

DECLARATION

**THE OBEDIENCE OF THE CHURCH AS A PRELUDE TO  
THE PAROUSIA:  
ECCLESIAL AND TEMPORAL FACTORS IN NEW TESTAMENT  
ESCHATOLOGY**

by

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**submitted in fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree**

**PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR**

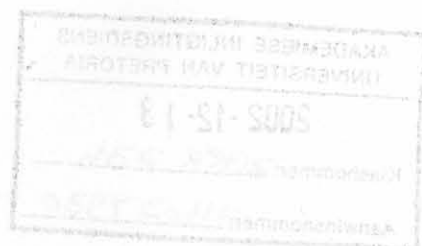
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**FACULTY OF THEOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

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**MAY 2002**



## DECLARATION

"I declare that the dissertation/thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at another university."

SIGNED

  
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(by Paul Hartwig)

DATE

24<sup>th</sup> May 2002.

PLACE

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## KEY TERMS

Eschatology; Ecclesiology; Parousia; Amillennialism; Premillennialism; Postmillennialism; Darby; Latter-Day Glory; Church Perfection; Obedience; Typology; *Naherwartung*; *Fernerwartung*; Last-Days; Salvation-history; Preterist; Historicist; Futurist; Apocalyptic; Theophany.

## SUMMARY

This thesis investigates the possibility, nature and implications of a pre-parousial ecclesial maturity within the context of New Testament eschatology. It is a biblical presentation of the hope for the completion of the church's internal and external mission prior to the Parousia, arguing that the obedience of the church in its accomplishment of its mission both expedites and precipitates the terminal apocalyptic events. This subject of ecclesial obedience and maturity is diametrically opposed to the temporal ecclesial factors evinced in the dispensational theology of the 19<sup>th</sup> century figure John Nelson Darby. The thesis is an attempt to marry the historical nature of the church mission with both the eschatological and apocalyptic program of the New Testament, rather than positing her removal from this earth as the event to precipitate the end-time program. Through a study of the nature of the Parousia and its temporal aspects, we are introduced to the problems of the temporal nature of the interadventual period, specifically the relationship between the *Naherwartung* and *Fernerwartung* in the New Testament. It is argued that this problem is mitigated once it is shown that the degree of imminency is determined by the actualisation of ecclesial obedience in both internal and external forms. The extensive and intensive upbuilding of the church is thus determinative for the duration of the interadventual period.

Of primary importance is the New Testament motif of the expectation of a latter-day glory of the church. Once this has been biblically established, and the actuality of a definitive and temporal maturity of the church prior to the Parousia is posited, it is argued that this epochal event is the primary factor for understanding the timing of the apocalyptic events of the terminal generation.

Lastly, the thesis also provides a synoptic model of an eclectic integration of the traditional issues of New Testament temporal eschatology, namely, amillennialism, postmillennialism, premillennialism, as well as the preterist, historicist and futurist schools of interpretation. It is argued that these views can be integrated in a coherent manner once the factors of globalisation and intensification (effected by the church) are introduced into the inaugurated aspects of New Testament eschatology.

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Lastly, due to the scope of the topic and the diversity of opinion, footnotes have been used. These will hopefully provide the reader with important explanation and help in further study.