

Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 9/1–2 (1998): 71–95.
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Two Hundred Years from Lacunza: The Impact of His Eschatological Thought on Prophetic Studies and Modern Futurism

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The Jesuit priest Manuel de Lacunza y Díaz (1731-1801), was born in Santiago de Chile and died in Imola, Italy. He wrote a book under the pseudonym Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, posthumously published: *La venida del Mesías en gloria y magestad. Observaciones de Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, hebreo-cristiano: dirigidas al sacerdote cristófilo*.¹ In 1791 he completed this famous work, which he began around 1775. Lacunza's work had a great impact on the ferment of prophetic studies at the beginning of the nineteenth century, since his work spoke about the premillennial advent of Christ, and was studied by the British millenarians. His work was key to the introduction of futurism in the field of prophetic apocalypticism in the early nineteenth century.²

¹ The first Spanish edition was printed in Cádiz, Spain, around 1812. In 1816, a complete edition in Spanish of 1500 copies of Lacunza's work in four volumes was published in London by the Diplomatic Agent of the Argentinian Republic, Manuel Belgrano, without the author's name, as *La venida del Mesías en gloria y magestad. Observaciones de Juan Josaphat Ben-Ezra, hebreo-cristiano: dirigidas al sacerdote cristófilo*, 4 vols. (Londres: Carlos Wood, 1816). There is another Spanish edition in three volumes (London: Ackermann, Strand, 1826). The work was translated into Italian, English and French. The English version was translated by Edward Irving: *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty. By Juan Josaphat Ben-Ezra, a Converted Jew*, 2 vols. (London: L. B. Seeley and Son, 1827). Irving's translation was published from the 1812 Cádiz printing, but checked with the 1826 Ackermann edition. See LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*. 4 vols. (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1946-1954), 3:313, 314. For versions in other languages, see Daniel Hammerly Dupuy, *Defensores latinoamericanos de una gran esperanza* (Florida, Buenos Aires: Casa Editora Sudamericana, 1954), 85-95.

² In this paper, all the quotations of *La venida del Mesías* are taken from the 1816 edition and the 1826 edition, both printed in Spanish in London. First, we will give the page numbering from the 1816 edition, and between brackets the page number from the 1826 edition. See also n. 48.

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Throughout his work, Lacunza called attention to the prophetic predictions of the Old Testament, Paul, and John, and sounded out once again “the prophetic warning and appeal that had too long been silenced by force . . . and the light of the premillennial second advent broke upon him in all its impelling grandeur and simplicity.”³

In the realm of studies about the second coming and the millennium, we can no more ignore Lacunza, than we can ignore Kant’s impact on modern philosophy. His voluminous treatise was investigated at the Albury Park Conferences and at Powerscourt house, and it deserves to be remembered.

It may be interesting to know that the pen-name he choose, Juan Josaphat Ben Ezra, was not *per se* a fictitious name chosen to conceal his true identity as a Jesuit and thus make his writings more palatable to Protestant readers.⁴ I presume it alludes to the great medieval rabbi Abraham ben Meier ben Ezra, a biblical scholar whose rabbinic exegesis was not allegorical or spiritual.

It is also an enigma why he doesn’t say anything at all about the Protestants when he mentions the false religions, including Mohammedanism.⁵

Historical Background to the Inroads of Futurism

Since futurism took root in the Protestant church nearly two centuries ago, we first need to have an overview of its development before the nineteenth cen-

³ Froom, 3:303.

⁴ This is what Kimball says, but I can’t agree with Kimball on this. Lacunza never speaks about Protestants in all his work, in spite of the fact that he was a Jesuit. He chose this pen-name for other reasons, as we can see when we read his work. See William R. Kimball, *The Rapture: A Question of Time* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 32.

⁵ Abrahám ben Meir ben Ezra, or Ezra Ben Abraham Ben Mazhir, was a rabbi and Jewish exegete born in Toledo, Spain, around 1092, whom the Jews called the Wise, the Great, the Admirable. They consider him to be the true founder of rationalist exegesis. He was contemporary with Maimónides, and exegesis was one of his specialties. He was a Bible interpreter and wrote a commentary on the Old Testament in 24 books. He opened the way to grammatical exegesis. He assumed the title of *gaon*, a formal title of the heads of Sura and Pumbedita in Babylonia. The *geonim* were recognized by the Jews as the highest authority of instruction from the end of the sixth century to the middle of the 11th. In the 12th and 13th centuries the title of *gaon* was also used by the heads of academies in Bagdad, Damascus, and Egypt. See *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada Europeo-Americana* (Barcelona: Hijos de J. Espasa) 1:309; *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 14 vols. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), 7:314-324.

According to M. Góngora, Lacunza acknowledges that he has borrowed the name of Ben Ezra as a pseudonym of his book because he was “one of the more learned and judicious rabbis” and also because “he was Spanish and he wrote when he was in the exile”. See, “Memorial del 12 de noviembre de 1788 al ministro español Antonio Porlier,” published by M. Góngora, *La revista chilena de historia y geografía* 123 (1954-55): 247-251. See Fredy Omar Parra Carrasco, *Pensamiento teológico en Chile: contribución a su estudio. V. El reino que ha de venir: historia y esperanza en la obra de Manuel Lacunza* (Santiago de Chile: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 1993), 47.

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ture, when Lacunza's work became widely known in Latin America and Europe.⁶

We are living at the end of the twentieth century and on the threshold of the third millennium, when futurism, the prevailing school of interpretation of the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, plays a significant role in today's eschatological views.⁷ Two centuries ago, however, the historicist school of interpretation was common to both amillennialism and premillennialism, since Roman Catholic futurism concerning the appearance of a future antichrist had not yet made an impact upon the Protestant prophetic interpretation, and almost all Protestant expositors of the prophecies of the books of Daniel and Revelation in the Reformation and post-Reformation era belonged to the historical school of interpretation, known as the Protestant school of interpretation.⁸

Furthermore, it has been found that futurism was not the original approach held by the early church, nor by the church of the Middle Ages and the Reformation. Research shows that the early Fathers were not futurists in the modern meaning of the word. In a certain sense, the early church Fathers had futurist views because for them everything was future.⁹ The early Christians were convinced that the final age of history had arrived; the new age had already dawned, and the end was imminent.¹⁰ To quote one example, Hippolytus (160-233), who produced the most extensive treatise of biblical eschatology found among the Fathers, argued that the end of the world would come about A.D. 500. He dated

⁶ For a study of Lacunza and his work, see Daniel Hammerly Dupuy *Defensores latinoamericanos de una gran esperanza* (Florida, Buenos Aires: Casa Editora Sudamericana, 1954), 85-95; 108-114. For a detailed investigation of the editions of Lacunza's work, see the studies of the French scholar Alfred Vaucher, *Une célébrité oubliée. Le P. Manuel de Lacunza y Díaz (1731-1801) de la Société de Jésus auteur de "La Venue du Messie en gloire et majesté."* New rev. ed. (Collonges-sous-Salève: Imprimerie Fides, 1968); *Lacunza, un heraldo de la segunda venida de Cristo* (Mexico DF: Publicaciones Interamericanas, 1970); George E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956), 38-39.

⁷ Dispensationalism, a view that has become deeply rooted in many American Evangelical churches, follows the extreme futuristic interpretation of Daniel and Revelation. See, for instance, George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974), 622-624; Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, seventh printing, 1990), 1154, 1162-1165; Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 36-39, 66-68, 81-83.

⁸ See Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 184-185; H. Grattan Guinness, *History Unveiling Prophecy of Time as an Interpreter* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1905), 132-136; 169-196; Kimball, 30-32.

⁹ See David P. Gullón, "An Investigation of Dispensational Premillennialism: An Analysis and Evaluation of the Eschatology of John F. Walvoord" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1992), 76-79; Kimball, 20-29.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Thomas N. Finger, *Christian Theology: An Eschatological Approach*, 2 vols. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985-89), 1:101-102.

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Christ's birth in the year 5503 after creation, thus making a period of about 500 years between His first and second comings.¹¹

In their writings, the early Fathers followed the historicist approach as the correct method to interpret the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.¹² Irenaeus and Hippolytus both used the historicist approach in their interpretation of the coming antichrist.¹³ For them everything was future, and, consequently, they cannot with fairness be cited for the modern futurist system that holds that most of the prophecies still are in the future, at the end of the Christian era.¹⁴

This rival eschatology, futurism, founded by Francisco de Ribera, whose posture constitutes the groundwork for the whole structure of Roman Catholic futurism concerning the Antichrist, had a tremendous impact on prophetic studies and gradually became more prominent in the nineteenth century. It is crystal-clear that the cradle for contemporary futurism was actually constructed by Catholic theologians to counteract the Reformers' historicist method of interpretation.¹⁵

Futurism and the Early Nineteenth Century

The spiritual tone of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century was dominated by Whitby's postmillennialism, which contributed to lessening the

¹¹ See David G. Dumbar, "Hippolytus of Rome and the Eschatological Exegesis of the Early Church," *Westminster Theological Journal* 45 (1983): 322-339; Roger T. Beckwith, "Daniel and the Date of the Messiah's Coming in Essene, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Zealot and Early Christian Computation," *Revue of Qumran* 110 (1979-81): 539-541.

¹² If they expected the Second Coming of Christ in a brief period of time, it was only natural that the reign of the antichrist was restricted to just a few years. See, for instance, Hippolytus's Treatise (ANF, 5:204-219); Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.25-35 (ANF, 1:553-567).

¹³ See J. Barton Payne, *The Imminent Appearing of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1962), 30. The futurist perspective of the early church cannot be equated with modern futurism.

¹⁴ While the early church "was generally futurist in their eschatological beliefs, present day futurism is not synonymous with the earlier forms of futurism" (Kimball, 29).

¹⁵ See Kimball, 30; Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, 37-39. Ribera's posture constitutes the groundwork for the whole structure of Roman Catholic futurism, which was followed by Lacunza despite Lacunza never mentioning Ribera. Lacunza alludes to Alcázar, the founder of preterism.

Francisco de Ribera (1537-1591), a Spanish Jesuit and theologian, was, from 1576 until his death, professor of Sacred Scripture at Salamanca. His commentary *In Sacram Beati Johannis Apostoli et Evangelistae Apocalypsim Commentarii. Cum quinque indicibus* (Salamanca, 1590), was published as a rebuttal to the Reformers. See Joseph Tanner, *Daniel and Revelation: The Chart of Prophecy and Our Place in It. A study of the Historical and Futurist Interpretation* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898), 1-17; Gullón, 80-82.

Ribera refuted the protestant identification of the papacy with the antichrist, projecting the antichrist to the future as a persecutor of the church whose reign would last for three and a half years. We find the seeds of futurism already in Augustine (354-430), who wrote about the future antichrist perhaps more than any previous interpreter. No less than seven times Augustine speaks about the last persecution at the hands of the antichrist, and three times he says that it will last for three and a half years. See for instance, *De Civ. Dei* 16.24 (*Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, edited by Thomas P. Halton, 84 vols. 1947-1991) 14:532; *ibid.*, 18:52, 53 (*FC* 24:174-177); *ibid.*, 20:13, 19, 23, 30 (*FC* 24:284, 298, 313, 338).

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sense of expectancy of the coming of the Lord.¹⁶ But in the early nineteenth century, the French Revolution stirred up a renewed interest in prophecy.

Since Lacunza's work was finished about 1791 and printed for the first time in Spanish around 1812, and in English in 1827,¹⁷ it is meaningful to know what was happening in Europe at that time. For our purposes, perhaps the most significant event was the French Revolution, which began in 1789 and influenced the revival of prophetic concern. Lacunza, of course, does not refer in his work to the French Revolution or to the dethronement and banishment to France of Pope Pious VI in 1798 and his death while in exile during the French Revolution, as he was not writing prophecy but expositing it (recall that while he died in 1801, he completed his manuscript in 1791).¹⁸

The prophetic expectations of the early nineteenth century in Europe reached a point of great agitation in the years following the French Revolution, an event that had a special influence for the student of prophecy.¹⁹ It was possibly the greatest blossoming of premillennialism since the beginning of the Christian era and led to the Second Advent Awakening. Many Bible scholars concluded that the end of all things and the commencement of the millennial kingdom were near.²⁰ Certainly the English translation of Lacunza gave a marked impetus "to the study of the second advent in Britain among those Protestants already awakened to the study of the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation."²¹

In England, many renowned premillennialists took part in the Albury Park prophetic conferences held at the estate of Henry Drummond (1786-1860), from 1826-1830, that molded the British millenarian revival.²² Premillennialism be-

¹⁶ Postmillennialism was a common view in eighteenth-century England. Daniel Whitby (1638-1726), Salisbury rector, highlighted the eventual culmination of Christian history in the coming of a literal millennium before the second coming, and postmillennialism prevailed. See Daniel Whitby, *A Treatise on the True Millennium*, in, *Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament*. 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Lackington, Allen and Co., 1807), 2:679-705; Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 5.

¹⁷ Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 17.

¹⁸ Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 5. He also states that "to live through the decade of the 1790s in itself constituted an experience in apocalypticism for many of the British" (*ibid.*). See also *ibid.*, 6-8. Lacunza never alludes to the dethronement and captivity of Pope Pious VI as the fulfillment of any time period of Daniel or the Revelation.

¹⁹ Froom, 3:9-12; Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 5-8.

²⁰ See, Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 5, 1-41 R. G. Clouse, "The New Christian Right, America and the Kingdom of God," *Christian Scholar Review* 12 (1983): 8.

²¹ Froom, 3:305. See also, Gullón, 84-86; Kimball, 32, 33.

²² See, Henry Drummond, *Dialogues on Prophecy*, 3 vols, (London: Nisbet, 1828-1829); Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 18-19; Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, 36. For the British and American millenarian revival, see Sandeen, *ibid.*, 1-102. Harold H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren, 1825-1850* (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1967), 16. He says that these conferences "provided a forum for the discussion of prophetic interpretation, but failed to secure unanimity" (*ibid.*, 16).

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gan to emerge,²³ and the British millenarian revival that was the forerunner of the prophetic conferences was characterized by three main aspects: (1) a new zeal for the interpretation of prophetic studies at the beginning of the century;²⁴ (2) a renewal of interest in the Jewish people and the restoration and return of the chosen people to Palestine; and (3) the doctrine of the premillennial advent, in contrast with the standard postmillennial eschatology.²⁵ These, among others, were also the preoccupation of Lacunza in the last decades of the eighteenth century, and in his book he dwells upon these concerns.

Three factors gave grounds for prophetic speculation: the political chaos of the period, the instability of the years following Napoleon's defeat in 1815, and the political tensions of the period around 1830.²⁶

In the nineteenth century, futurism entered premillennialism through the writings of the Protestant scholars Samuel Roffey Maitland, William Burgh, and James H. Todd, among others.²⁷ Maitland, who had read the work of Lacunza,²⁸ and whose futuristic approach to Revelation had a great impact on premillennialism, introduced futurism into Protestantism²⁹

²³ Ernest Sandeen holds that the millennial expectations "are woven into the fabric of the early nineteenth century life in both Europe and America" ("Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism" in *Church History* 36 [1967]: 69.

²⁴ . As an example I mention the following works on prophecy: William Cuninghame, *A Dissertation on the Seals and Trumpets*, 2nd ed. rev. and enlarged. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, Strand, 1817); George Stanley Faber, *A Dissertation on the Prophecies That Had Been Fulfilled or Are Now Fulfilling, or Will Hereafter Be Fulfilled Relative to the Great Period of 1260 Years*, 2 vols. 4th ed. rev. and corrected (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1810) idem, *The Sacred Calendar of Prophecy: or a Dissertation on the Prophecies which Treat the Grand Period of Seven Times, and Especially of Its Second Moiety or the Latter Three Times and a Half*, 3 vols. (London: C. and J. Rivington, 1828).

²⁵ See Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 8-14.

²⁶ See Harold H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren, 1825-1850*, (London: Pickering and English, 1967), 12-14; Deryck W. Lovegrove, *Established Church, Sectarian People: Itinerancy and the Transformation of English Dissent 1780-1830*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 121-123.

²⁷ See, for instance, Charles H. H. Wright, *Daniel and His Prophecies* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1906), xiv, xv. Wright names S. R. Maitland, J. H. Todd, W. Burgh, Dr. Pusey of Oxford, and many others. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 38; Gullón, 81-91. Sandeen remarks that "graduates of Trinity College, Dublin, for reasons that are not clear, were among the earliest and most able defenders of futurism."

²⁸ Samuel Roffey Maitland, *An Attempt to Elucidate the Prophecies Concerning Antichrist: With Remarks on Some Works of J. H. Frere, Esq.* 2d ed. (London: Francis and John Rivington, 1853), 4-8. Maitland knew the work of Lacunza and agreed with Lacunza that the fourth empire of Dan 2 and 7 is not the Roman Empire. The fourth empire, said Maitland, is the kingdom of antichrist (*ibid.*, 9). Maitland was perhaps the first Protestant to make use of Lacunza, and his example was followed by Burgh and Todd.

²⁹ Scholarly opinion points particularly to Maitland as the one responsible for the introduction of futurism into Protestantism. See, for instance, Payne, 30, 153; Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 37.

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The work of this Chilean theologian and biblical scholar, the Jesuit Lacunza y Díaz, translated into English, had a great influence upon the incipient futurism of early nineteenth-century Protestantism.³⁰ Lacunza's prophetic interpretation was a mingling of futurism and historicism. In his analysis of the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah, Lacunza avoided the method of allegorism and reached conclusions that in some aspects coincided with the exegesis of the historicist school.

He took a futuristic view and argued that the book of the Revelation is a consecutive prophecy yet to be fulfilled and stated that the antichrist is a moral body composed of innumerable individuals and not a single man.

On the other hand, Lacunza maintained that the appearance of the antichrist and the two witnesses are still in the future, just before the coming of Christ,³¹ and that all the prophecies concerning the antichrist will be fulfilled just prior to the coming of Christ. The great tribulation during which the church will be persecuted by the antichrist will last 1260 literal days.³² He did make, however, a strong case for the premillennial advent of Christ. In this way, Lacunza contributed to the revival of British millenarianism³³ and to the development of futurism in Protestantism, a view, as we have seen, first suggested by the Spanish Jesuit Francisco de Ribera.³⁴ Lacunza's work was studied at the Albury Park prophetic conferences.³⁵

Lacunza rejected the allegorization of the Millennium made by Tyconius, Augustine, and Catholic exegesis.³⁶ His work was considered by Edward Irving

³⁰ See Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 37-38, 106; Zens, 3; Duncan McDougall, *The Rapture of the Saints*, 1st rev. and annotated ed. (Blackwood, NJ: O.F.P.M. Publishers, 1970), 19-20; Wilmot, 251-252. John H. Newman and Henry E. Manning accepted the futuristic interpretation of the antichrist. Both entered the ranks of the Roman Catholic Church, and became cardinals. Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists*, 144-149.

The influence of Roman Catholic futurism has been decisive on Protestant thought and was assimilated by the Fundamentalists. Lacunza "restricted the prophetic fulfillments of the Revelation to the very end of the age" (Kimball, 32). This new view among Protestants discarded the idea of a historical antichrist who operates during the whole Christian era until the second coming of Christ (Tanner, 17).

³¹ "El anticristo está todavía por venir" (*La venida del Mesías*, 1:128 [1:89]). See also Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 37.

³² The 1260 days, 42 months, and three years and a half are "the exact time during which the great tribulation of Antichrist among the Gentiles is to last" (*ibid.*), 3:152 [2:343].

³³ *Ibid.*, 1:152-178 [1:105-124]. See Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 17-22.

³⁴ See Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 37-38. Irving, who did not agree with the futurism of Lacunza, unintentionally, perhaps, helped to lay the foundation of the Protestant futurism by means of his translation.

³⁵ See Jon Zens, *Dispensationalism: A Reformed Inquiry into Its Leading Figures and Features* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1978), 3.

³⁶ This is acknowledged by most scholars. See, Ray C. Petry, *Christian Eschatology and Social Thought* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), 316. Pelikan affirms that Augustine "set the standard for most Catholic exegesis in the West when he surrendered the millenarian interpretation of Rev 20." See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of the Doctrine*,

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as the master work of one of God's most gifted servants.³⁷ It was important for the development of futurism in Protestantism, and we may say that nineteenth-century futurism was fueled by Lacunza's premillennial work.

Although the general approach to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation at the Albury Park prophetic conferences which sparked the British millenarian revival, was historicist,³⁸ those attending took account of Lacunza's and Maitland's futurism. Drummond argued that the opinions of Ben-Ezra, Samuel Maitland, and others who considered that the greater part of Revelation is yet to be fulfilled in a literal period of 1260 days at the end of the world, were not to be overlooked. He stated that these opinions were not opposed to the day-year principle, as may at first sight appear to be the case.³⁹

Thus, Drummond thought he had reconciled the two approaches by a sort of double historicist fulfillment of the prophetic time periods. The 1260 days of persecution by the antichrist are given a dual fulfillment: a prophetic application during the time of the Christian dispensation⁴⁰ and a fuller literal fulfillment in the days before the coming of the Lord.⁴¹ Actually, it seems to be a threefold antichrist: the papacy;⁴² Protestantism which renounced the truth of God;⁴³ and the future antichrist as proposed by Ribera, Lacunza, and Maitland.⁴⁴

Vol. 1, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600) (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 129.

³⁷ *The Coming of Messiah*, 1:xx.

³⁸ H. Drummond, 1:177; 3:ii-iii, 421. These meetings from 1826 to 1830 were attended by a wide section of Evangelicals. See Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 18-20. Edward Irving, Lacunza's translator, attended these meetings. See *The Coming of Messiah*, 1:clxxxvi-ccxii.

³⁹ Ladd affirms that in 1827, the book of Lacunza "and the millennial question became the main objects of study at the Albury Park conference" (*The Blessed Hope*, 36).

"For as all the prophecies of the Old Testament had an inchoate accomplishment first, and a more perfect fulfillment afterwards, so it is not impossible that this great prophecy of the New Testament may have had a partial application during the whole time of the Gentile dispensation, and will have a more full and literal completion in the days which accompany the coming of our Lord" (Drummond, *Dialogues*, 377).

⁴⁰ Drummond, 1:177, 322, 324, 336; 2:17; 3:iii.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1:376-377.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1:266, 322-325; 3:421; "The false prophet is the little horn of Daniel, that Papal iniquity."

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2:359-360. "And as Popery as a system buried the truth of God under ceremonies and traditions, so Protestantism as a system renounced the truth of God, in neglecting the ordinances by which that truth was to be preserved."

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:377. This opinion, says the *Dialogues*, is not to be overlooked (*ibid.*). See also 2:42. It is interesting to note the almost allegorical reason for this dual fulfillment of the 1260 days. As Christ's personal ministry at His first coming was 1260 days in which he fulfilled in His own person all the things which the church had performed personally, "it seems fair to conclude, that he will likewise fulfil [sic] in his own person, at the time of his second advent, all the things which the church shall have performed from the time of her first calling" (*ibid.*, 377).

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Synopsis of Lacunza's Treatise

Even though Ribera, as well as others Catholic theologians, had fostered the fruitful ground from which futurism would eventually burst into full bloom at the beginning of the nineteenth century,⁴⁵ the work of Lacunza had a more immediate impact upon the unfolding events of the prophetic awakening [of the nineteenth century] than either Ribera or Bellarmine. The historicist approach to apocalyptic prophecy espoused until the nineteenth century was challenged and gradually rejected in favor of the futurist interpretation of Revelation.⁴⁶

Lacunza had rediscovered the truth of the second coming of Christ to establish his millennial kingdom which had been lost in Catholicism, therefore he revived premillennialism.⁴⁷

Lacunza's treatise begins with a long preface in which he dialogues with the Bible and affirms that his ideas regarding the second coming came from the Scriptures,⁴⁸ recovering the almost forgotten truth of the premillennial second advent. He divides his voluminous work into three sections. In the first, he expounds his hermeneutical rules in contrast with the hermeneutics of those who follow the allegorical interpretation.⁴⁹

In the second part, the most extensive and substantial of his work, he makes wide use of the Scripture and discusses ten phenomena related to Christ's second coming and the concomitant events. In the third, he reveals the conclusions of his investigations, "the fruits of the foregoing observations,"⁵⁰ and describes the principal events related to the second coming, the millennium, and the new

⁴⁵ Ribera's futurist method was advocated in different countries by some prominent Roman Catholic theologians, such as Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), Cornelius A. Lapide (1537-1637), Thomas Malvenda (1566-1628), and Blasius Viegas (1544-1599). See Gullón, 82.

⁴⁶ Kimball, 32. See also, Froom, 2:489-493; 3:319, 323; Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, 36; Sandeen, 37, 38; Gullón, 84. It is difficult to say just why the historicist school of interpretation faded in popularity. It may be that the excessive date-settings by historic premillennialism of contemporary events and the diversity in its interpretations of prophetic Scripture were the cause that the historicist approach discredited itself. See Dennis L. Reiter, "Historicism and Futurism in Historic Premillennialism, 1878-1975" (M.A. thesis, Trinity Divinity School, 1975), 30.

⁴⁷ As we will see, he adapted premillennialism to his own style, since his theory of the two resurrections is particular. See also, Froom, 3:303, 304; Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, 36; Sandeen, 18, 37; Kimball, 32.

⁴⁸ *La venida del Mesías*, lviii [xl]. For the quotations of Lacunza's work, we will use the 1816 Spanish edition with 4 volumes and almost 1900 pages, *La venida del Mesías en gloria y magestad: observaciones de Juan Josaphat Ben-Ezra, hebreo-cristiano: dirigidas al sacerdote cristófilo*. 4 tomos (Londres: Carlos Wood, 1816), where the author makes use of the Latin text of the *Vulgata*. Also, we give the pages of Ackerman's edition, 3 volumes (London, 1826) in which the biblical quotations are in Spanish. We will quote in this form: *La venida del Mesías*, 1:57 [39]; the first number corresponds to Wood's edition and the second, between brackets, to Ackerman's.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, lxiii [lxiv]. Lacunza mentions the spiritual, tropological, mystical, and accommodating meanings to interpret the Scriptures. He follows the literal method of interpretation.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, lxxv [lxxii].

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earth. We may say that his book is a lengthy conversation with the Scriptures, as he himself states at the end of his work.⁵¹

Lacunza shows a wide knowledge of the Scriptures, as well as of the principal commentators and expositors from patristic times until his own days, but his main source was the Scriptures, particularly the prophetic and apocalyptic traditions related to the promised kingdom of Israel.⁵² This kingdom at the second coming is the essence of his thesis.⁵³ It is revealing that Lacunza argues that the change in belief about the second coming of the Lord in glory and majesty was made in the times of Dionysius of Alexandria (d. 264) and Epiphanius (315-403).⁵⁴

Undoubtedly, Lacunza supports the literal interpretation and fights against the allegorical method, because it obscures the true meaning of the Word of God,⁵⁵ and affirms that the errors of the heretics and Catholics in history came because they deviated from the literal sense of Scriptures. He also speaks against the patristic allegorism of Origen, a mixture of the typological and allegorical.⁵⁶

Lacunza disagrees with the Catholic view about the second coming and proposes a new system or explanation. Jesus Christ will come at the end of time with his angels and thousands of saints resurrected in the first resurrection, “those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead” (Luke 20:35), to judge the dead and the living in two different judgments, both in substance and in time. The saints who are not among the martyrs and other renowned saints specified in Revelation 20:4 or in Daniel 12:2, 3 don’t come to life to reign with Christ during the millennium, and therefore they have not part in the first resurrection. They will come to life in the second resurrection or universal resurrection at the end of the 1,000 years. Lacunza also states that besides the martyrs and other famous saints, some of the wicked will be resurrected in the first resurrection.⁵⁷ From this fact, he concludes that

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 4:433 [3:314] “Y veis aquí, Cristófilo carísimo, que hemos llegado con el favor de Dios al fin, y término de nuestra larga conversación.”

⁵² In his own words: “Empecé desde luego a estudiar este punto particular [the millennium] registrando para esto con toda la atención y reflexión de que soy capaz, cuantos autores antiguos y modernos me han sido accesibles, y en que he empezado a hallar alguna luz, más confrontándolo siempre con la Escritura misma” (*Ibid.*, 1:59 [1:40]).

⁵³ Lacunza makes clear that his whole work consist of 3 things: (1) to discover if the Catholic church has decided something on the millennial kingdom; (2) to know the different kinds of chiliasts and what the doctors say about them; and (3) to know what the same doctors say and what is their explanation of Revelation 20 and what was the error of the chiliasts (*Ibid.*, 1:60, 61 [1:41, 42]).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:99 [1:68, 69]. Says Lacunza “...parece que forman la época precisa de la mudanza entera y total de ideas sobre la venida del Señor en gloria y majestad. Hasta entonces se había entendido la Escritura Divina como suena según su sentido propio, obvio y literal.”

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:10 [1:7].

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:10-24 [1:7-16].

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:52-56 [1:36-38]. He appeals to Luke 20:35 and Jude 14. See also *ibid.*, 4:136-151 [3:99-109]. Lacunza denies that all the saints will be resurrected in the first resurrection. The living

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there will be a great amount of time between the second coming and what he calls the judgment of the dead or universal resurrection at the end of the millennium.⁵⁸

He posits two literal resurrections, one before the second coming, the saints' resurrection, and the second for the remainder of men, much later, one thousand years, whether definite or indefinite,⁵⁹ until the universal judgment—which, instead of a thousand years, could be one million years or 200,000 generations!⁶⁰ His premillennialism contradicts the amillennial position of the Roman Catholic church. Moreover, he refutes the claim that the church is the kingdom of God represented by the stone of Daniel 2.⁶¹

Here we have the crucial key to his system: he contends that according to the Scriptures, the stone that struck the statue and became a huge mountain represents not the first but the second coming of Christ in glory and majesty. This difference is vital for Lacunza, and he discusses at length the meaning of the stone and the mountain. “Is it the present church?” he asks himself. The answer is a categorical no.⁶² For Lacunza, the two advents of Christ are like the foci of the ellipse of all prophecy and the goal of all history.⁶³

Lacunza proposes another interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7. He includes Babylon and Persia under the head of gold, ruled by Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Cyrus and his successors; the second was the kingdom of the Greeks, the third, the Roman Empire, and the fourth the barbarian or Roman-Gothic Christian kingdoms of divided Western Europe since the fifth century.⁶⁴

Lacunza claims that the four beasts in the vision of Daniel 7 represent the religious history of mankind, and he names four religions: idolatry, the oldest of all false religions; Mohammedanism; false Christianity with its four heads: her-

saints will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (see *ibid.*, 4:12-20 [3:7-15]).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:55 [1:38].

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:103 [1:71]. In several places, Lacunza maintains that the one thousand years of Rev. 20 could be 10,000, 20,000, 100,000 or more. See, *Ibid.*, 1:133 [1:92]; 1:175 [1:122]; 1:230 [1:162]; 4:332, 337, 338, 342 [3:242, 243, 246, 249]. Lacunza discusses the resurrection in 1:150-213 [1:104-149].

⁶⁰ Almost at the end of his treatise, he goes on to say that “después de mil años, o sean cien mil, o un millón de años de justicia, e inocencia, se vuelva a pervertir otra vez el orbe de la tierra” (*Ibid.*, 4:337 [3:249]). He speaks of “one hundred or two hundred thousand years, or one hundred or two hundred thousand generations” (4:332 [3:246]). If we calculate 50 years to each generation, that means ten million years!

⁶¹ See *ibid.*, 1:272, 273, 290, 291 [1:189, 190, 202, 203].

⁶² Lacunza devotes to this issue 23 out of 56 pages he uses to explain the statue of Daniel 2. See *ibid.*, 1:276-299 [1:192-209].

⁶³ See *ibid.*, 1:280-283 [1:195-197]. See also Froom, 3:304.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:243-275 [1:169-192].

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esy, schism, hypocrisy, and the lust of the flesh or licentiousness; and deism, which he calls natural religion and also anti-Christianity.⁶⁵

After his detailed analysis of the current views about the Antichrist, all of which he reduces to nothingness with an overwhelming critique,⁶⁶ he concludes that the Antichrist will appear in the last times before the second coming.⁶⁷ The Antichrist, argues Lacunza, is not an individual but a moral body⁶⁸ that began to develop in the time of the apostles and which, together with the mystical body of Christ, has been in existence continually and exists at the present time.⁶⁹ This is the true and only Antichrist,⁷⁰ which the book of Revelation presents as the beast of seven heads and ten horns.⁷¹ He argues that the persecution by the Antichrist, the great tribulation, will last three and a half years—or 42 months or 1260 days—and will be the greatest event immediately before the second coming of Jesus Christ.⁷² Lacunza contends that the eleventh horn of the beast of Daniel 7 is not the Antichrist because the book of Revelation keeps silent about such a horn.⁷³

Lacunza has an important point when he reasons that the true rationale for the tribulation of the Antichrist, the mystery of lawlessness, according to the book of Revelation, will be the wrath of the dragon against those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus,⁷⁴ the remnant of true Christianity among the peoples.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:315-346 [1:221-242]. Lacunza also calls the fourth beast of Daniel 7 and the eleventh horn the Antichrist. See *ibid.*, 1:348, 351 [1:244, 246]. However, some pages later he seems to contradict himself when states that the eleventh horn is not the Antichrist. See 1:431 [1:301].

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:356-396 [1:250-277]. Lacunza uses more than 290 pages to discuss the issue of the Antichrist (1:356-467 and 2:1-180 [1:250-452]).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:128, 412, 430 [1:89, 288, 301]; 3:84 [2:294, 295].

⁶⁸ The Antichrist “no es otra cosa que un cuerpo moral compuesto de innumerables individuos diversos, y distantes entre sí, y animados de un mismo espíritu” (*Ibid.*, 1:399, 400 [1:279, 280]). “Que el Antecristo de quien hemos oído que ha de venir, no puede ser un hombre, o persona individual y singular, sino un cuerpo moral que empezó a formarse en tiempo de los apóstoles” (*Ibid.*, 405-406 [1:284]). Lacunza claims that the Antichrist is a moral body also in 1:399, 400, 401, 405, 450, 451, 463 [1:279, 280, 281, 283, 314, 315, 324]; 2:12, 13, 74, 75, 76, 90, 101, 241 [1:334, 335, 377-379, 389, 397, 2:44, 45]. But he never says that the Pope is or will be the Antichrist.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:405, 406 [1:283, 284].

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:400 [1:280].

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1:431 [1:301].

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1:400 [1:280]. See also 1:431 [1:302] where Lacunza says: “El Antecristo, perfecto, y completo, como lo esperamos para los últimos tiempos, y como lo considera San Juan es la bestia misma del Apocalipsis con sus siete cabezas y diez cuernos.” For the three and a half years, see, *ibid.*, 1:43, 412, 450, 451, 463 [1:29, 288, 314, 324]; 2:2, 179 [1:327, 451]; 3:84, 90, 136, 152, 217, 225 [2:295, 298, 332, 343, 391, 398].

⁷³ “Este mismo silencio del Apocalipsis respecto del undécimo cuerno es una prueba clara y sensible de que este cuerno no es el Antecristo” (*Ibid.*, 1:430, 431 [1:301]).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:225 [2:398]. Says Lacunza, “Convierte el dragón todas sus iras, con aquellos que observan los mandamientos de Dios, y tienen el testimonio de Jesucristo . . . Veis aquí el verdadero principio de la tribulación Antecristiana, de que estamos amenazados en todas las Escrituras... Veis

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In regard to the book of Revelation, Lacunza contends that the sentence “the Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:1) means the same as the appearing of Jesus Christ in the great day of his coming. He asserts, therefore, that the whole book of Revelation, or at least from the fourth chapter,⁷⁵ is directed towards the second coming of the Lord. Consequently its prophecies are all in the future, awaiting their fulfillment,⁷⁶ inasmuch as this last book “is the true and unique key of all the prophets; explains, illuminates, summarizes, enlarges, and frequently fills up many empty places that the prophets have left to us.”⁷⁷ Lacunza was a thorough futurist and literalist.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, he recognizes that in order to understand the Apocalypse we must study its many allusions in the light of the Old Testament.⁷⁹

Regarding the beast coming out of the earth with two horns like a lamb, Lacunza declares that it is a symbol or metaphor of the Christian priesthood of the time of the end.⁸⁰ As to the apocalyptic harlot of Revelation 17, Lacunza tears down the two traditional opinions of Catholic exegetes: one, that the prophecy was accomplished in pagan Rome; the other that it will be accomplished in an-

aquí revelado, manifiesto, perfecto y consumado aquel mismo misterio de iniquidad que ya se comenzaba a obrar aun en los tiempos de Pablo.”

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 4:102 [3:74].

⁷⁶ Several times Lacunza affirms that “el Apocalipsis no ha tenido hasta ahora su cumplimiento” *Ibid.*, 1:407-410 [1:284-286]; “Los últimos tiempos son el asunto inmediato y único de su profecía” 1:427 [1:298]; See also, 2:30 [1:346]; 3:99, 137, 151 [2:304, 305, 332, 343]. “Poco antes de la revelación del Antecristo . . . y sólo entonces, se empezarán a ver los grandes y admirables misterios que contiene el Apocalipsis y a verificarse sus profecías; las cuales, digan otros lo que quisieren, hasta ahora no se han verificado, no digo todas o muchas, pero ni una sola” (*ibid.*, 3:151 [2:343]).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 4:328 [3:240], Lacunza says: “El Apocalipsis es la llave verdadera y única de todos los profetas. A todos los explica, los aclara, los compendia, los extiende y llena frecuentísimamente no pocos vacíos que ellos nos dejaron”. This sounds very familiar to another sentence: “In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end. Here is the complement of the book of Daniel” (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Mountain View: PPPA, 1963], p. 585).

⁷⁸ I disagree when Froom says that “in certain features, however, Lacunza was a futurist” (3:319). Farther on, he says that “in his general view of the Apocalypse, Lacunza was still a futurist” (3:322). Indeed, Lacunza was a committed futurist.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 3:100 [2:305]. He says Revelation has allusions from the Pentateuch, the Psalms and the prophets. “El Apocalipsis . . . no es tan oscuro si se quiere atender a sus vivas y casi continuas alusiones. Toda su oscuridad, o la mayor y máxima parte, pudiera pasar de la noche al día, si se estudiasen dichas alusiones” (*ibid.*).

⁸⁰ “Sí, amigo, nuestro sacerdocio: éste es, y no otra cosa, el que viene aquí significado y anunciado para los últimos tiempos debajo de la metáfora de una bestia con dos cuernos semejantes a los de un cordero... El sacerdocio cristiano ayudando a los perseguidores de la iglesia y de acuerdo con ellos por la abundancia de su iniquidad” (*ibid.* 1:454, 460 [1:317, 322]).

Lacunza identified the future apostate clergy of the Roman Catholic Church with the antichrist and claimed that when the Jews rejected the Messiah, the center of union of the people of God passed from Jerusalem to Rome, and the Jews were temporarily cast aside by God (*ibid.*, 2:341 [2:121]). But with the defection of the clergy, the center of unity will revert to Jerusalem and to the Jews (*ibid.*, 2:411 [2:172]).

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other Rome yet future and very like the old idolatrous Rome.⁸¹ These views, Lacunza avers, are pure nonsense.⁸²

Lacunza saw the unfaithful Jerusalem depicted in Ezekiel 16 as the Old Testament prototype of the apocalyptic prostitute, because both Ezekiel and John use the harlot symbol to indict God's unfaithful covenant partner for sexual promiscuity, fornication or idolatry.⁸³ He argues that this harlot will be a future papal Rome, even though by his words we guess that he refers to something that was in process in his own time.⁸⁴ Unmistakably, these words from the pen of this Jesuit point at papal Rome:

Rome, not idolatrous but Christian, not the head of an imaginary Roman empire but the head of Christendom and centre of unity of the true church of the living God, may very well, without ceasing from this dignity, at some time or other incur the guilt and before God be held guilty of fornication with the kings of the earth . . . and this same Rome, in this same respect may receive upon itself the horrifying retribution that the prophecy declares.⁸⁵

Lacunza brings in the man of sin of 2 Thessalonians in his debate on the Antichrist and states that the temple in which the man of sin sets himself up, "is nothing else than the church of Christ."⁸⁶ Lacunza, nevertheless, makes clear that the man of sin is nothing else in his roots, foundation, and beginning, but a great multitude of true apostates, and it does not matter if they call themselves deists or materialists. He never mentions that the Antichrist, the man of sin, is now or will be the bishop of Rome, the true successor of Peter, the Pope.⁸⁷

His inquiry into the subject matter of the Jewish people and their future restoration comprises more than 200 pages and utilizes no less than 210 biblical quotations from 24 books of the Old Testament and from 11 of the New Testament. Lacunza alludes to three conditions of the people of Israel: before the Messiah, as God's church and the true wife of the Lord; after the first coming of the Messiah, as an unfaithful wife, banished from their country and like dry bones; and the third, still future, as restored and planted in her own land, be-

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 2:34 [1:349]. See also 2:32-69 [1:347-373].

⁸² *Ibid.*, 2:45-48 [1:356, 357]. Lacunza refutes with irony these opinions and states: "Si, como se pretende, el estar la mujer sentada sobre la bestia no significase otra cosa que la supuesta alianza y amistad entre Roma idólatra y el Antecristo, parece que el amado discípulo no tuvo razón alguna para una tan grande admiración" (2:52; 1:361]).

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 2:40-66 [1:353-370]. Lacunza says that in Ezekiel 16, we find 17 times the word "fornication" and once "adultery".

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:63, 64 [1:369, 370]. "Aquí no se habla de modo alguno de Roma presente sino solamente de Roma futura, que es puntualmente de la que habla la profecía... por eso, ¿no podemos tomar un partido medio que nos aleje igualmente del error funesto y de la lisonja perjudicial?" (*ibid.*). See Fredy Omar Parra Carrasco, 58. He asserts that Lacunza thinks that the harlot symbolizes papal Rome (*ibid.*).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:65 [1:370]. See also 2:66-69 [1:371-373].

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:89 [1:388].

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:89, 90 [1:388, 389].

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trothed once more to the Lord.⁸⁸ Since “Israel is not a repudiated wife, but only a wife that is serving penitence.”⁸⁹ Lacunza is very emphatic: the Christian church is not Zion.⁹⁰ He suggest that the Jews will find mercy without looking for it, just because of the unbelief of those whom God called, and he concludes that we have reason to expect the future unbelief of the Christian church.⁹¹ In all this analysis, he makes a literal exegesis of all the prophecies concerning Israel.

Speaking of the Christian church, Lacunza asserts that the Catholic church, *unam, sanctam, catholicam, apostolicam, and Roman*, is the true church of Christ, the pillar and foundation of the truth.⁹² The bishop of Rome, the Pope, is the visible head of the true and universal church, and Christ’s vicar on earth.⁹³ He acknowledges that Christ is the invisible head of the church, and the church is the mystical and moral body of Christ, and that this invisible head is only visible through his vicar, Peter’s legitimate successor, high priest and supreme shepherd, to whom Christ left in His place and gave the keys and authority,⁹⁴ even though he recognizes that the actual state of the Christian church in the majority of nations it is neither cold, nor hot, but lukewarm.⁹⁵

Concerning Babylon, Lacunza contends that the ancient Babylon contains another great mystery which has not yet been concluded, because she is like a sign, or likeness, or parable of all that has happened from Nebuchednazzar until now, and yet has to be concluded. Based on Revelation 17:6, he equates the future papal Rome with ancient Babylon.⁹⁶

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:181-390 [2:1-158]. He quotes the whole Pentateuch, except Leviticus; Judges, Esther, Job, 1 and 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah Ezekiel, Daniel (only 9:26), Hosea, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and from the apocrypha Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, 1 Maccabees. From the New Testament, he quotes from the four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, Romans, Galatians, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, and the Revelation.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:364 [2:138]. “No hay razón alguna para decir que es una esposa repudiada, sino solamente una esposa penitenciada que está cumpliendo su penitencia hasta que acabe de recibir enteramente de la mano del Señor al doble por todos sus pecados” (Isa 40:2).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:322 [2:106]. “Esta antigua esposa de Dios, actualmente *estéril, desterrada, cautiva, destituida y sola*, ha de salir algún día de su estado actual: ha de salir de su destierro, de su cautiverio, de su soledad, de su esterilidad: ha de ser llamada otra vez, y *assumpta* a su antigua dignidad” (*ibid.*, 2:323 [2:106]).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 2:451-454 [1:203-205].

⁹² *Ibid.*, 2:394, 395 [2:160-162].

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 2:396, 419; 3:55, 243 [2:162, 178, 273, 411].

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:241-243 [2:410-411]. In these pages, Lacunza underscores this view three times. “El obispo de Roma, como sucesor legítimo del apóstol San Pedro es el vicario de Cristo, es el sumo sacerdote, el supremo pastor: por consiguiente es el superior y la cabeza visible del cuerpo místico de Cristo, que es la iglesia” (3:243 [2:411]). See also 2:457 [2:453].

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:445 [2:197]. Every time Lacunza says: Christian church, he means the Catholic church.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3:50, 57 [2:270, 274].

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Lacunza makes a particular exegesis of Revelation 12 and holds that the woman is the ancient wife of God, the house of Jacob,⁹⁷ to whom God calls after the 1260 days.⁹⁸ Moreover, in all the periods spoken of in Revelation 12, the Antichrist had not yet come into the world,⁹⁹ and the war between Michael and the dragon must happen after the birth of the child but will precede the tribulation of the Antichrist.¹⁰⁰ On the time periods of Revelation 12, Lacunza claims that the 1260 literal days (Rev.12:6) is the duration of the Antichrist's persecution,¹⁰¹ but he completely overlooks the period of persecution mentioned in Revelation 12:14.

It is interesting to note, however, how Lacunza interprets the periods of time and believes that the day of the Lord, that is to say, the day of his coming, will be no less than 45 days after the tribulation of the Antichrist who will persecute the church for 1290 days. How then does Daniel speak of 1290 days of tribulation and John in Revelation only 1260 days? Because of the prophecy of Christ in Matthew 21:24, "If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened."¹⁰² In this form he resolves this apparent discrepancy about the duration of the Antichrist's tribulation.

Lacunza applies the parallel prophecies of Isaiah 2:1-4 and Micah 4:1-3 to the peoples that will be left on earth after the second coming of Christ, after the fall of the stone, after the fourth beast of Daniel 7 is slain and its body thrown into the blazing fire; in short, after the complete downfall of the Antichrist. These people, relatively few if compared with the earth's population, and their descendants will populate the earth for many centuries, or, in the words of John, one thousand years.¹⁰³

In the last section of his work, Lacunza expounds the conclusions of his observations with reference to the millennial kingdom of Christ on this earth after his second coming. He reasons that the antediluvians lived long lives on this earth due to the uniform climate of the earth. The same will happen in the mil-

⁹⁷ Lacunza spends more than 150 pages in the study of this chapter, *Ibid.*, 3:75-234 [2:288-403]; 3:98 [2:304].

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4:152, 184 [3:110, 132].

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3:118 [2:319].

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:156, 177 [2:346, 347, 361]. Lacunza affirms that if we understand this, we will discern the role of Michael in Daniel 12:1 and what Jesus says in Matthew 24:21. Therefore, according to Lacunza, Revelation 12 explains the prophecy of Daniel 12:1, 2, (*ibid.*, 3:175-179 [2:359-362]).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 3:152, 184-197 [2:343, 366-375].

¹⁰² Lacunza doesn't explain further the 1290 and the 1335 days of Daniel 12. See *Ibid.*, 4:92-99 [67-72].

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 3:355-359 [2:494-498] "Los que quedaren vivos después de la venida del Señor . . . después de la ruina entera del Antecristo . . . después de arrojada al fuego la cuarta bestia . . . Estas reliquias de las gentes y pueblos que quedarán vivos después de la venida del Señor . . ." (*ibid.*). See also, 4:21 [3:15]. For Lacunza, the one thousand years may be one hundred thousand or one million years.

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lennium, although he thinks that there will be sin and sinners, mourning and pain, but this will be unusual in those times.¹⁰⁴

The New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven is a real city,¹⁰⁵ and its inhabitants, the martyrs and men of prominent sanctity, will enter and will go out of the city at any time to visit the earth and also the heavenly bodies and the work of the Creator.¹⁰⁶ Lacunza maintains that not all the saved people will enter the city: only those who came to life in the first resurrection.¹⁰⁷ He has the singular idea that those who “are still alive and are left” (1 Thess. 4:17) at the second coming will be like secondary apostles to teach the remnant of the nations that were left alive on earth.¹⁰⁸ Lacunza also holds that many of the wicked, whom he calls “corpses” based on Isaiah 66:23, 24, will be resurrected in the first resurrection, to suffer in hell.¹⁰⁹

Lacunza affirms that in the new earth there will be another Jerusalem, with a temple to offer sacrifices. This is the capital city described in Ezekiel 40-48, where holy people will dwell, sojourners of the people of Israel who have not gone through death at the time of the second coming.¹¹⁰

Lacunza points out five means by which the earth will have universal peace and justice, only one religion and one faith: (1) Christ will be personally on the earth; (2) the dragon will be bound in the abyss with his angels and pseudo-prophets; (3) universal peace and justice will rule the earth; (4) there will be one language in all the globe, the primitive language of mankind; and (5) the people

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 4:53, 66, 79 [3:38, 48, 57].

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 4:118-122, 151 [3:86-88, 109].

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 4:126-129 [3:91-94].

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 4:141-144 [3:102-104]. He claims that Christ will bring with Him the souls of many saints, but they will be resurrected in the second resurrection and the universal judgment, at the end of the millennium. “Vendrán estas almas bienaventuradas con Cristo a nuestra tierra: más no resucitarán hasta la general resurrección de toda carne” (*ibid.*, 4:144 [3:104]). Lacunza explains: “Todos los . . . que a lo menos hicieren penitencia de todos sus pecados, aunque esto sea a la hora de la muerte, entrarán *aliquando* [alguna vez] a la vida eterna o al reino de Dios . . . más . . . se puede y se debe negar que puedan estos tener parte alguna en la primera resurrección, y por consiguiente en la santa, y celestial Jerusalén” (*ibid.*, 4:142 [3:103]).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 4:130-136, 273, 253-275 [3:94-98, 197, 198, 183-200]. Lacunza builds his reasoning on 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, and their occupation as new teachers of the new earth, on Isaiah 18:2; 24:13; 18:7; Psalm 96:3, 10; Isaiah 66:19; Luke 12:37; 19:17; Matthew 24:46; Isaiah 24:14. “Estos . . . serán como unos segundos apóstoles, y maestros nuevos de la nueva tierra, que enviados a todas las reliquias de las gentes deberán recogerlas, instruir las, civilizar las, santificar las, y como criar las de nuevo” (*ibid.*, 4:135 [3:98]). They will be like angels who go from one side of the world to another without any need of transportation (*ibid.*, 4:273 [3:197, 198]).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 4:145-151 [3:105-109].

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4:194-252 [3:141-182]. “Los antiguos sacrificios, que según las Escrituras, volverán a aparecer en el siglo venturoso, en la nueva tierra, en el nuevo y último templo de Jerusalén todavía futura, no serán entonces otra cosa, que una nueva y sapientísima liturgia instituida, y ordenada por el sumo, y eterno sacerdote Cristo Jesus” (*ibid.*, 4:235 [3:168]). This Jerusalem is not the holy city of the New Jerusalem, that according to Lacunza will come down out of heaven at the time of the coming of Christ in glory and majesty. See *ibid.*, 4:100-118 [3:73-86].

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will come as pilgrims to Jerusalem and its temple, center of unity of all the earth. This journey will be free to every individual, and compulsory, as a fundamental law for every nation, tribe, and people, by means of delegates. They will see Christ in all his glory; they will see and experience the holiness of the city and of its inhabitants, and they will see hell and its renowned reprobates resurrected to shame and everlasting contempt, which in that time will be on the surface of the earth.¹¹¹ Lacunza hints that it is possible that they will see from the outside the holy city that has come down out of heaven.¹¹²

Lacunza is unable to explain the reason why Satan is released from his prison to deceive the nations, and he asserts that John does not give any reason at all, only shows the outcome. He says that all originates with the lukewarmness in those pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and the Lord will chastise them gently as a father, then they will have no rain, and finally, God will open the door of the abyss to give freedom to Satan.¹¹³

It is fascinating to notice the steps Lacunza envisages that lead to the perversion of the globe: lukewarmness, love of personal comfort, sensuality or vain ostentation, avarice, injustices and a great hypocrisy. But this will be after a long, long time, almost an evolutionary process that can take a million years. Satan will be released from his prison and will find the nations which are in the four corners of the earth almost in the same condition as when he was bound. He will induce and infuriate them against the Jews, telling the nations that they have been deceived by the Jews for many centuries, and he personally will lead all this multitude, but not all will be deceived by him.¹¹⁴

Lacunza concludes his work by speaking of the general resurrection and the universal judgment when those who have done good will rise to eternal life, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned and thrown into the eternal fire. In the last chapter, Lacunza contends that the righteous will live forever on this new earth where Jesus Christ was born and died for us.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 4:277-309 [3:201-226]. “¿Qué medio tan excelente, y tan eficaz en sí mismo, esta peregrinación a Jerusalén, para conservar en toda su perfección la fe, el temor de Dios, y la inocencia en todos los habitantes de la tierra! . . . Mas el gran trabajo es, que la observación de esta ley fundamental no será perpetua” (*ibid.*, 4:308, 309 [3:226]. “Este residuo de las gentes, y toda su posteridad, por muchos siglos, será obligado como por una ley fundamental, e indispensable, a presentarse una vez al año en Jerusalén (sin duda por medio de dos o tres enviados de cada tribu, pueblo, o nación)” (*ibid.*, 4:332 [3:242]).

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 4:302 [3:220] In his words: “No es inverosímil que vean por de fuera la ciudad santa bajada del cielo; y si acaso esta se les oculta (como yo sospecho por estar cubierta por de fuera de alguna nube, de un modo semejante a lo que sucedió antiguamente en el Monte Sinaí), que vean a lo menos esta nube.”

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 4:332-335 [3:243-244].

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4:335-350 [3:244-254].

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4:361-433 [3:263-315].

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Lacunza's Eschatological Ideas

A careful survey of the work of Lacunza shows that he had many of the particular tenets of the extreme form of modern futurism. Also, a search of *La venida del Mesías* shows the following contemporary theological ideas:

1. The futurist interpretation of Revelation—from chapter 4 to the end of the book—is a consecutive prophecy of the last times yet to be fulfilled.¹¹⁶

2. The appearance of the antichrist is expected shortly before the coming of Christ. Lacunza maintained that the antichrist had not yet arrived in the world.¹¹⁷

3. The antichrist's persecution will last 1260 days, which is exactly 42 months or three and a half years, the exact time of the great tribulation.¹¹⁸

4. The woman who appears in Rev 12 is not the church but represents the house of Israel, the ancient spouse of God, or the house of Jacob.¹¹⁹

5. The battle mentioned in Rev 12:7-9 is not in the past, but in the future, in the last days, in the times of the antichrist.¹²⁰

6. The future regathering and conversion of Israel will occur during the tribulation of the antichrist, when God shall call “a second time the remnant of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob, faithfully accomplishing to them all the promises which he made them, even with an oath.”¹²¹

7. The 144,000 of Rev 7 are Jews and will be the third part left in the land as Zechariah said.¹²²

8. The restoration of the tabernacle of David and the restitution of the kingdom to Israel are future. Lacunza gives two meanings to this crucial passage. The first is the vocation of the Gentiles, the second, after this, is the vocation and the gathering together of the remnant of Israel dispersed among all the nations.¹²³

¹¹⁶ I only mention some doctrines found in Lacunza. He affirms that only the first three chapters are in the past. See *ibid.*, 1:408-410 [1:285-287] 3:136, 137 [2:332].

¹¹⁷ “El Anticristo, está todavía por venir” (*ibid.*, 1:128 [1:89]; 3:84 [2:294]. See also 1:431 [1:301, 302] where Lacunza says: “El Antecristo, perfecto, y completo, como lo esperamos para los últimos tiempos.”

¹¹⁸ For the three and a half years, see, *ibid.*, 1:43, 412, 450, 451, 463 [1:29, 288, 314, 324]; 2:2, 179 [1:327, 451]; 3:84, 90, 136 152, 217, 225 [2:295, 298, 332, 343, 391, 398].

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3:75-403 [2:288-404]).

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:175-176 [2:359, 360]. According to Lacunza, the battle of Michael with the dragon and the expulsion of the dragon and his angels is yet to come.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 3:232 [2:404]. Lacunza argues that the return had not yet been fulfilled: “La vuelta de la cautividad, destierro y dispersión de los hijos de Israel de que hablan las profecías, no puede ser la vuelta de algunos individuos de solas dos tribus, lo que sucedió en tiempos de Ciro” (*ibid.*, 3:40 [2:263]).

¹²² *Ibid.*, 3:112 [2:314]. Two-thirds of Israel in the land will perish and only one-third will escape. “parece pues, sumamente verosímil, que las dos terceras partes de la casa de Jacob, persigan con todas sus fuerzas a la otra parte, que ha creído” (*ibid.*, 3:115 [2:316]).

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 3:234-331 [2:405-477] Lacunza devotes 73 pages to explain Amos 9:11,12 that is quoted in Acts 15:16-18. Lacunza strongly argues that Jesus promised a future restitution of the kingdom to Israel.

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9. The division of the holy land is made among the remnant of the twelve tribes of Israel.¹²⁴

10. All unfulfilled prophecies of the Old Testament will reach complete fulfillment at the Second Coming.¹²⁵

11. Mount Zion (Jerusalem) will be raised among all the mountains, meaning that the city of David shall then be lifted up, the tabernacle of David reestablished.¹²⁶

12. The judgment and chastisement will be visited on the remnant of the nations and peoples who shall remain alive at the coming of the Lord. Some of them will enter the millennial earth.¹²⁷

13. The temple of Jerusalem will be restored and the ancient rites and sacrifices in the millennial kingdom will be reinstated. In the Millennium, not only will sacrifices not be forbidden but they will take place by God's approval and command, as the sacrifices at the temple of Jerusalem continued for forty years after the death of Christ.¹²⁸

14. The existence of the heavenly Jerusalem in the Millennium and the relationship of the immortal resurrected and translated saints with the inhabitants of the earth in the Millennium who are still in their natural bodies.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4:194-252 [3:141-182].

¹²⁵ "Then in that day (we say in conclusion), in that second time of the Messiah, shall be verified fully and perfectly, without wanting one iota or tittle, all the prophecies of which we have been speaking, and all the rest which were not verified in the former time" (*ibid.*, 3:360 [2:498]). "Then, in short, shall those innumerable prophecies be verified, of which the prophets, especially the Psalms, are full, where are announced to us, the conversion, the restitution, the future assumption of the remnant of Israel, and the change of their present state into another infinitely different" (*ibid.*, 3:222, 223 [2:396-397]).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3:354, 355 [2:494].

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3:358-360; 4:20, 21 [2:496-498; 3:14-15]. As a consequence of this judgment and this chastisement, those who shall remain alive, and their posterity, will live in peace. Lacunza also postulates an interval between the coming of the Lord and the Millennium with a duration of 45 days. And they will be blessed because they will be of the few untouched by the two-edged sword of the King of kings, and they will be worthy to enter the millennial earth (*ibid.*, 4:96-99 [3:70-72]).

¹²⁸ Lacunza is crystal clear and argues that the sacrifices in the temple of Jerusalem are prohibited in the Christian church, but not forever. He reasons that because there is no temple in Jerusalem, no sacrifice could be offered. Therefore, sacrifices will continue to be prohibited until the end and the consummation of the age, according to Dan 9:27. But when the temple is rebuilt, there will be sacrifices. "The ancient sacrifices which, according to the Scriptures, shall come to reappear in the future age, in the new earth, in the new and last temple of Jerusalem, will be nothing else than a new and most wise liturgy instituted and ordained by the Eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ" (*ibid.*, 4:235, 211-251 [3:168; 152-182]). "I know in like manner, that the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross having been most fully verified, the sacrifices of that temple did not cease, but continued without any alteration" (*ibid.*, 4:228 [3:163]).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 4:100-151 [3:86-109]. Lacunza remarks that the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem shall go from the city and personally visit the whole orb of the earth. It is conspicuous that the four propositions about the heavenly Jerusalem by a modern futurist are a perfect summary of Lacunza's view: (1) that the heavenly Jerusalem is the eternal habitation of the resurrected and translated saints; (2) that this heavenly Jerusalem is in existence in the Millennium; (3) that the Scriptures teach that

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15. In the Millennium, the terrestrial Jerusalem will be the capital and center of unity of the whole earth, and there will be in this capital a magnificent temple as Ezekiel saw. All nations will go to Jerusalem.¹³⁰

16. Some deaths will occur in the Millennium, but rarely shall lamentation and crying be heard in those blessed times.¹³¹

17. The few who remain alive upon the earth after the Second Coming, and all their most numerous posterity, will for many centuries, will for a thousand years, “continue the judgment of Christ upon the living; or which appears the same, his kingdom over the living and the sojourners, until the end of the Millennium.”¹³²

18. Gog and Magog of Revelation 20 are not the same as those that appear in Ezekiel 38 and 39. The events of Ezekiel must happen before the coming of the Lord, when the Jews are in the land of their fathers; the other is one thousand years after the Second Coming. The Gog and Magog of the Revelation are the nations in the four corners of the earth. In number they are like the sand on the seashore, and all of them are people who will be deceived by Satan at the end of the millennium.¹³³

19. Lacunza has some allusions, although in an embryonic form, that seem to imply that after the Second Coming of Christ some people will remain alive during the time of the antichrist’s tribulation.¹³⁴

20. Lacunza refers to the Millennium as a more perfect era or dispensation when universal peace and universal righteousness will reign.¹³⁵

there is some participation of these resurrected saints in the government of the Millennium; and (4) that there will be some kind of relationship between the resurrected and translated saints with the saints of the millennial earth. See John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Findlay, OH: Dunham Publishing Co., 1959. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Academie Books, Zondervan, 1981, 1988).

¹³⁰ Lacunza, *La venida del Mesías*, 4:67, 233, 292 [3:49, 166, 212].

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 4:53, 66, 79 [3:38, 48, 57].

¹³² *Ibid.*, 4:20, 21 [3:14, 15]. We must remember that Lacunza maintains that the one thousand years are not a thousand literal years.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 4:345-360 [3:251-262]. Lacunza argues that Ezekiel speaks of the conversion, the restitution, the assumption, and the fullness of the precious remnants of Jacob, against which the multitude of Gog shall set themselves with all their might (*ibid.*, 4:354 [3:258]).

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:191, 192 [2:370-371] “Para las gentes que quedaren vivas en la tierra, después de la venida del Señor, como es ciertísimo que han de quedar” (*ibid.*); 3:355 [2:497-498] “Los que quedaren vivos después de la venida del Señor, como parece ciertísimo, que han de quedar” (*ibid.* 3:355 [2:494, 495]); “Me parece ciertísimo que quedarán vivos muchos individuos” (*ibid.*, 4:14-16 [3:7-10]).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4:277-308 [3:199-222]. Lacunza says that the Millennium is the fifth eternal kingdom which will be established upon the earth, and the residue of nations, no less than the remnant of Israel, will multiply in peace and will fill the whole earth. Lacunza goes on to say that “all times have not been equal and uniform; that God hath in some times given more than in others; that in the latter times there has always been more given than in the times before; that his mystery towards men hath been more opened from day to day” (*ibid.*, 4:275 [3:199]).

Conclusions and Evaluation: Key Ideas in Lacunza

1. First of all, we agree with Froom when he says that “Lacunza was a solitary voice just before the early dawn of the nineteenth-century revival of the advent hope and the beginning of the great second advent world movement.”¹³⁶ Indisputably Lacunza has his own merits.

2. Lacunza holds to the literal interpretation of the Scriptures, but his interpretation of the 1,000 years seems to be allegorical. He never affirms clearly that the one thousand years are 1,000 literal years. He goes on to say that “it can be 100,000 or one million years of justice and innocence,”¹³⁷ whereas when he speaks of the three and a half times or 1260, or 1290, or 1335 days he always interprets them as literal days.¹³⁸ Consequently, a contradiction seems to exist in his exegetical method. His method is not consistent. Lacunza, who analyzes and examines everything in detail, never gives any reason for this exegesis of the one thousand years, or, for that matter of the prophetic periods of time.

3. He does not explain why mortal people who enter the millennium will live so many years as he assumes, without first being changed. He claims that after the second coming of Christ, the promise of Isaiah 65:17-25 and 2 Peter 3:13, the new heaven and the new earth, the home of the righteous, will be fulfilled on this earth in the millennium, before the universal resurrection.¹³⁹

4. Concerning the book of Revelation, he correctly says that it has many allusions to the Old Testament, and it is the true and unique key to all the prophets and must be decoded according to the Old Testament.¹⁴⁰ Lacunza is right when he affirms that the Apocalypse has to be studied in the light of the Old Testament, but he is wrong when he claims that all its prophecies are in the future.

5. The determining key to his system is his interpretation of the stone in Daniel 2 as the second coming of Christ in glory and majesty and not as His first coming or as the Catholic church being the great mountain, and he is right. Lacunza maintains that the two advents of Christ are the center of all prophecy and the goal of all history.¹⁴¹

6. Concerning the interpretation of Daniel 7, Lacunza is whimsical and destroys the parallelism with the rest of the prophecies in Daniel. In his exegesis of Daniel 2, he follows a certain historical continuity. In Daniel 7, he destroys this

¹³⁶ Froom, 3:207.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4:337 [3:248].

¹³⁸ See for instance, *ibid.*, 4:97 [3:70].

¹³⁹ See, *ibid.*, 4:63-65, 92-99, 259-276 [3:46-48, 66-72, 186-200].

¹⁴⁰ See for instance, *ibid.*, 4:328 [3:239-240]. In his own words: “¿Cómo de ha de entender este Libro Divino, si los lugares más notables a los que alude frecuentísimamente, ya sea los libros de Moisés, ya de los Salmos, ya de los profetas; si estos lugares, digo, no se reciben, sino en cuanto pueden ser favorables? . . . El Apocalipsis, Señor mío, no es tan oscuro si se quiere atender a sus vivas y casi continuas allusiones . . . Toda su oscuridad pudiera pasar de la noche al día, si se estudiassen dichas alusiones” (*ibid.*, 3:100 [2:305]).

¹⁴¹ See for instance, *ibid.*, 1:280-283 [1:195-197].

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historical continuity when he argues that Mohammedanism is the second beast, and false Christianity the third. Moreover, if the beasts come up out of the water one after another, and if the chapter has some historical sequence as he claims, then he is incorrect on all counts.¹⁴²

7. While Lacunza completed his book at the beginning of the French Revolution, he lived on for another decade and could have revised it, but he didn't understand the event of 1798 when the Pope was taken prisoner and died in French captivity. He says that the mystery of the mortal wound of the beast is something that occurs in the future because the Antichrist is in the future, and his explanation of this fact is confusing and vague.¹⁴³

8. Lacunza follows the hermeneutics of literalism, and for this reason he contends that all Old Testament prophecies about the kingdom will be fulfilled literally in the millennium in a literal Israel. Nevertheless, to explain why the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, will come down out of heaven at the second coming, and not at the end of the one thousand years, he seems to apply the recapitulationist method of interpretation. He never uses the typological method to interpret the Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom. Lacunza never grasped the gospel principle that Abraham is the father of all believers, and his exegesis is not Christ centered.¹⁴⁴

9. For Lacunza, the essential thing is the future, the kingdom, the new heaven and the new earth. Therefore, Lacunza doesn't interpret the centuries between the apostolic church and his own time. He almost bypasses the Christian era and acknowledges no signs of the coming of Christ, except the Antichrist and the conversion of the Jews. He never brings into discussion the eschatological discourse of Jesus about the signs of the end of the age. There is no exegesis of Matthew 24 or Mark 13. His preoccupation seems to be with the Old Testament, the Jews, and the Antichrist, in the context of a somewhat allegorical millennium.

10. Even though he speaks of the harlot as papal Rome, nevertheless he never suggests that the papal institution could be the Antichrist. The Pope, La-

¹⁴² See for instance, *ibid.*, 3:128-131 [2:326-329].

¹⁴³ See *ibid.*, 1:433-442 [1:303-308].

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 4:100-104 [3:73-76]. He acknowledges that this event appears in chapter 21, after the universal resurrection and judgment of chapter 20, but he contends that this is a casual circumstance and explains: "San Juan observa y sigue en este lugar el mismo orden, y método, que ha venido observando constantemente en toda su profecía: es a saber, cuando dos o tres o más misterios concurren en un mismo tiempo, los divide o los separa el uno del otro; habla del uno como si no hubiese otro, y este lo lleva hasta su fin: concluido este, vuelve cuatro pasos atrás, y tomando el otro, lo lleva del mismo modo hasta su fin . . . Este orden y método del Apocalipsis desde el principio hasta el fin, es facilísimo, y sería convenientísimo observarlo bien: sin la cual observación, y conocimiento pleno, no concibo como pueda entenderse bien este libro divino, que comprende en tan poco volumen tantos y tan grandes misterios, pertenecientes todos, a lo menos desde el capítulo 4, a la revelación de Jesucristo, o lo que es lo mismo, a su segunda venida en gloria y majestad" (*ibid.*, 4:102 [3:74]).

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cunza recognizes, “is Christ’s vicar on earth and head of the true church” until His coming.¹⁴⁵

11. In this same vein, Lacunza provides the first insight of modern ecumenism when he states that the Catholic church is the pillar and foundation of the truth, the incorruptible and faithful depository of the truth, and the bishop of Rome, the Pope, is the true center of the whole circumference of the Christian world.¹⁴⁶

12. Concerning the existence of life in the cosmos, of rational creatures in other worlds, like us, Lacunza believes that it may be possible, because God is all-powerful, but no one knows for sure. In any case, according to Lacunza, if there are creatures with body and soul, similar to us, they must belong to Jesus Christ. Lacunza ponders if before or after the death and resurrection of the man-God, they have had some divine mission by means of the ministry and work of the holy angels and of some illustrious righteous of every globe, like an Enoch, a Noah, an Abraham, a Moses, a David. He also wonders if some or all of them have sinned. But in any case, declares Lacunza, all the countless worlds that we see, and those that we can’t see, are the eternal inheritance of the man-God, and therefore pertain to all of us, who are his youngest brothers, “heirs of God and coheirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17), particularly after the universal resurrection.¹⁴⁷

13. Lacunza has a good principle of hermeneutics when he says that we must explain an unclear text through hundreds of clear textual references and not the other way around.¹⁴⁸

14. In interpreting the Old Testament prophecies, Lacunza emphasizes the hope of a future Jewish restoration. He applies the messianic Old Testament prophecies to Jesus the Messiah, who will reign over history after the restoration of the Davidic kingdom after his second coming. This is evident throughout his treatise. On the other hand, when Lacunza contends that the thousand years could be 200,000 generation, he does not keep a balance between history as such and the millennial Kingdom of Christ.

15. Another important consideration is that Lacunza never worries about the exact time of the second coming of Christ. He never gives any reason for the apparent delay. He never exegetes the famous texts of 1 Peter 3:8 or Psalms

¹⁴⁵ *La venida del Mesías.*, 2:396 [2:162]. All the authority of this church “está y estará hasta que él venga, en sus legítimos sucesores, que son los obispos, y sobre todo en el sucesor del príncipe de los apóstoles, San Pedro, que es el obispo de Roma, al cual llamamos todos los católicos el papa, o padre común, o el *sumo pontífice*, y a quien reconocemos por vicario de Cristo en la tierra” (*ibid.*). See also 3:243 [2:411].

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:394-396 [2:160-162] Says Lacunza: “Por consiguiente, reconocemos a este obispo de Roma por el verdadero centro de unidad, a donde deben encaminarse, y llegar, y comunicar con él, todas las líneas que parten de toda la circunferencia del orbe cristiano; y las que no se encaminaren a este centro, ni comunicaren con él, van ciertamente desviadas, ni pertenecen a la unidad esencial, al cuerpo de Cristo, ni a la verdadera iglesia cristiana” (*ibid.*, 2:396 [2:162]).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 4:405-412 [3:293-299].

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4:89 [3:64]; see also 4:253-255 [3:183-184].

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90:4. Consequently, he never asks himself the question that seems to preoccupy so many Christians today: when will this happen? (Matt. 24:3). He lived in the midst of the eschatological agitation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe and America. He was apocalyptic, saw the imminence of the kingdom of God, and lived in a atmosphere of imminence.

Finally we must say that one essential contribution of Lacunza had been the recovery of the faith in the second coming of Christ, filling an objective empty space in the theology of the last part of the eighteenth century. His work not only furthered futurism but was very timely in furthering the great awakening of the nineteenth century, as well.