

**The Early Church  
and  
The Post-Tribulational Rapture**

**The early Church fathers were universally Post-tribulational.**

**Which is to say they expected the Church to face the Great Tribulation and the Antichrist.**

**Not a single witness supports any expectation of a Pretribulational rapture.**

**Didache**

**Epistle of Barnabas**

**Shepherd of Hermas**

**Justin Martyr**

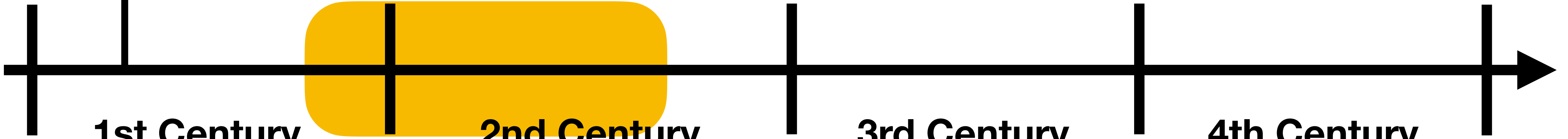
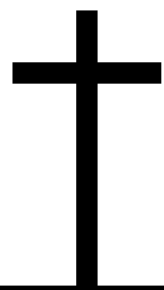


**1st Century**

**2nd Century**

**3rd Century**

**4th Century**



## The Didache (c.70–c.120)

“[T]hen shall appear the deceiver of the world ... and he shall commit iniquities which have never been since the world began. Then shall the creation of mankind come to the fiery trial and many shall be offended and be lost, but they who endure in their faith shall be saved ... Then shall the world see the Lord coming on the clouds of Heaven.”

(Didache 16:4–8)

## Epistle of Barnabas (c.80–c.100)

**“The final stumbling-block approaches ... That the Black One [Antichrist] may find no means of entrance, let us flee from every vanity, let us utterly hate the works of the way of wickedness... Take heed, lest resting at our ease, as those who are the called [of God], we should fall asleep in our sins, and the wicked prince, acquiring power over us, should thrust us away from the kingdom of the Lord.”**

**(Epistle of Barnabas, 4)**

## The Shepherd of Hermas (c.95–c.150)

**“[Blessed are] you who endure the great tribulation that is coming on, and they who shall not deny their own life.”**

**(Vision 2:2)**

**“Those, therefore, who continue steadfast, and are put through the fire, will be purified by means of it.”**

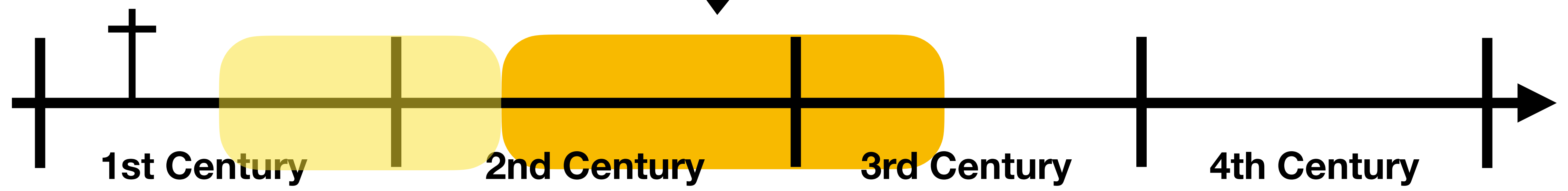
**(Vision 4:3)**

## Justin Martyr (AD 100-165)

**“...two advents of Christ have been announced: The one, in which He is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonored, and crucified; but the other, in which He shall come from heaven with glory, when the man of apostasy, who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians...”**

**— Dialogue with Trypho, Ch. 110**

**Irenaeus**  
**Hippolytus**  
**Tertullian**





## Irenaeus (c.130-202)

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but shall receive power as if kings one hour with the beast” ... And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight. After that they shall be destroyed by the coming of our Lord.

(Against Heresies, V, 26, 1)

## Irenaeus (c.130-202)

It is therefore more certain, and less hazardous, to await the fulfillment of the prophecy [concerning the revealing of the Antichrist], than to be making surmises, and casting about for any names that may present themselves, inasmuch as many names can be found possessing the number mentioned; and the same question will, after all, remain unsolved. . . . But he indicates the number of the name now, so that when this man comes we may avoid him, being aware who he is.

(Against Heresies, V, 30, 3, 4)

## Irenaeus (c.120–202)

“For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in which the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord”

(Against Heresies, V, 35, 1)

## Irenaeus (c.120–202)

And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, “There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.” For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.

(Against Heresies, V, 29, 1)

## Hippolytus (c.185–235)

**“For when the times advance, he too, [the Antichrist] of whom these things are said, will be manifested ... Now, concerning the tribulation of the persecution which is to fall upon the Church from the adversary ... That refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church.**

**(Hippolytus, Treatise on Christ and Antichrist, 50, 60, 61, cf. 60–67)**

## Hippolytus (c.185–235)

When the times are fulfilled, and the ten horns spring from the beast in the last (times), then Antichrist will appear among them. When he makes war against the saints, and persecutes them, then may we expect the manifestation of the Lord from heaven.

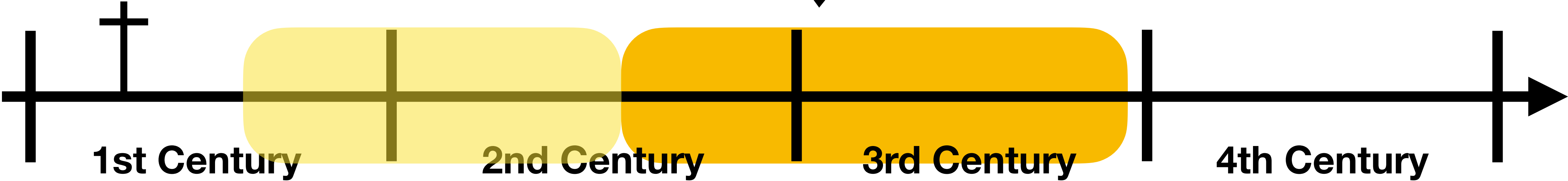
(On Daniel, II, 7)

**Tertullian (c.160-220)**

**“...Antichrist with his false prophet may wage war on the Church of God; and that, after the casting of the devil into the bottomless pit for a while...”**

**(On the Resurrection of the Flesh  
Vol. 3, Chapter 25)**

**Cyprian**  
**Victorinus**  
**Cyril of Jerusalem**





**Cyprian (c.200-258)**

**“Nor let any one of you, beloved brethren, be so terrified by the fear of future persecution, or the coming of the threatening Antichrist, as not to be found armed for all things by the evangelical exhortations and precepts, and by the heavenly warnings. Antichrist is coming...but immediately the Lord follows to avenge our sufferings and our wounds.”**

**(Epistles of Cyprian, Epistle 55, 7)**

**Victorinus (c.270)**

**“The little season signifies three years and six months, in which with all his power the devil will avenge himself under Antichrist against the church.”**

**(Commentary on the Apocalypse, 20)**

## Victorinus (c.270)

“‘And I saw, when he had opened the sixth seal, there was a great earthquake.’ In the sixth seal, then, was a great earthquake: this is that very last persecution. ‘And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair.’ The sun becomes as sackcloth; that is, the brightness of doctrine will be obscured by unbelievers. ‘And the entire moon became as blood.’ By the moon of blood is set forth the Church of the saints as pouring out her blood for Christ. ‘And the stars fell to the earth.’ The falling of the stars are the faithful who are troubled for Christ’s sake.

(Commentary on the Apocalypse)

## Victorinus (c.270)

**‘Even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs.’ The fig-tree, when shaken, loses its untimely figs – when men are separated from the Church by persecution. ‘And the heaven withdrew as a scroll that is rolled up.’ For the heaven to be rolled away, that is, that the Church shall be taken away. ‘And every mountain and the islands were moved from their places.’ Mountains and islands removed from their places intimate that in the last persecution all men departed from their places; that is, that the good will be removed, seeking to avoid the persecution.**

**(Victorinus, Commentary on the Apocalypse)**

## **Victorinus (c.270)**

**"(Satan) must be loosed for a little season. The little season signifies three years and six months, in which with all his power the devil will avenge himself under Antichrist against the Church."**

**(Commentary on Revelation 20)**

## Victorinus (c.270)

**“The woman flew into the desert with the assistance of the wings of a great eagle,” that is, of two prophets. This is the whole catholic church.”**

**(Commentary on Revelation 16)**

## Victorinus (c.270)

**“I saw an angel descending from the rising of the sun.” He is speaking of Elijah the prophet, who was to come before the time of antichrist to restore and to strengthen the churches from the intolerable persecution.**

**(Commentary on Revelation 7)**

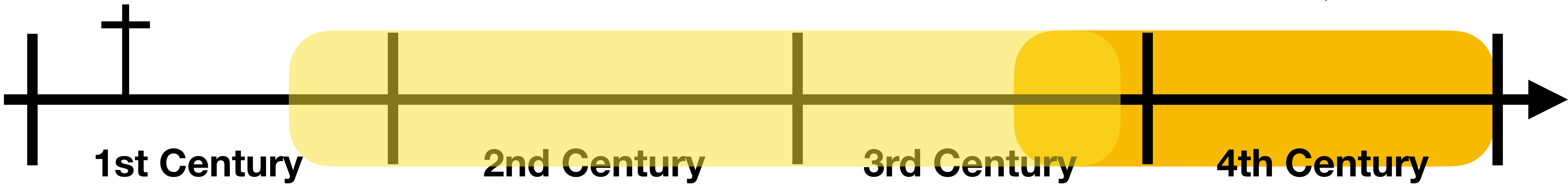
## Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 355-386)

**“He (Antichrist) will display a murderous, most absolute, pitiless and unstable temper toward all people, but especially toward us Christians. He will act insolently for only three and a half years. Then he will be defeated by the glorious second coming from heaven of the only-begotten Son of God, our Lord and Savior Jesus, the true Christ. He will destroy Antichrist ‘with the spirit of his mouth’ and commit him to the flames of hell.”**

**(Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Letters 15.12)**



**Ambriostater**  
**Ephraim the Syrian**  
**Methodius**



## **Ambriostater (c. 366-384)**

**“Paul pointed out the time and the signs of Christ’s return. The Lord would not come back until ... the antichrist appeared, who would kill the saints... He would even sit in Christ’s seat in the house of God, as God himself.”**

**(Commentary on 2 Thessalonians 2)**

**Ephraim the Syrian (c.306–373)**

**“Therefore before the rise of the Man of Wickedness, we must teach and admonish people [about] his ways, and his deceits...**

**Even our Savior said ‘If possible, he would lead astray many of the elect.’ ”**

**(An Exposition of The Gospel, 93)**

Methodius of Olympus (c. 311)

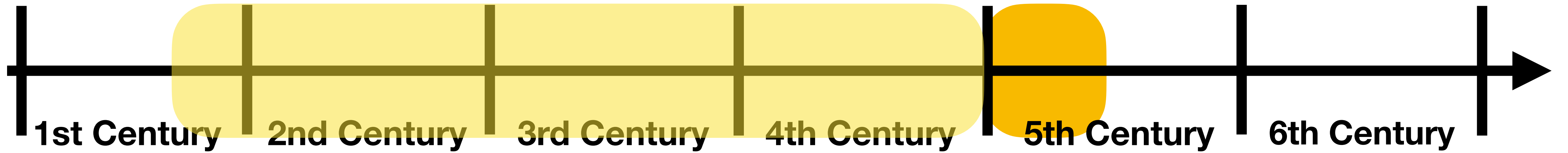
**“Now she who brings forth... who passed, undefiled and uninjured by the wrath of the beast, into the wilderness, is, as we have explained, our mother the Church... And the thousand two hundred and sixty days that we are staying here, O virgins, is the accurate and perfect understanding”**  
**(The Banquet of the Ten Virgins 8.11)**

## Methodius of Olympus (c. 311)

**“Do not, therefore, lose courage on account of the schemes and slanders of the beast, but bravely prepare for the battle, armed with the helmet of salvation, and the breastplate, and the greaves.”**

**(The Banquet of the Ten Virgins 8.12)**

**Andrew  
of Caesarea**



## Andrew of Caesarea (c. 410)

**“At the end, with a superabundance beyond everything, so to speak, these things will come on the world at the coming of the antichrist, as he is called. At that time, the great men, whether those who hold office in the church ... and the churches of the faithful... they will flee from their places, changing from place to place on account of the false christ.”**

**(Commentary on Revelation, 6)**

## Andrew of Caesarea (c. 410)

**“That the holy city, whether that is the new Jerusalem or the catholic church, will be trampled by the nations for forty-two months signifies, I believe, that at the appearance of the antichrist those who are faithful and trustworthy will be trampled and persecuted for three and a half years.”**

**(Commentary on Revelation, 11)**



Andrew of Caesarea (c. 410)

**“When the devil through the antichrist in whom he works arrays himself for battle against the church, those in the church who are elect and preeminent will spit on the tumults of life and the desires of the world and flee into that desert devoid of every evil.”**

**(Commentary on Revelation, 12)**

## Andrew of Caesarea (c. 410)

**"All of these things are symbolized by the wings of the eagle, and they were given to the church so that taking flight by them into the desert... To be sure, this occurs always, but it will especially be so at the coming of the antichrist, who will rule everywhere, it is written, for the designated time of three and a half years."**

**(Commentary on Revelation, 12)**

Andrew of Caesarea (c. 410)

**“Since the orthodox teachers of the church and those who disdain the world retreat to the rigor of the desert, the antichrist does not neglect them but wages war, it says, against those who struggle in the world for Christ.”**

**(Commentary on Revelation, 12)**

## Andrew of Caesarea (c. 410)

**“And so the body of the church will be united to Christ, our head. The eternal gospel, which from eternity was foreordained by God, says, “Fear God, but have no fear of the antichrist who cannot kill the soul with the body; rather, fervently stand opposed to him who has power but for a short time””**

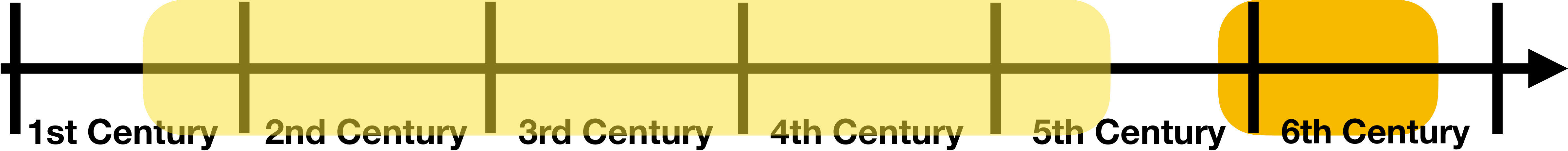
**(Commentary on Revelation, 14)**

**Andrew of Caesarea (c. 410)**

**“The book (of Revelation) displays the persecution against the church, the downfall of the devil, the coming of the antichrist and the deceit of the false prophet”**

**(Commentary on Revelation, 22)**

**Primasius**  
**Oecumenienus**



## Primasius (c.550-560)

**“For a time he (Antichrist) will attain power, which he will use in an evil way to harm the body of Christ, so that as Christ suffers, the persecutors praise the beast all the more since Christ is crucified more cruelly with his saints. Of this power the Lord said, “You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above.” If, therefore, at the time of his passion Christ had temporarily given power to his persecutors, although the prince of this world could find in him nothing worthy of death, why is it surprising that in his church he allows evil persons to attack, so that one might say that the beast has defeated them?”**

**(Commentary on the Apocalypse 13:7)**

## Oecumenius (c.590-640)

**“‘These (the ten kings) will make war on the Lamb,’ it says. For before they are wholly destroyed by the antichrist, these kings, about whom the passage is speaking, will persecute the church... And Christ will triumph in another way also, since his servants struggle to death for their faith in him.”**

**(Commentary on the Apocalypse 17)**