhaps not a very scholarly way of approaching the problem, but true none the less.

“I was talking recently with an elderly missionary from China who told me that her greatest regrets now are not having prepared the Chinese Christians for the tribulation they would undergo. She said in her years in China she went everywhere teaching the pre-tribulation rapture and getting Christians to believe that they would not have to suffer for the Lord in that sense. The ‘great tribulation’ may absolutely stagger the imagination, but still there is only so much one person can suffer.”²

A mind-set has evolved within Western Christendom. It is epitomized within the American Church—especially its evangelical wing. That mind-set is rooted in a belief system, which evolved in the midst of the Industrial Revolution, birthed in the UK and ultimately disseminated by “spiritual propagandists” in the mid-1800s to audiences in the USA.

At its nexus is a Protestant belief (which springs from the eschatology of the West and founded within Catholicism itself) that the “blessings of Almighty God” can be manifested through material abundance, both for the individual, but primarily upon those states which enhance, embrace and endow its prosperity.

It is not surprising that a theological justification would arise during the Industrial Revolution wherein God’s people could handsomely benefit from the blessings accrued as a result of the technological advancements provided by “free and open” societies whose champions of liberty, prosperity, and spiritual rebirth should be progressive evangelicals who could stand at the forefront of such religious and economic vitality. Herein lies a most wretched deceit—for a *“man’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses”* for *“life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing”*—and those who seek after the provisions of this life, and justify their prosperity by distorting the Scriptures to validate their wealth, will one day discover that *“he who lays up treasure for himself . . . is NOT rich toward God”* (Luke 12:15, 23, and 21).

The West, and especially the Christian West headed up by the American Church—and here I would include every single wing of that Church (Protestant, Evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox and even aberrant versions thereof like the Mormons)—has so extended its theological tolerance for the “things of this world” that to contemplate any lack thereof through loss or tribulation is simply “theologically intolerable.” The exceptions to this tragic estrangement among the faithful to suffering are so rare as to be nonexistent—though, surely there are many who have not succumbed to the allure of the “Babylonian garment” (Joshua 7:21).

Yes, it was altogether acceptable to embrace and expand the doctrine of the pre-tribulational rapture of the Church to believers at the forefront of the West's prosperity. After all, how could a God of love, blessing (in material things) and deliverance (from the religious intolerance of continental Europe), set us as a "city on a hill" and then bring us to shame, through tribulation? Certainly the full concept of such a thought may not have initiated the doctrine—but its implications became altogether convenient and sufferable once believers connected the spiritual and economic dots. Now, you could justify both wealth and living—without condemnation of accruing your gain, while maintaining a semblance of evangelical fervor.

Unwittingly for some, purposefully for others (especially leaders—and most certainly for theological leaders) the theological undergirding of the Industrial Revolution and the accumulation of wealth by **both** the "merchants of the earth" (the industrialists themselves, the robber barons of industry—and all the "corporate greed" and avarice that comes with it), and the burgeoning middle class that sustained this final form of aggressive and egregious capitalism run amok, could now be substantiated by a pretribulational rapture of the Church. Her prosperity would be utterly vindicated by the Lord prior to any suffering or tribulation—she could have her cake and eat it too!

The success—as seen in the accumulation of wealth—is wholly embraced and sought after by the majority of the leadership of this American Church. But, as MacPherson decries:

"But when does success become greed? LaHaye (i.e., Tim LaHaye, writer of the *Left Behind* series) is currently suing fellow Christians over the *Left Behind* film rights! His lawsuit even states that he has suffered 'emotional and mental stress, including anxiety, worry, mental anguish and sleeplessness' (notwithstanding his multi-million-dollar evangelical empire—my parenthesis)—characteristics, as you can tell, of Spirit-controlled temperament!"³

Indeed, the multi-million dollar empires created by scores of American evangelical "fundamentalists" and Pentecostal, holiness and Charismatic Christians is unfathomable. How descriptive is Babylon's predicament!

"I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow"
(Revelation 18:7).

And listen to Isaiah's pronouncement against this "***Lady of Kingdoms***" -

“And you (i.e., the “daughter of the Chaldeans” or Babylon the Great) say, ‘I shall be a lady forever,’ so that you did not take these things to heart, nor remember the latter end of them. Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely. Who say in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children’; but these two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day the loss of children, and widowhood, they shall come upon you in their fullness because of the multitude of your sorceries (Note: This has full reference to the incursions of the New Age into the Church), for the great abundance of your enchantments. For you have trusted in your wickedness; you have said, ‘No one sees me’; your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; and you have said in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one else besides me’” (Isaiah 47:7-11).

Undoubtedly, Revelation 18 has this same “queen” in view as found in Isaiah 47. Never in the history of the world has there been such a nation as these United States of America and the Patriotic Church whose support she enjoys, which has not known the heel of a foreign conqueror nor been ravaged by foreign wars nor impoverished by what has become known as “grinding Third World-style poverty.” She has begot scores of children who have carried her message throughout the whole earth. She is warped by her science and technology—and it is this knowledge and wisdom that has twisted her capacities to clearly understand her own depravity!

“I will not see sorrow!” It is unimaginable that the Lord would allow the Church to go through any tribulation, especially the Great Tribulation! Dave MacPherson deplors the leadership of Pretribulationism in this capacity:

“They (the leadership of the Pretribulationist theology—my parenthesis) don’t care that the late Corrie ten Boom stated in a published article that pretrib leaders are ‘the false teachers Jesus was warning us to expect in the latter days’ and that pretrib caused the deaths of ‘millions’ of Chinese Christians when the Communists took over China! And they don’t care that the dishonest pretrib theory they peddle for money in fact makes them accessories to the past, present, and future mass-murder of fellow believers.”⁴

MacPherson’s exposures of scores of money-grubbing, plagiarist evangelicals (soundly documented) who have stolen the writings of other brethren to be their own, with profit in mind, demonstrates that this power and wealth

gospel has infiltrated into nearly every nook and cranny of the American Church! The tyrannical hold and influence that the King of Tyre has upon American Christianity is through this gospel of wealth and prosperity—be it manifested in the “Prayer of Jabez-syndrome” or in the “Brag it and Bag it” gospel of the Word-Faith Movement; be it in the occultist visualizations within the “Power of Positive Thinking” or the Theocratic State wherein they proclaim that the “wealth of the wicked has been laid up for the righteous!”

Well did Jeremiah foresee the demise of these egregious prophetic phenomena:

“As a cage is full of birds, so their houses are full of deceit. Therefore they have become great and grown rich. They have grown fat, they are sleek; yes, they surpass (or “overlook”) the deeds of the wicked; they do not plead the cause, the cause of the fatherless; yet they prosper, and the right of the needy they do not defend. Shall I not punish them for these things?’ says the Lord. ‘Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?’ An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?’” (Jeremiah 5:27-31) (My underscore).

It is impossible to disassociate, after years of study, historic research and the pure, unadulterated contemporary knowledge conveyed through a multiplicity of media expressions, the doctrine of the pre-tribulational rapture from the wealth of the West, and its current leadership, the United States of America. John Nelson Darby found fertile ground in America to perpetuate his doctrine of the pre-trib rapture of the Church; and his salesman, C. I. Scofield, was more than able to popularize it all the more, because the American Church was altogether predisposed to its allure and false hope.

The unmitigated accumulation of wealth within every branch of the American Church—be it justified by the Post-millenarian/Amillenarian Kingdom Now/Theocratic State or Pre-Tribulational Premillenarian forms of capitalism—are in sum and substance, an abomination to the Lord of Hosts and a detriment to God’s people both now and in the immediate tribulational future! This shameless gravitation to wealth and prosperity—this pervasive influence that commercialism has had upon every expression of the Church universal in the USA; and the doctrines that exonerate those who would financially benefit from such accumulations of wealth—is so repugnant before the Lord, that the pretribulational attempts to differentiate themselves as distinct (i.e., they are the Church in Philadelphia) from the deplorable condition of their Laodicean brethren,

disintegrates into theological shambles when the façade of their true condition is exposed:

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot, I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent” (Revelation 3:15-19).

Brethren in the Third World, in the main, have little problem recognizing whereof we speak when confronted with the facts—their suffering cries out against the Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Church! Why? Because they know the meaning of sorrow, depravity, loss, suffering, war, death, famine, nakedness, isolation, disease, rejection, impoverishment and everything that SHE has not known! Yes, they recognize so clearly that she *“sits a queen”* – no, they have utterly no problem seeing her!

The height of hypocrisy is when the believing Church affirms her heavenly character, while building her barns and expanding her “empires” upon this earth. Somehow the dispensationalists who view the Church in Philadelphia as the end-time church characterized by revival and the Laodicean Church as the apostate “church” just prior to the “Rapture” have entered into their worst nightmare. They, blinded by their wealth (and they are truly blinded because they have little awareness—or refuse to acknowledge—the blighted conditions outside of *“The Lady of Kingdoms”*), stagger on into their certain “Great Escape” future, oblivious to their wretched state, blinded by their pride, wealth, and security.

No wonder that these millenarians, so entrenched in this world’s niceties, find themselves in full cooperation with social reformers and Kingdom Now theocrats—walking hand in hand down the primrose path to destruction. It is inconceivable to them that God would allow such destruction to come upon them—perhaps, though reluctantly, as a nation, but never personally. To contemplate such is naught but a theological impossibility (for they “literally” affirm God would never allow it to happen).

Ceaselessly does one hear the vacuous verbiage and blather of the Laodicean: There’s nothing wrong with wealth. Abraham was blessed with

material blessing in order to bless others—even so, we as Christians can do and have the same—that’s the will of God. God would have His servants prosper. After all, the ***“wealth of the wicked is laid up for the righteous.”*** I would that you would prosper, body, and soul, and spirit. God does not want us to suffer needlessly. God will bless those who give, who tithe, and who support this church, that ministry. Bless the Lord with your wealth. “Create wealth” – make wealth and with your wealth, give to the Lord’s work! It is the “love of money” – not money itself that is the root of all evil; therefore, “professional money management” is the responsible thing to do as a Christian, *ad nauseam, ad infinitum*.

My Premillenarian brethren who espouse the doctrine of the pretribulational rapture of the Church, and do so without guile, have little historic understanding as to its basis (or, if they do, refuse to confront its historic deceptions), nor of its beguiling propagation; and most certainly know not how the merchants of the earth have utilized its deceptions to their advantage. If the truth be known of those who have grossly benefited from this doctrines’ propagation, and for profit have they so prophesied, then would the words of Jeremiah resound in their ears and perchance these false prophets would be unveiled for the charlatans they are before the eyes of the innocent:

“My heart within me is broken because of the prophets . . . for both the prophet and the priest are profane . . . also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: they commit adultery and walk in lies; they also strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah . . . do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord. They continually say to those who despise Me, ‘The Lord has said, ‘You shall have peace’; and to everyone who walks according to the imagination of his own heart, they say, ‘No evil shall come upon you.’ For who has stood in the counsel of the Lord, and has perceived and heard His word? Who has marked His word and heard it? Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord has gone forth in fury—a violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. IN THE LATTER DAYS (my caps) you will understand it perfectly. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings” (Jeremiah 23:9-22, excerpts).

“I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal . . . Is not My word like a fire? Says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, says the Lord, who steal My words every one from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets, says the Lord, who use their tongues and say, ‘He says.’ ‘Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams,’ says the Lord, ‘and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all,’ says the Lord” (Jeremiah 23:25-32, excerpts).

“Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit!” (Jude 11).

Again, allow me to encourage our readers to seek out the truth of this matter and to confirm its research through those whom I have cited in this appendix, and through ardent research of God’s Word, the Holy Scriptures. The underlying theological underpinnings of the pretribulational rapture, secret rapture, and the complimentary doctrines of imminence and the illusory singularity of the Church in the heavens while Israel is chastised upon the earth during the Seventieth Week of Daniel, are fraught with historic discrepancies, theological subterfuge, and the insidious nature of mammon’s deceit. The seeming benign enjoyment of this world’s pleasures and the alleged, yet well deserved, wealth that befits “children of the kingdom” are a falsehood of immense theological distortion. The “mind” of the Christian is enjoined to the following:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible (i.e., “imperishable”) and undefiled and that does not fade away, RESERVED IN HEAVEN for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (I Peter 1:3-5).

The believer’s “*inheritance*” is NOT of this world, nor of the “*deceitfulness of riches*” (Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:19) but is “*reserved in heaven*

for you who are kept by the power of God through faith.” Furthermore, and in light of this incorruptible and undefiled inheritance that does not fade away, we are emboldened to the following:

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved (i.e., “distressed”) by VARIOUS TRIALS, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him (no occult “visualization” alluded to here!), yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls. Of THIS SALVATION the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you” (I Peter 1:6-10) (my caps).

And, the obvious has befallen those who even name the Name above all names and lay claim to the lottery of this world’s riches, having by their very practice fulfilled the words of Peter:

“They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor (who sold his prophetic gift for gain), who LOVED THE WAGES of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity; a dumb donkey speaking with a man’s voice restrained the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water; clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage” (II Peter 2:14b-19).

From his prison in Rome, cir. A.D. 61, Paul exemplified the very Savior Who had captured him to preach *“the unsearchable riches of Christ”* and to be the “Apostles to the Gentiles.” Here is one who considered:

“. . . what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ, yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have SUFFERED THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS, and count them as

rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith” (Philippians 3:7-9).

It is not, most assuredly, that they who equip themselves with a “mind to suffer” on behalf of Christ should wholly embrace a doctrine of Post-tribulational eschatology—for doctrines do not save us, Christ does! Yet, let this be the sole basis of our common faith and heritage, for all of us who claim the Name above all names must rivet our attention upon Him . . .

“Who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:6-8).

It is ***“this mind” “which was also in Christ Jesus”*** that is to be in us who believe. It is ***“this mind”*** which confirms that . . . ***“The trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1:7).*** Brethren, consider Him ***“Who endured”*** – and then you will see how they ***“overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their ‘soul-lives’ unto the death” (Revelation 12:10).***

