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ROBERT H. GUNDRY AND REVELATION 3:10

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Robert Gundry's interpretation of Rev 3:10 is impossible grammatically and linguistically. The separation of the expression τηρέω ἐκ into two separate and contradictory aspects is a grammatical impossibility. In addition, the lexical meanings Gundry assigns to the verb and preposition are impossible in the expression τηρέω ἐκ unless this grammatically incorrect separation is maintained. On a purely factual basis, it is shown that, contrary to Gundry's statements, the expression τηρέω ἐκ is ideally suited to the pretribulational perspective of Rev 3:10.

* * *

Rev 3:10 states, "Because thou has kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."

This verse, which promises that believers will be "kept from the hour of trial coming on the entire earth," seems to teach a pretribulational rapture (departure of the church to be with the Lord before the tribulation period). The words τηρήσω ἐκ ("keep from," "keep out of") seem clear. However, those who believe that the rapture occurs at the end of the tribulation (posttribulational rapture) argue that τηρήσω ἐκ does not support a pretribulational rapture, but instead means "protect through," or "protect in" the tribulation, or some similar concept.

A relatively recent argument against a pretribulational rapture, which stresses that τηρήσω ἐκ does not mean "keep from" the time of tribulation, is *The Church and the Tribulation*, by Robert H. Gundry. The publishers state on the flyleaf that they believe "it will become the standard text on the posttribulational viewpoint of the rapture of the church."¹ However, Gundry's book is best described as an

¹Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973).

argument against pretribulationism rather than as support for post-tribulationism, since the book consists of an attempt to refute the ideas of pretribulationism rather than a real positive argument for a posttribulationist rapture. Any attempt to derive Gundry's "system" from his book is very difficult, since he does not state it explicitly and some of his arguments and conclusions contradict others.

Rather than discuss Gundry's entire book, this article focuses on the section dealing with Rev 3:10, and particularly the discussion of τηρήσω ἐκ. Although many pretribulationists do not seem to realize the force of Rev 3:10, those who write against pretribulationism do and recognize the necessity to explain the plain statements of the verse in a manner consistent with their position. Gundry's basic contention is that τηρέω means "to keep or protect in a sphere of danger," and that ἐκ means "emergence from within" something. Therefore, τηρήσω ἐκ means "to protect believers in the tribulation period with a final emergence" near the end of the tribulation. He also argues that John would have used ἀπό or some similar preposition rather than ἐκ if he referred to a pretribulationist rapture. When this work first appeared, I noticed a basic exegetical error regarding τηρήσω ἐκ. An analysis of Gundry's work shows that his view of τηρήσω ἐκ is a grammatical and logical impossibility, and his statement that ἀπό would be more appropriate than ἐκ for a pretribulationist view of Rev 3:10 is unfounded.

GUNDRY'S EXEGESIS

General inconsistencies

As noted earlier, Gundry does not specifically state the precise system or order of events involved in his view. This must be deduced from the discussion. However, this is more difficult than one would expect due to inconsistencies in his statements and argumentation. An example from his discussion of Rev 3:10 will demonstrate this. He argues from Rev 3:10 that the expression "kept from the hour of trial" means that Christians will be kept *through* the tribulation period (the hour of trial) and be delivered out of it at the last moment when God's strong wrath is poured out on the earth.² After a long discussion emphasizing the fact that believers will be kept through the hour and finally taken out of it, he then argues on the basis of the word ὥρα ("hour") that the "hour of testing may refer only to the very last crisis at the close of the tribulation."³ It is clear from numerous statements in the book that he believes that the church will

²Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 55-60.

³Ibid., 61.

not go through this "last crisis" at the close of the tribulation. It will be taken out prior to this "last crisis"; it will be raptured pre-"final crisis", i.e., pre-"hour of testing." However, this is the same "hour of testing" which he earlier insists the church will be in and from which it will emerge at the end. This seems to be a contradiction.

First, Gundry assumes that the "hour of trial" is the tribulation period and presents a sustained argument on the basis of τηρήσω ἕκ that "kept from the hour of trial" means "protected in the hour of trial and only delivered at the end." Then he argues from the same passage on the basis of another word in the same phrase, ὥρα, that the "hour of trial" may refer to the last crisis rather than the tribulation. However, the church will not be kept in and eventually emerge from the hour of trial or last crisis, but will be delivered before the "hour." But what about the argument that τηρήσω ἕκ proves "protection in and eventual emergence?" For Gundry, τηρήσω ἕκ can mean "keep completely out of" if the hour is the "last crisis," but must mean "keep in and eventually out" if the hour is the entire tribulation. Despite all his argument for τηρήσω ἕκ as "protect in with eventual emergence," Gundry apparently has no problem dispensing with all of it and taking τηρήσω ἕκ as "keep out of" (as pre-tribulationists say) if the hour refers to the final crisis, since his position requires it. His meaning for τηρήσω ἕκ apparently can fluctuate, depending on the meaning of "hour," in whatever way is necessary to preserve his preconceived view. If Gundry believes that the church will be removed before the "final crisis," then apparently he does not really believe that τηρήσω ἕκ in Rev 3:10 means "keep in with final emergence" on the basis of exegesis of τηρήσω ἕκ, as he claims; rather, the determinative factor for the meaning of τηρήσω ἕκ seems to be the meaning he assumes for the hour of trial. In other words, the exegetical meanings are controlled by a presumed post-tribulation position. If Gundry believes that the "hour of trial" may be the "final crisis," then to be consistent he should argue that the church will be kept in the final crisis (hour) and eventually emerge. He cannot do this, however, and still maintain one of his basic arguments, namely, that the church does not experience God's wrath. This manner of argument, which proceeds as if each word is in isolation from those around it and gives one meaning to a biblical expression in order to argue a specific point and then assigns the same expression a different and contradictory meaning to argue another point, is typical of the book.

The next section will discuss the most glaring blunder in Gundry's exegesis, a classic case of losing sight of the forest due to the trees. The most amazing fact is that those who have evaluated Gundry's book have either not noticed it or paid little attention to it, although they have pointed out other obvious inconsistencies.

The impossibility of Gundry's view of the meaning of τηρήσω ἐκ

Gundry argues that the preposition ἐκ means "out from within" and that its primary sense is emergence.⁴ From this he concludes that ἐκ requires that the church be in the hour of the tribulation so that it can emerge from within. He also argues that τηρέω "always occurs for protection within the sphere of danger."⁵ He then states regarding τηρήσω ἐκ, "we properly understand τηρέω ἐκ as protection issuing in emission."⁶ He adds, "Presence within the period is directly implied."⁷ He clearly states that this emission is not at the beginning of the tribulation period⁸ but in the final stage, that is, after a prolonged time of "keeping" or protection in the tribulation period.

Gundry has been accused of separating the verb and the preposition into two separate acts. In response to criticism he states that he does not separate the two.⁹ Let us look at some facts. (1) If ἐκ means "emergence" or "emission" and τηρέω always means "protection within the sphere of danger" (both of which Gundry claims), then the *only* way one can conclude (as Gundry does) that τηρέω ἐκ¹⁰ is protection through most of the tribulation issuing in emission near the end of the tribulation period is to take each word separately and add the individual meanings. This is to treat the words as though they were two individual entries in a dictionary and ignore the fact that they are in a clause and function together. There is no way to deny that he has done this; Gundry's denials cannot disprove the obvious fact that he *has* separated the two. (2) Additional statements by Gundry¹¹ in his book make it clear that he does separate the verb and the preposition. Arguing that ἐκ means "emergence from within," but trying to refute any attempts to have the emergence at the beginning of the tribulation, Gundry, arguing that τηρέω requires definite keeping in the tribulation period, states,

. . . if we imagine that ἐκ denotes exit, but say that the church will be caught out right after the *beginning* of the seventieth week, we render the word τηρέω (*keep* or *guard*) practically meaningless. . . . It would be sheer sophistry to say that the church will be removed immediately

⁴Ibid., 55-56.

⁵Ibid., 58 [emphasis mine].

⁶Ibid., 59.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., 57.

⁹Robert H. Gundry, excerpts from a letter dated June 28, 1974.

¹⁰The lexical form τηρέω ἐκ will be used from now on in the discussion rather than the future τηρήσω as it actually occurs in Rev 3:10.

¹¹Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57.

upon entrance into the hour, for then the keeping will last only for an instant and the promise becomes devoid of real meaning.¹²

It is obvious from this quotation that Gundry wants to have a definite, prolonged period of keeping (τηρέω) as well as eventual emission (ἐκ). This requires not τηρέω ἐκ but τηρέω καὶ . . . ἐκ. If any more evidence is required to demonstrate the separation of the verb from the preposition into two aspects, a statement in the next paragraph of Gundry's book leaves no room for doubt. Gundry explains why he thinks other prepositions which would be more clearly posttribulational were not used in Rev 3:10: they do not have the proper emphasis. Then he explains why ἐκ is used: "As it is, ἐκ lays all the emphasis on emergence, in this verse on the final, victorious outcome of the keeping-guarding."¹³ Here he insists on the full meaning of "emergence from within" for the preposition ἐκ.

From these two quotations it is clear that Gundry argues that τηρέω demands a definite and extended time of "keeping-guarding" and that ἐκ lays all the emphasis on emergence as the outcome of the keeping-guarding. As he states numerous times, τηρέω ἐκ means a prolonged period of keeping in the tribulation with emission at the final stage since otherwise, he feels, τηρέω and ἐκ lose their meaning. Contrary to his denial, he *has* concluded that the meaning of τηρέω ἐκ is the sum of the meanings of τηρέω taken independently and ἐκ taken independently. In fact, it is even worse, since τηρέω ceases functioning near the end of the hour and ἐκ does not function at all until the last moment.

However, this piecemeal approach to exegesis is a grammatical impossibility. When a verb is followed by a prepositional phrase, as here, the prepositional phrase gives the direction to the verb. An illustration will help. "Stand up" in English does not mean stand for a while and eventually climb up. It is one action, i.e., standing in the upward direction, that is, rising. "Keep out" does not mean keep in for a while and eventually come out. It is one action, to keep in a certain direction, to keep out, i.e., stay out of. To interpret Acts 12:5 as Gundry does Rev 3:10 would mean that Peter was being protected (kept) by the Jews in some sphere of danger and after a prolonged period of time he was placed in jail (Πέτρος ἐτηρεῖτο ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ). It is clear from the context that Peter was being "kept in" the prison; there is only one action. A more obvious example is Acts 4:10. "Whom God raised from the dead" (ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν) does not mean that Jesus was raised for a prolonged period of time and

¹²Ibid. These are not isolated instances taken out of context. The work is saturated with this concept and such expressions.

¹³Ibid.

eventually came out of the dead. The verb and preposition describe one action, "to raise out of."

A few more examples should clarify the point. If Gundry is consistent with his reasoning on the meaning of *τηρέω ἐκ*, then Acts 25:4, *τηρεῖσθαι τὸν Παῦλον εἰς Καισάρειαν*, "keep Paul in Caesarea," would mean to keep Paul protected somewhere for a prolonged time (otherwise *τηρέω* is devoid of meaning) and then rapidly push him into Caesarea (since *εἰς* means "into," normally with the concept of going into something). However, it is clear that *τηρέω* and *εἰς* do not function as two separate entities in this passage. Rather they are two words describing one action. The preposition *εἰς* has the basic idea "into" but combined with *τηρέω* it obviously means "in." The same is true of *τηρέω ἐκ*. Although *ἐκ* may have the basic idea "out from within," when it is combined with *τηρέω* it can *only* mean *out* and the idea of emergence is not involved. So *τηρέω ἐκ* in Rev 3:10 cannot describe two actions "to keep in and eventually emerge," but one action, "to keep out."

It is no more possible to separate a verb and its accompanying prepositional phrase into two separate actions in Greek than it is in English. Rather, as in normal language use, the preposition states the action in a more specific sense. Does any language function as Gundry interprets *τηρέω ἐκ*? Certainly Greek does not.

Even if Gundry did not separate the two, his solution is still impossible. How can "to keep in" be combined in one action with a preposition meaning "out from within, to emerge"? Can any sense be made of "I will keep you in out from within?" Obviously, something is wrong. Since Jesus combines the two words, they must make sense. The only solution is that Gundry has given a wrong meaning to one of the words. "Out from within" is a common meaning for *ἐκ*. It may also mean "out" without any idea of emergence¹⁴ contrary to Gundry's claim. But this gives the impossible meaning "I will keep you in out," or "I will keep you in out from within." Since neither of the two renderings of *ἐκ* ("out" or "out from within") alters the impossibility of this rendering, the problem is with Gundry's interpretation of *τηρέω*. Clearly *ἐκ* means *out*. "Out" and "in" cannot go together in one action. Since "out" is clearly correct, the problem is with the idea "in."

The problem is that *τηρέω* does not mean "to keep in" as Gundry claims, but merely "to keep" or "guard." Some other indication, such as the preposition, is necessary to indicate the direction, location, or sphere of the keeping. This can be seen by comparing *τηρέω ἐν*, ("keep in") and *τηρέω ἀπό* ("keep from"). The verb is the

¹⁴See the more detailed discussion of *ἐκ* to follow.

same but the preposition changes the direction or locale of the “keeping.” It should be obvious to anyone with even a cursory acquaintance with grammar that τηρέω (“keep”) cannot mean “keep in” when it occurs with a preposition meaning “out.” Ἐκ does not *always* mean emergence as Gundry claims; but in each occurrence it *does* always mean the opposite of “in.”

We have seen the impossibility of interpreting τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 as protection for a period of time issuing in emission. It is a linguistic impossibility. Τηρέω with ἐκ (“out”) cannot have *any* meaning of “in.” If the meaning of τηρέω (“keep”) is twisted to mean “deliver” or “take” there is still no stress on being “in.” No matter how the meaning of τηρέω is twisted this expression says nothing at all regarding presence in or through the tribulation.

Gundry’s contention that τηρέω, when “a situation of danger is in view,” always means “protection within the sphere of danger”¹⁵ is less than convincing when τηρέω is studied. First, τηρέω usually means “keep” without any idea of “keeping in.” Second, there is no place where τηρέω means “keep in” a sphere, which sphere is the object of the preposition, when it occurs with a preposition meaning something other than “in” (or possibly “through,” implying presence in). Τηρέω ἀπό, τηρέω ὑπό, τηρέω ἄχρι, τηρέω παρά, τηρέω περί, τηρέω ἐκ, etc., do not mean and cannot mean “keep in.”

Although Gundry argues that τηρέω *always* means “protection within the sphere of danger” and therefore τηρέω in Rev 3:10 demands prolonged presence in the tribulation, he apparently forgets that on the previous page he stated that τηρέω ἀπό would not require presence within the tribulation. In other words, although the same sphere of danger is present, τηρέω does not require presence within the sphere of danger in this case. The only change is that the preposition ἐκ has been changed to ἀπό, but this means that he must be wrong on at least one of these points since they contradict each other. Τηρέω cannot *always* require presence in the sphere of danger if it does not with ἀπό. If it is not required with ἀπό, then it is impossible for τηρέω, in itself, to require presence *in* the sphere of danger. Since obviously ἐκ, which means “out of,” cannot require presence *in* something, then not only on the obvious facts of language mentioned above, but on the basis of Gundry’s own statements, τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 cannot require presence in the tribulation period. The only possible constructions using the standard prepositions which mean “keep in” are those that occur with a preposition meaning or implying “in”: τηρέω ἐν, τηρέω εἰς, or τηρέω διά. Τηρέω εἰς occurs in the NT with the meaning to keep “until” or “unto” some

¹⁵Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 58.

point, and therefore in the NT does not mean to "keep in." Τηρέω ἐν would stress the fact that the person would be "kept in" some sphere and not allowed out, whereas τηρέω διά in Rev 3:10 would stress the idea of protection during the time involved. It is impossible for τηρέω with any preposition to mean keep in and eventually remove. It is impossible to state both of these concepts with any one verb and its accompanying prepositional phrase.

It is logically and grammatically impossible for τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 to mean protection within the tribulation period (sphere of danger) with eventual emergence, as Gundry claims. This is not merely a difference in possible interpretations but a calamitous linguistic and logical blunder. I am certain that Gundry himself knows better than to treat Greek or any language in such a way. However, he has argued as if the individual words were in isolation and combined the details of each in mutually contradictory fashion.

Τηρέω ἐκ IN REV 3:10 DEFINITELY IMPLIES
A PRETRIBULATIONAL RAPTURE

If the rapture is pre-"hour of trial," a study of the terms in Rev 3:10 indicates that τηρέω ἐκ is the most natural choice, rather than an improbable choice. In addition, τηρέω ἐκ is definitely against the idea that the believers will be in or kept through the "hour of trial." It must be kept in mind, however, that the entire phrase τηρέω ἐκ . . . is decisive, not merely individual words in isolation. The words will be discussed individually and then as a unit.

Ek does not necessitate the idea of emergence

Gundry argues that the preposition ἐκ has the basic idea of emergence and therefore implies that the believers addressed in Rev 3:10, in order to emerge, must have been in the tribulation period.¹⁶ He states: "if ἐκ ever occurs without the thought of emergence, it does so very exceptionally."¹⁷

A study of ἐκ does not support Gundry's contentions. The following statistics were derived from a study of each of the 923 occurrences of ἐκ in the NT.¹⁸

¹⁶Ibid., 55-56.

¹⁷Ibid., 56.

¹⁸W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, 5th ed., rev. by H. F. Moulton, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), pp. 1058-67. Robert Morgenthaler (*Statistik des neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes* [Zurich: Gotthelf, 1958] 92) counts 915.

*Approximate Number of Occurrences¹⁹ in
Certain General Categories*

Cause	20	Partitive	130
Content	32	Separation	52
Emergence	186	Source	253
Location (at)	23	Time	16
Means	90		

Although there often is an implication of emergence from within in uses other than the one titled "emergence," it is clear that in the majority of instances, the primary stress in the preposition ἐκ is not that of emergence. Several of the above categories seem to be definitely contrary to the meaning of emergence. The category titled "separation" is specifically a category for passages which do not mean emergence, but imply "away from" or "from," just as ἀπό. Some examples are as follows.

John 20:1. Mary saw the stone which had been taken "away from (ἐκ) the tomb." It does not seem likely that the stone was inside the tomb to emerge from within. Matt 27:60, 66; 28:2, and Luke 24:2 use ἀπό τοῦ μνημείου "away from the tomb" to describe the stone but do not indicate that it was inside the tomb. Another incident where a stone was taken away from a tomb is the raising of Lazarus. The tomb was a cave and the stone was placed or lying "upon" it, not within it. All of these verses indicate that the stone was not inside the tomb; therefore, ἐκ was used in John 20:21 to mean "away from" without any idea of emergence. The stone was not "pulled out of the tomb."

Acts 15:29 uses the verb διατηρέω, an intensified form of τηρέω, together with ἐκ. It is clear that the apostles and elders at Jerusalem are asking the Christians at Antioch to stay entirely "away from" idolatry, blood, strangled things, and fornication. There is no indication that the Antioch Christians were involved in these things and therefore to emerge from them. (Literally, of course, they could not be "in" idol sacrifices, blood, etc.) Much less are they instructing the Christians to keep or guard themselves from danger while in these things and then several years in the future to emerge from within them.

Acts 12:7. "His chains fell off from his hands." The chains were not in Peter's hands to emerge from them; rather, they fell away from (ἐκ) his hands.

¹⁹Many instances did not fit conveniently into a general category; however, these statistics are sufficient for this discussion.

Acts 27:29 does not seem to mean that the anchors were emerging from within the stern, but that they were "out from" the stern.

Acts 28:4 seems to mean that the snake hung "from" Paul's hand and does not seem to require that the snake was "in" his hand previously.

2 Cor 1:10 states, "who rescued us from such a great death. . . ." In the context it is clear that Paul refers to physical death. He was rescued *from* death rather than having emerged from death. He was not *in* it.

1 Thess 1:10, depending on the Greek text one follows, uses ἀπό or ἐκ to state, "Jesus who rescues us from the coming wrath." Gundry apparently prefers the variant ἐκ in this verse.²⁰ Earlier Gundry regards this verse as a reference to God's retributive wrath and states that the church will not suffer this wrath.²¹ He clearly differentiates this wrath from the tribulation period.²² However, he seems to waver on his view on the following pages.²³ However, if this is God's eternal wrath, then it is clear that the preposition has no implication of the believer being in God's eternal wrath and then emerging. If it is God's retributive wrath near the end of the tribulation, as Gundry seems to hold, then believers either do not suffer this wrath, as Gundry says, and therefore are not in it to emerge, or if they are protected in the midst of it as Gundry states is possible,²⁴ then there still is no concept of emergence. If the wrath refers to the tribulation period, then this is another verse promising rescue from that period. If one reads ἐκ, as Gundry does, rather than ἀπό with the majority text, this verse is against Gundry's view no matter which of the interpretations of "wrath" one may hold.

1 Tim 4:17. Paul states that the Lord rescued him "out of the lion's mouth." He does not imply that he was actually in the lion's mouth and emerged, but that God kept him "from" the lions.²⁵

2 Pet 2:21. This verse does not seem to imply that the persons were within the "holy commandment" and emerged from it, but it simply states that they turned "away from" it.

However, let us get right to the issue of whether or not ἐκ always implies emergence. There are two verses in the NT where ἐκ occurs with τηρέω (John 17:15; Rev 3:10). As already discussed, it is

²⁰Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57.

²¹Ibid., 46.

²²Ibid., 48-49.

²³Ibid., 54. Although this seems to contradict other statements of Gundry regarding God's retributive wrath, it is clearly stated.

²⁴Ibid., 54.

²⁵Although a figure of speech is involved, apparently the figure builds on the perspective of facing lions in the arena.

linguistically improbable for a verb meaning “protect in” (as Gundry claims) or meaning “keep, protect, guard” (the correct view as will be shown) to occur with a preposition requiring emergence. As previously shown, Gundry’s analysis requires the meaning “keep in coming out.” The more probable meaning of *τηρέω* would require “protect, keep, guard emerging.” Both of these are an impossibility.

To sum up, the preposition *ἐκ* does not always imply emergence from within as Gundry claims. Even if it did 99% of the time, it can hardly imply emergence with *τηρέω*. One thing is clear: *ἐκ* does not mean “in,”²⁶ and its occurrence in Rev 3:10 can only be a hindrance to posttribulationism.

Ἐκ is the best word if the rapture is pretribulationist

Gundry also argues that *ἀπό* (“away from”) in Rev 3:10 would “at least *permit* a pretribulationist interpretation.”²⁷ It is clear that he is not going to allow even *ἀπό* to *require* a pretribulationist interpretation. It is amazing that with two possible prepositions which would demand the Church’s presence in the tribulation (*ἐν*, “in,” *διὰ* “through”) Gundry allows *ἀπό* (“from”) at the most merely to *permit* a pretribulationist view and cannot see his way clear to allow even the one preposition *ἐκ* (which means the opposite of “in”) to require a pretribulationist rapture. Gundry states that *ἀπό* would at least permit a pretribulationist view, implying that *ἐκ* in Rev 3:10 cannot even permit such a view. In addition he lists some other prepositions—*ἐκτός*, *ἔξω*, *ἔξωθεν*, *ἄνευ*, and *χωρίς*²⁸—which he feels would have required a pretribulationist view. To state it concisely, Gundry feels that either *ἐκτός*, *ἔξω*, *ἔξωθεν*, *ἄνευ*, *χωρίς*, or possibly *ἀπό*, would have been used by John in this verse if a pretribulationist rapture were in view, and that *ἐκ* would not (could not) be used. However, a more careful linguistic study shows that the opposite is true, namely, that in all probability John would not have used *ἀπό* or the other prepositions Gundry listed, but would use *ἐκ* if he believed the rapture will occur prior to the tribulation period. *Ἐκ* is the most probable choice, and in Rev 3:10 it can only mean what pretribulationists claim it means.

Ἐκ is better than ἄνευ, ἔξω, ἔξωθεν, ἐκτός, or χωρίς to indicate a pretribulationist rapture. Gundry, as stated above, feels that one of the prepositions *ἄνευ*, *ἔξω*, *ἔξωθεν*, or *ἐκτός* would be used to

²⁶That *ἐκ* means “in” could possibly be argued from one or two passages, but it is improbable that this is the correct meaning.

²⁷Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 58.

indicate clearly a pretribulational rapture. However, ἄνευ in the NT means "without" in the sense of "not with," i.e., "without griping" (cf. Matt 10:29, 1 Pet 3:1, 4:9). It is not used to mean "without" in a spatial or geographical sense as would be necessary to imply removal or keeping away from the "hour of trial." In classical Greek,²⁹ although ἄνευ may occur with the meaning "away from," it more commonly means "without" as the opposite of "with," or "except." This seems borne out in the papyri and LXX also. It should also be noted that ἄνευ occurs only four times in the NT and not at all in John's writings. It is contrary to its NT and Johannine usage to expect it to occur in Rev 3:10, if Rev 3:10 related to a pretribulational rapture, unless there were no other possible way to state it. The probable nuance of ἄνευ if used in Rev 3:10 would be "I will keep you without the hour of trial . . .," that is "I will keep you, without at the same time keeping the hour of trial." This seems improbable.

Gundry also states that ἐξῶ would *require* previous removal and asks why John did not use ἐξῶ if a pretribulational rapture is in view in Rev 3:10. Liddell and Scott list one of the meanings for ἐξῶ as "out" or "out of" ("out from within") when it occurs with a verb of motion,³⁰ but they say exactly the same thing regarding ἐκ.³¹ Admittedly, ἐκ *frequently* has the idea "out from within" (not *always*, as Gundry implies). However, ἐξῶ occurs 63 times in the NT³² of which 36 occurrences (more than half) have the idea "out from within." The LXX³³ shows the same usage. Of 105 occurrences at least 40 have the idea "out from within." We may wonder why of two words so overlapping in meaning Gundry insists one (ἐκ) *cannot* mean previous removal in Rev 3:10 while the other (ἐξῶ) would *require* it? Johannine usage is even clearer. John uses ἐξῶ 16 times of which only 3 do not have the meaning "out from within."³⁴ Since ἐξῶ often has the same meaning as ἐκ, in fact the very meaning Gundry *stresses* for ἐκ, particularly when John uses it, there certainly is no reason why John would use ἐξῶ in preference to ἐκ to indicate a pretribulational rapture.

Another factor should also be mentioned. The word ἐξῶ occurs at least 168 times in biblical Greek; not once does it occur with a word indicating time. Therefore it is not surprising that it does not

²⁹H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed., rev. by H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940) 135.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 600.

³¹*Ibid.*, 498.

³²Moulton and Geden, *Concordance*, 348-49.

³³E. Hatch and H. A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the other Greek Versions of the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck-U. Verlagsanstalt, 1954) 501-2.

³⁴Someone may argue that these are with verbs of motion. However, the same principle is true of ἐκ.

occur in Rev 3:10. Gundry also seems to think that the concept of "outside" (ἔξω) would be the proper stress if Rev 3:10 related to a pretribulational rapture. However, to keep "outside of" a period of time is an unusual idiom in Greek or English. To "keep out of" a period, however, is normal usage in both languages. In English we could well say "I will keep you from the hot southwestern summer." It would be unusual to say "I will keep you outside of the hot summer." The emphasis is also different. Τηρέω ἐκ means to "keep from, to keep out of, to keep from being in," but τηρέω ἔξω would mean "I will keep you outside" stressing the location rather than separation. It is very unlikely that John would use ἔξω with τηρέω to describe a pretribulational rapture in Rev 3:10.

The same arguments apply to the other two words Gundry mentions, i.e., ἐκτός and χωρίς. Ἐκτός means "outside," "except," or "besides." It does not occur with a word for time in biblical Greek. Ἐκτός occurs seven times in the NT (five in Paul) and not at all in John's writings. To state that, if Rev 3:10 was pretribulational, John would use this word rather than ἐκ, which occurs more than 800 times in the NT and more than 300 times in John alone, is to go against the facts. The word χωρίς means "outside," "without," and is no more probable in this passage than the other words. Χωρίς occurs 38 times in the NT. In every case it means "separate from" or "without" in the sense of lacking. John only uses it three times. There is no obvious reason why John would use it in Rev 3:10 rather than ἐκ.

Several additional facts should be mentioned regarding the possible use of ἄνευ, ἔξω, ἔξωθεν, ἐκτός, or χωρίς in Rev 3:10. Τηρέω does not occur with any of these prepositions in biblical literature (NT or LXX). Τηρέω occurs with ἐν, εἰς, ἐπί, ἄχρι, and ἐκ in the NT and with ἀπό, ἕως, and περὶ in the LXX.

As we have seen, two of the four prepositions in question are not used very often in the NT. Ἄνευ occurs four times, none of which are Johannine. Ἐκτός occurs seven times, none of which are Johannine. Χωρίς occurs 38 times. Only three times are in John's writings. Upon what basis Gundry proclaims that John would use these prepositions in Rev 3:10 if pretribulationism is intended is certainly not obvious.

Ἐξω occurs 63 times; 14 of these are Johannine. Of these Johannine uses, 12 have the meaning "out from within." Once again, why John should use this preposition rather than ἐκ when both commonly mean "out from within" is not clear.³⁵ Why John should use one of these four prepositions, none of which, as we have seen,

³⁵It is less clear why ἔξω *requires* a pretribulational view when it often means "out from within," which is the very reason Gundry says ἐκ *cannot* go with a pretribulational view.

fits well in the context of Rev 3:10, and prefer them to a word which occurs over 800 times in the NT and which is used more by John than any other NT author, is not at all clear. Why John must use ἀνευ, ἔξω, ἔξωθεν, ἐκτός, or χωρίς, when they occur nowhere in the NT with a word for time (such as ὥρα) is not at all clear. Why John should use one of these five prepositions with τηρέω in Rev 3:10, when they do not occur with τηρέω in biblical literature is not apparent. It appears that Gundry merely referred to a lexicon without any consideration of the actual use of these words.

Ἐκ is more likely than ἀπό to be used for a pretribulational view in Rev 3:10. Gundry argues that τηρέω ἀπό in Rev 3:10 would "at least permit a pretribulational interpretation."³⁶ He feels that ἐκ would not permit such a view. In other words he feels that ἀπό would be used if a pretribulational rapture is in view in Rev 3:10.

Is it more likely that John would use ἀπό in this case? Is there such a difference between τηρέω ἀπό and τηρέω ἐκ that one preposition, ἀπό, permits a pretribulational interpretation but the other, ἐκ, excludes it? Greek grammars point out the well-recognized fact that by NT times the classical distinctions between ἀπό and ἐκ were disappearing and that the two words "frequently overlapped" in meaning.³⁷ The two words are used somewhat interchangeably. A study of textual variants shows some fluctuation between ἐκ and ἀπό, indicating that the scribes regarded them as interchangeable. In addition, when we note that "separation" is a valid meaning for ἐκ according to Greek grammarians and the standard lexicons,³⁸ we should be somewhat surprised to see such stress laid on the difference between ἀπό and ἐκ. We should expect to see some evidence showing such a difference.

A thorough study indicates that either word would indicate a prior removal or pretribulational interpretation, but, contrary to Gundry's opinion, ἐκ is the more probable to be used with a pretribulational view for the following reasons.

(1) John prefers ἐκ rather than ἀπό. Grammarians point out that "the greatest use of ἐκ" is in the Revelation, the Gospel of John, and

³⁶Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57.

³⁷C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1963), 71-72; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 3rd ed. (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919) 569-70; J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908-63), 1.102, 237; 3.251, 259.

³⁸Robertson, *Historical Grammar*, 597, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. and rev. by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), 234-35.

1 John,³⁹ that ἐκ is used "much more widely" than in classical Greek,⁴⁰ and in Revelation the ratio of ἐκ to ἀπό is 100:20.⁴¹ A simple word count⁴² reveals that ἐκ occurs in the Gospel of John more than any other book—165 times. The book of Revelation is next with 135 instances, and the small book of 1 John has 34 occurrences. John's use of ἀπό is quite the reverse. Although ἀπό occurs 110 times in Matthew, 118 times in Luke, and 108 times in Acts, it occurs only 41 times in John's gospel and a total of 96 times in all of John's writings. In the book of Revelation John uses ἐκ 135 times and ἀπό only 34 times.⁴³ It is clear that John prefers ἐκ whenever it may be used, and does not prefer ἀπό. This preference is, in fact, a characteristic of John's writings. Since ἀπό and ἐκ are similar in meaning by NT times, since both can mean "separation from," since both imply "not in," it is clear that John would prefer ἐκ, as in Rev 3:10, rather than ἀπό if he regarded the rapture as pretribulational.

(2) The verb τηρέω does not occur with the preposition ἀπό in the NT;⁴⁴ however, it does occur with ἐκ in at least one passage other than Rev 3:10. This occurrence is also in John's writings (John 17:15). There is no textual dispute over the preposition in John 17:15. This means that there is evidence for John's use of the expression τηρέω ἐκ but none for his employment of τηρέω ἀπό.⁴⁵

(3) The preposition ἀπό occurs with ὥρα seven times in the NT (once in John—John 19:27), but it never means to separate from the time, nor to emerge from the hour. Therefore, it is not likely that John would use ἀπό with ὥρα in Rev 3:10 to express a pretribulational rapture as Gundry claims.⁴⁶ However, ἐκ does occur twice in the NT with ὥρα, both in John's writings (John 12:27; Rev 3:10). In John 12:27 it means separate from.⁴⁷ In Rev 3:10 it means "separate from" or Gundry's concept of emergence. Since John does not use ἀπό in a sense that would allow a pretribulational rapture, or even a posttribulational rapture, in Rev 3:10, but does use ἐκ in such a way, it is obvious that Gundry's claim that John would use ἀπό is not based on the evidence. Since John does use ἐκ with ὥρα in John

³⁹F. Blass and A. DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, trans. R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961) 114.

⁴⁰Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3.249.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 259.

⁴²The numbers vary slightly, depending upon the Greek text used.

⁴³Moulton and Geden, *Concordance*, 1041, 1066-67.

⁴⁴James 1:27 is not an exception, since the preposition ἀπό seems to be connected with ἄσπιλον rather than τηρεῖν ἑαυτὸν.

⁴⁵Τηρέω with either preposition is rare. The verb occurs once with ἀπό in the canonical LXX and once in the Apocrypha. It occurs with ἐκ twice in the NT.

⁴⁶Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57-58.

⁴⁷Gundry admits this and that it does not mean emergence from within (p. 57).

12:27 to express the idea of separation, it is much more likely that he would use ἐκ than ἀπό in Rev 3:10 if he referred to a concept based on a pretribulational rapture. In other words, ἐκ in Rev 3:10 agrees with the pretribulational view.

Ἐκ is better for the pretribulational view than other prepositions.

Dana and Mantey list the following standard prepositions in NT Greek: ἀνά, ἀντί, ἀπό, διά, ἐκ, εἰς, ἐν, ἐπί, κατά, μετά, παρά, περί, πρό, πρόσ, σύν, ὑπέρ, and ὑπό.⁴⁸ Only two of these seventeen prepositions could possibly be used in the phrase in question in Rev 3:10 with a meaning that would allow for a pretribulational rapture.⁴⁹ They are ἀπό and ἐκ. However, we have seen that it is highly improbable that John would use ἀπό in such an instance. Therefore ἐκ is the only preposition John was likely to use in Rev 3:10 if he regarded the rapture as pretribulational. On the other hand, if John was expressing a posttribulational view of the rapture he obviously could have used διά, εἰς, ἐν, or κατά, and he also could have used ἐπί, παρά, or πρόσ if the meanings expressed in Dana and Mantey are accepted.⁵⁰ Although there are several prepositions that could be used to indicate a posttribulational view of the rapture explicitly,⁵¹ none of which occur in Rev 3:10, ἐκ, the only preposition likely to occur in a pretribulational view of Rev 3:10 is used.

Τηρέω ἐκ does not express emergence from the hour

It is impossible for τηρέω ἐκ to prove a posttribulational view of Rev 3:10 even if ἐκ meant “emergence from within,” since this could occur at any time, including the very beginning of the hour (tribulation period). Gundry’s statements that if we say the emergence is at the beginning of the hour “we render the word τηρέω (*keep or guard*) practically meaningless,” and that then “the keeping will last only for an instant”⁵² show beyond all possibility of denial that he has separated τηρέω and ἐκ into two separate components. However, as shown previously, such a position is impossible; therefore, if ἐκ meant emergence as Gundry claims, there is every possibility that it could

⁴⁸H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 99-112.

⁴⁹The use of the so-called improper prepositions has been discussed and their use in this passage shown to be unlikely.

⁵⁰According to Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 900, these prepositions in expressions of time would all express presence in the hour of trial.

⁵¹Certain improper prepositions such as ἔντος, ἔσω, and μέσον could conceivably be used to indicate presence in the hour (if we argue as Gundry does on p. 58 of his book); however, this is unlikely.

⁵²Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57.

occur at the beginning of the period. As we have also seen, it is impossible for ἐκ to mean emergence if τηρέω means keep *in* the hour as Gundry claims,⁵³ since τηρέω and ἐκ go together and the preposition ἐκ indicates the direction or sphere of the “keeping” (τηρέω). It should be obvious that τηρέω cannot mean “keep within” and occur with a preposition meaning either “out from within” or “out.” It cannot mean either “keep within out” or “keep within out from within” as we have previously shown. This impossibility should reveal immediately that τηρέω *cannot* mean keep within the sphere of danger (hour, tribulation, period) in Rev 3:10 as Gundry claims.

We also shall see that ἐκ does not imply emergence when it occurs with τηρέω. Gundry not only erroneously isolates the two words τηρέω and ἐκ, but despite his long discussion, he is wrong on the meaning of both τηρέω and ἐκ. Although the mass of details he presents tends to obscure the basic issue, the error of his position on Rev 3:10 should be readily apparent to anyone familiar with Greek or English. His arguments are equivalent to someone arguing from a whole mass of details that grass actually turns black at night and missing the basic point that the lack of light is the significant factor. That τηρέω cannot mean what Gundry claims is so obvious that those previously attempting to defend posttribulationism have not argued as he does, but have tried to refute Rev 3:10 in other ways.

The meaning of τηρέω. Despite Gundry's statements that τηρέω means “to guard or protect in a sphere of danger,”⁵⁴ it does not necessarily mean this. In classical Greek τηρέω is used of “keeping back of dogs, keeping from disease.” In the LXX, Prov 7:5, the verb τηρέω is used with ἀπό γυναικός to mean “keep or stay away from” a woman. The compound verb διατηρέω is used in Acts 15:29 to mean “stay or keep away from idol sacrifices . . . etc.” One of the most common uses of τηρέω in the NT is in the expression to keep God's Word (commandments, Jesus' word). This does not mean to protect it, but to “hold to,” “hold,” or “keep” it. Τηρέω is used in John 2:10 (“you have kept the good wine”) to mean “keep, hold, hold back,” in John 9:16 to “keep” the sabbath, in 1 Cor 7:37 “to keep his own

⁵³Ibid., 58.

⁵⁴Although Gundry at first states that this is true when danger is present, he then states that this is always true in biblical Greek (p. 58). The above examples show that it is not always true. Since several references include the idea of danger, it is clear that it is not necessarily true even when danger is present. In addition, Gundry's statement that “keeping necessarily implies danger” and the “keeping is required by their presence in the danger” (p. 58) indicates that he is in effect making his view the universal meaning for the verb “keep.” The examples given here are not given as an argument regarding the lack or presence of danger, however, but to show that τηρέω does not imply presence “in,” but can mean “protect from.”

virgin." Paul uses it to say, "I kept myself from being a burden" (2 Cor 11:9), and of the angels who did not "keep" their estate.

Τηρέω can mean "guard," or "keep," or "keep away from." To assume that in Rev 3:10 it refers to being in the presence of danger is to assume Gundry's conclusion that the church is present in the tribulation. However, Jesus states He will keep them from the *period*. There is no reason to assume that this means "keeping in" the sphere of danger. It has already been demonstrated that τηρέω ἐκ cannot mean "guard in" or "keep in" when it is used with ἐκ, "out." The concept that τηρέω implies "presence within" is contrary to the evidence and the basic meaning of τηρέω. The verb, itself, implies nothing regarding the direction or sphere of keeping or protecting. This can only be determined from other elements in the sentence. In this case the sphere or direction is indicated by ἐκ.

Another aspect of τηρέω needs to be mentioned. Τηρέω is not a verb implying motion such as ἔρχομαι (come) or αἴρω (take). Verbs of motion occurring with ἐκ imply emergence, but this does not apply when the idea of motion is not present. Verbs which may imply motion, such as σώζω ("save") and ρύομαι ("rescue"), when used with ἐκ may imply either separation or emergence. Τηρέω, however, has no such connotation of motion or direction; it merely means "keep" or "guard." For example, the preposition εἰς normally indicates "motion into a thing or into its immediate vicinity."⁵⁵ However, in several occurrences with τηρέω (in the NT) it means "with a view to, unto." In Acts 25:4 it occurs with τηρέω meaning "in" or "at." No idea of "motion into" is implied.

Τηρέω occurs 69 times in the NT. It never occurs with the implication of motion. In fact, the opposite is true of τηρέω; the stress is on stability or maintaining a position, or standard. This large number of occurrences is adequate to determine the basic concept of τηρέω. There are 38 occurrences of τηρέω in the LXX (including apocryphal works; 27 are canonical), none of which implies motion. Biblical Greek, the papyri and classical Greek⁵⁶ all give the same testimony. Τηρέω itself has no implication of motion; rather the idea of stability is prominent. Such ideas as to keep someone in a place (prison), to maintain something or a standard, to preserve, watch, protect, are common for τηρέω (cf. Matt 27:36; Acts 12:5; 1 Pet 1:4; Jude 6).

The significance of this discussion may be seen in a comparison with the use of ἐκ with another verb, αἴρω, in John 17:15. Jesus says,

⁵⁵Bauer, *Lexicon*, 228.

⁵⁶J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *A Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1930) 633 and Liddell and Scott, *A Greek Lexicon*, 1789.

"I do not ask that you take them out of the world." With the verb αἴρω, which implies motion, the preposition ἐκ has the idea of emergence. The idea of emergence does not come from ἐκ alone, but from ἐκ with the verb αἴρω. If John, in Rev 3:10, desired to indicate removal from *within* the hour (tribulation period), then αἴρω ἐκ would indicate this specifically. However, τηρέω ἐκ does not indicate motion; rather, it means "keep out of," "maintain in a position out of," or "preserve out of." The difference may be illustrated in English. "Take out of" or "take out from within the hospital" is not the same as "keep out of" or "keep out from within the hospital." The same preposition is used, which may mean emergence, but it does not mean emergence when used with the verb "keep."⁵⁷ The English and Greek terms in this instance are approximately the same. The only other use of τηρέω ἐκ in the NT occurs in John 17:15, the passage mentioned earlier.

Τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15. There is "one other place in biblical Greek"⁵⁸ where the expression τηρέω ἐκ occurs. This should give us some indication of the meaning in Rev 3:10. However, here is another place where Gundry's arguments are logically inconsistent. He states that τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15 is in "full contrast and opposition" to ἄρῃς . . . ἐκ, an "exact description of what the rapture will be;" and therefore τηρέω ἐκ cannot refer to the "rapture or the result of the rapture."⁵⁹ This sounds reasonable only if we can forget Gundry's conclusions on Rev 3:10, the verse in question. He has argued that τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 is protection issuing in emission (rapture) at the final crisis of the tribulation. In other words, he argues that τηρέω ἐκ specifically describes a posttribulational rapture. When discussing John 17:15, however, he argues that since τηρέω ἐκ does not refer to a rapture in John 17:15, therefore, in Rev 3:10 it cannot refer to the rapture or result of the rapture at all. We ask: if it is impossible for the expression τηρέω ἐκ to refer to the rapture or the result of the rapture in Rev 3:10 as Gundry states, then how can it at the same time refer to a situation where "ἐκ lays all the emphasis on emergence, in this verse on the final, victorious outcome of the keeping-guarding," that is, to the rapture as Gundry also states.⁶⁰

⁵⁷Gundry is less than careful when he argues that such expressions as "saved from" the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer 30:7), which uses a verb implying motion and meaning "save," do not imply prior removal, therefore, τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10, an expression using a different verb, not implying motion, does not (p. 60).

⁵⁸Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 58-59.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 59. It is clear that Gundry means τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 since he differentiates it from its only other occurrence in John 17:15.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 57.

This is enough time spent on this incredible contradiction. Let us look at Gundry's statement that *τηρέω ἐκ* in John 17:15 is in full contrast and opposition to *ἄρῃς . . . ἐκ* in the same verse.⁶¹ He concludes from this that since *ἄρῃς ἐκ* means "take up" and would fit the idea of rapture, then *τηρέω ἐκ* cannot refer "to the rapture or result of the rapture."

Such handling of the passage can hardly be considered exegesis since *ἄρῃς ἐκ* does not oppose or contrast with *τηρέω ἐκ* as he claims. Jesus prays "I do not pray that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from evil (the evil one)." The contrast is not between "take out" and "keep out," but between the entire phrase "take out of the world" and the phrase "keep from the evil one." How Gundry can suppose that a contrast, even as he proposes, is support for his view is amazing. "Take out" (*ἄρῃς ἐκ*) means removal from the sphere in question, emergence from the world. As Gundry says, this will fit the rapture. On the other hand, *τηρέω ἐκ* contrasts in that there is no idea of emergence involved; rather, the people are "kept from" or "kept away from" the evil one.

That this is the most obvious meaning for *τηρέω ἐκ* in John 17:15 may be seen by comparison with other verses parallel in meaning to John 17:15, such as Matt 6:13; Luke 11:4 (Majority Text), and 2 Thess 3:3. All say either "rescue" or "keep" *ἀπό τοῦ πονηροῦ*. Gundry states that *ἀπό* would be the preposition used in Rev 3:10 if "away from" or separation in the sense of entirely away from were meant. These three verses use *ἀπό* with "the evil (one)" and therefore by Gundry's own admission mean separation from the evil (one), not emergence.

Let us apply Gundry's interpretation of *τηρέω ἐκ* in Rev 3:10 to the same phrase in John 17:15. This verse would then read "I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but that you keep them for a long period in evil (or the 'evil one') and at some final crisis physically snatch them out of it." In other words keep them in evil until the rapture and finally rapture them. When we realize that for Gundry the "keeping-guarding" in the tribulation means that only a remnant survive and most perish, such a meaning for John 17:15 is even more remote, since this would allow most to perish or succumb to the evil.

This is a strange form of keeping or protecting from evil and obviously cannot be the meaning of the passage. In a context where the Lord refers to the hatred of the world (the disciples are viewed as those in "enemy territory"), he then states, "I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to keep [or guard] them from the evil one." The evil must refer to "the evil one" or the opposition of

⁶¹Ibid., 59.

evil in this context. If the Lord was thinking of emergence from the evil one or from the principle of evil, the use of αἴρω would make a perfect play on words with the preceding statement. However, he is not thinking of removal, but of “keeping or guarding from” the evil. The meaning of “evil one” seems to best fit the context. If the concept of sphere (the sphere of evil, the world) were in view, a natural word play could be obtained by contrasting “I do not ask that you take them out of the world” (ἄρῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου) with the statement “keep them from the world” (τηρήσεις αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου). Whether or not the disciples were in “the evil one,” or “the evil” at one time is not the issue. As has been shown, the verb τηρέω cannot be used with ἐκ to imply emergence since no concept of motion or “deliverance out of” is in view. Τηρέω ἐκ does not refer to emergence from the “evil one” or the “evil” in John 17:15. The impossibility of τηρέω ἐκ occurring with such a meaning, the contrast with the previous statement where emergence from the world is stated, the awkwardness of viewing the verse in its context in such a way, and the natural meaning of “separation from” in the verse all are against such an interpretation.

The obvious meaning of τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15 perfectly corresponds with the pretribulational view of its meaning in Rev 3:10. The pretribulational view does not require that τηρέω ἐκ refer directly to the rapture, something which is required by Gundry’s view, although he also says it cannot. The pretribulational view merely requires that τηρέω ἐκ means “keep from,” in other words, not allow the church to “be in” the tribulation. There is no direct statement of motion or emergence. This “keeping from” is accomplished by or the result of the rapture; it is not the rapture itself. We know that it is a result of the rapture from other contexts, not due to the terminology here. Gundry’s contention that τηρέω ἐκ cannot refer to the rapture is no problem to other views; it makes his impossible. The preposition ἐκ with the verb τηρέω cannot imply emergence. Emergence is not in view in John 17:15, neither does τηρέω imply presence in. Τηρέω ἐκ in John 17:15, the only other NT occurrence of this expression, means “keep out of” or “away from” the evil, and confirms the findings regarding Rev 3:10.

The inclusion of ὥρα is significant

If the word ὥρα were omitted from Rev 3:10, the promise would read, “I will keep you from the trial which is coming upon the entire inhabited earth to try the earth dwellers.” The verse would still support the pretribulational rapture, i.e., a keeping from an earth-wide tribulation. However, the inclusion of ὥρα (“hour”) makes it even clearer.

Gundry's arguments on the word are more of a smoke screen than a serious attempt to understand the passage. He argues that since time goes on in heaven the church cannot be delivered from the time of the tribulation. The word ὥρα in Rev 3:10 is not strictly referring to a chronological hour, however, but to a "period" or "time." Specifically, it refers to a "period of trial" or "time of trial" which is coming upon the entire inhabited *earth* to try those dwelling on the *earth*. Rev 3:10 says that the church is removed from a period of trial which occurs upon the earth, that is, not from some of the events, but from the entire trial or time of trial. No one has claimed that they are removed from chronological time, nor does anyone claim they are removed from, say, 1982-1989. Gundry's statements would mean that God could not remove anyone from a time of trial since time goes on in heaven. The same argument would preclude a direct statement "I will remove you from the tribulation period" or "I will remove you from the tribulation" (which by definition is a period of time).

Gundry argues that Jesus did not pray for deliverance from a period of time when he prayed "Father save me from this hour" (John 12:27) since he would have gone through the time even had he not died.⁶² Gundry further states that Jesus is asking for deliverance from the events within the period of time. It is certain that Jesus is not asking to be protected or saved through the time and events of the crucifixion; he asks that the event not take place.

This verse lends no support at all for Gundry's view that τηρέω ἐκ ὥρα means that the church will be protected through the events of the tribulation. Jesus is speaking about a future event scheduled by God. He requests that this event be canceled. There was no other possibility of deliverance. However, it was not canceled, but occurred as prophesied. Neither can he be asking to be delivered by being resurrected after dying, since there could be no question in his mind regarding this. Such a concept would not fit the following phrase: "But for this reason I came to this hour." The entire context refers to his death and indicates a travail of soul. This verse parallels his prayer in Gethsemane. Jesus actually says, "I am troubled; should I pray to be excused from the cross? But this is the reason I came." He did not differentiate the event and the time as in Rev 3:10. The time and event are both included in the term "hour."

In Rev 3:10, however, the expression is the "hour of trial." The stress is on the time (period). If Jesus was promising "deliverance from the events" of the tribulation period, as Gundry views ὥρα,⁶³

⁶²Ibid., 60.

⁶³Ibid.

why add a specific word for time and not just say, "I will keep you from the trials"? However, Gundry fails to handle the details of the verse. The "time of trial" is the term. The *events* of the time of trial are not equivalent only to the trials. The events of a period of time include *all* events in that period. If the word ὥρα ("hour") were omitted, the expression could refer only to the trials themselves. The inclusion of ὥρα means that Jesus promised exemption from all of the events, that is, from the entire period of trials, not merely from certain events categorized as trials. Even if we use Gundry's idea that the events are in view, Rev 3:10 requires a keeping from all the events of the tribulation. There is no basis for exemption (or protection) only from some of the events. Whether ὥρα refers to a period or the events of a period, its inclusion is significant and precludes Gundry's view of Rev 3:10.

The scope of the trial also argues against the view that the church will be on earth and yet somehow avoid even the events which are called trials. The time of trial is on the *earth* and on the *entire* inhabited earth. Therefore, a keeping from the trials would require either a cancelation of the events or a removal from the earth. Removal from the earth does not remove from chronological time, it is true, but it does remove from a *period* of trial which occurs *on the earth* as Rev 3:10 describes it. This use of "time" is a common idiom in language. Gundry as usual is less than accurate when he states, "to pray, say, for deliverance from a time of illness is not to ask that one be taken out of the world before he becomes ill,—he is already ill—but that the Lord should preserve and bring him safely out of the period of illness."⁶⁴ He fails to grasp the fact that τηρέω, even by his own definition, does not mean "deliver," a verb which would imply emergence. It means "keep." If someone prays that he be "kept from a time" of illness, particularly when he is not yet in the time, he is not asking for preservation and safe delivery through it, but that it not take place. Neither is he asking that chronological time be canceled.

Jesus promised in Rev 3:10 that the believers will be "kept from" the tribulation period. It is clear from prophecy that the events will not be canceled. If they were, everyone would be kept from the period. The only alternative, one which fits the natural idiom of language, is removal from the earth prior to the period of the events. Such a removal from the earth has not happened at other times in history and seems unusual. However, we know that removal of believers from the earth will occur at the rapture; therefore, it is not at all out of place to see that it fits perfectly in Rev 3:10 as the means of keeping believers from a time of trial upon the entire earth.

To approach it from another aspect, in terms of Gundry's statement that the deliverance is not from the time but from the events of the period, how can the church be delivered or protected from the events of a time of trial which is on the entire inhabited earth and remain on earth? How can the church be delivered from the tribulation period with its awful destruction and intensity which destroys in some cases one-third of the earth's population at one time and still remain on earth? How can they be delivered from a time when everyone who does not worship the beast is hunted down and killed, and still be on earth? How can they be delivered from a time which is so terrible that everyone would perish unless "those days were cut short," and still be on earth? How can they be delivered from a time in which almost all believers are killed, and still be on earth?

If one is given a promise to be *kept from* a "time of illness," he is not expecting to go through it. He expects that he will not be in a period of time characterized as a time of illness. He is not expecting to be delivered from chronological time. He certainly does not expect to be protected in the sense of to barely survive or not even to survive a period of intense illness. To be "kept from the hour [ὥρα] of tribulation" does not mean to go through it but to be kept from a period known as the tribulation. The "hour of trial" is a term describing a period of trial or tribulation. It is the same as the term "the tribulation period." Rev 3:10 says, "I shall keep you from the tribulation period."

Whether "the events of the period" or the time of the events is stressed does not help Gundry's view. Jesus promises not "deliverance" from but "keeping" from the period (or the events of a period of time) which affects the entire earth. Gundry's strange idea of protection or deliverance from the events is that the church will experience the trials and troubles but will not be wiped out entirely. Is this really deliverance from the events of the tribulation period? Since the events will not be canceled, the only way the church can be delivered from the events is to be removed geographically. Since the events are worldwide, this requires removal from the world, i.e., rapture.

God has promised to keep the church from that "hour" which will try the entire earth. Rapture is the obvious way, and is promised to the church. To be kept from the events of the tribulation period means from all, not from a select few. This requires removal from the entire period. Therefore, whether τηρέω ἐκ . . . ὥρας means "kept from the time" or "from the events," the result is the same. The word ὥρα does reinforce the fact that this is inclusive, that is, exclusion from *all* the events.

Gundry's conclusion is inconsistent with the promise aspect of Rev 3:10 and a positive purpose for the rapture

The promise of being kept from the "hour of tribulation" is a promise of hope or reward. Gundry, however, has the church going through the tribulation period. It is exposed to most of the troubles. The "protection" promised according to Gundry is protection of the church in a corporate sense, i.e., it will not be completely eliminated. But neither will the unbelievers. Jesus said that he will come back and terminate the period; otherwise, everyone would be eliminated.

According to Gundry, the church only misses God's wrath at the precise end of the tribulation. But the Bible pictures the tribulation period as the greatest time of trouble on the earth. The book of Revelation indicates that believers will be specially tried and suffer. To promise that "I will keep you" in the sense that you will suffer terribly, more than other generations of believers and most will be killed, but that I will keep a remnant, seems hollow. This seems particularly so if the "kept" remnant is raptured along with the dead saints right before the hoped-for millennium. What can be the purpose for keeping a remnant alive through the tribulation so that some of the church survive and then take them out of their situation and make them the same as those who did not survive? Why keep them for this? Gundry's explanation, that they provide an escort for Jesus, does not hold up. Raptured living saints will be exactly the same as resurrected dead saints. Why cannot the dead believers fulfill this purpose? Why keep a remnant alive, then rapture them and accomplish no more than by letting them die? There is no purpose or accomplishment in a rapture such as Gundry's view promotes.

With all of the saints of all the ages past and the armies in heaven available as escorts and the fact that translated saints provide no different escort than if they had been killed, why permit the church to suffer immensely, most believers be killed, and spare a few for a rapture which has no apparent purpose, immediately before the period ends? Gundry even calls this a "victorious" emergence. This emergence comes just before the end of the tribulation and just before the long-awaited millennial kingdom is set up, where peace and righteousness reign, where sickness, etc., are less, and where all know of the Lord. Is this the promise? You will suffer, be killed, but I will keep a few alive, and take them out just before the good times come. Such reasoning, of course, calls for some explanation of the apparent lack of purpose for a posttribulational rapture of any sort.

We can note the following:

- (1) An unusual, portentous, one-time event such as the rapture must have a specific purpose. God has purposes for his

- actions. This purpose must be one that can be accomplished only by such an unusual event as a rapture of living saints.
- (2) This purpose must agree with God's general principles of operation.
 - (3) There is little or no apparent reason to rapture believers when the Lord returns and just prior to setting up the long-awaited kingdom with all of its joyful prospects.
 - (4) There is good reason to deliver all who are already believers from the tribulation, where they would be special targets of persecution.
 - (5) To deliver from a period of universal trial and physical destruction such as the tribulation requires a removal from the earth by death or rapture. Death is not appropriate as a promise in Rev 3:10.
 - (6) Deliverance from the tribulation before it starts agrees with God's previous dealings with Noah and Lot and is directly stated as a principle of God's action toward believers in 2 Pet 2:9 (see discussion below).

The immediate context begins in v 4. The entire section is support for Peter's statement that judgment is certain for false teachers. The reason is stated as a condition. The conditional statement (protasis) begins in v 4 and states, in effect, "if God did not spare the angels who sinned but cast them into hell, and did not spare the ancient world but delivered Noah (φυλάσσω) when he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly, and burned up Sodom and Gomorrah and rescued (ρύομαι) Lot. . . ."¹⁴ (then follows the conclusion, apodosis), "then the Lord knows to rescue the godly out of trial" (ἐκ πειρασμοῦ).

Several things should be noted. (1) Peter states v 9 as a general principle derived from God's past actions. It is clear from God's actions in the past (angels, Noah, Lot, etc.) that this principle follows: he knows to deliver the godly from trial. (2) The word Peter uses in v 9 is πειρασμοῦ, the same word which occurs in Rev 3:10. (3) Since this principle is derived from the past examples of deliverance stated in vv 4-8, it is clear that "trial," πειρασμοῦ, does not mean everyday, routine trials. The trials described are the universal flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The flood was a judgment of God on the entire world. It was a physical judgment, not eternal judgment. This parallels the tribulation period and is described by the same term (πειρασμοῦ). The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a physical judgment from God on the ungodly. The statement that God knows to deliver from "trial," πειρασμοῦ, must mean from times of physical trial intended for the ungodly, a description which fits the tribulation period. (4) Neither Noah nor Lot went through the trial as

did the ungodly. They did not suffer from the trial. Lot was removed from Sodom and Gomorrah (πειρασμοῦ) before the destruction, not after it started. He did not remain in Sodom under some miraculous protection of God.⁶⁵ Noah was in the ark before the flood started. He did not remain somehow to be protected miraculously through the flood. Both Noah and Lot were spared the “trial.” Both were warned ahead of time.

Gundry attempts to avoid the significance of this verse. He states that “Noah went through and emerged from the flood.”⁶⁶ But Noah did not swim in the waters for a time and eventually emerge by being fished out. Noah was placed in a physical, geographical place of safety. This is not significantly different from the church being in the air with the Lord and possibly over the earth during the tribulation period. The key to the comparison is not solved by such arguments, however. The issue boils down to one simple question. Did Noah remain in the same situation and suffer the same experiences and trials as the ungodly? The answer is clearly *no*. Before the trial (flood) he was physically delivered from among the ungodly and the trial coming upon them. All of those with Noah survived. Gundry states that Lot’s rescue was “not removal, but sheltered protection.”⁶⁷ Such an obviously incorrect statement is suggested by the feeble argument that Lot “remained within the sphere of judgment in the cities of the plain while the fire and brimstone fell.”⁶⁸ But the point of the entire story of Lot is that God removed him from Sodom and Gomorrah before he destroyed (judged) the cities.⁶⁹ He did not keep him in the cities and protect him from the fire. Lot did not experience the trials that came on the ungodly. Lot was removed from Sodom. God expressly stated that he could not destroy the cities until Lot was safely in Zoar (Gen 19:22). Gen 19:29 says explicitly that God sent Lot “out of the midst of the overthrow” when he destroyed the cities.

Gundry’s argument here seem strange since he argues that Noah and Lot were not kept from the trials (πειρασμοῦ). However, it is clear from the OT passages that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the flood were incidents of *God’s* wrath or retributive

⁶⁵Ibid., 62.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹To argue that ἐκ in 2 Pet 2:9 means emergence (Ibid., 55) completely disregards the biblical account which goes to great lengths to show that God would not allow any wrath on Sodom and Gomorrah until “after” Lot was removed. To argue that he was in the “sphere of judgment in the cities of the plain” (p. 62) is not only innocuous, but merely points out that Lot was removed from the place of judgment prior to the judgment. When the judgment is on the entire earth this requires removal from the earth.

justice. Since Gundry argues elsewhere that believers will not experience God's wrath, why insist in these cases that they did? According to Gundry's own statement, believers are not to experience God's wrath at all. The expression ἐκ πειρασμοῦ ῥύεσθαι (2 Pet 2:9) must mean complete separation according to his statements elsewhere. As we have seen, it does mean that in the case of Noah and Lot. This passage then teaches that God delivers the godly ἐκ πειρασμοῦ and the ungodly are kept for judgment. Since Gundry argues that believers escape divine wrath, he should accept this with no reservation. Why then does he argue against it and contradict himself? This verse is no problem to him if he can maintain his completely artificial distinction between satanic and divine wrath in the tribulation period.

This verse states that ἐκ πειρασμοῦ means complete separation rather than emergence. Therefore, the expression in Rev 3:10 can also mean the same. There is no more reason to differentiate satanic and divine wrath in the tribulation period than there is to differentiate the two in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the flood. Unless this distinction can be maintained, however, then 2 Pet 2:9 teaches that God removes believers from a physical judgment upon earth *before* the judgment.

There is no support in these examples nor in the general principle based on them (2 Pet 2:9) for a strange protection through the trial (πειρασμοῦ), such as Gundry's concept, which is a protection which does not protect but keeps a corporate body from complete annihilation. If Noah experienced this type of protection, he would have had to swim through most of the flood and possibly drown with most of his family, but be "protected" in the sense that God would bring one of the eight safely through. This type of protection would have Lot burned severely but surviving.

Neither is there support in these examples and the general principle derived from them for some kind of protection while undergoing the same events and trials as the ungodly.

The general principle derived from these examples and stated as a principle is that God physically removes believers from among the ungodly *before* he brings such extraordinary physical judgment on the ungodly. The believers do not experience the trial. To sum up: it is a general principle of God's actions to remove believers from among the ungodly *before* he physically brings unusual divine wrath or judgment which is intended for the ungodly. A pretribulation rapture fits God's way of dealing with believers. Rev 3:10 is not only clear, but coincides with God's way of doing things. Any other time for the rapture does not.⁷⁰

⁷⁰To argue that since believers are in the tribulation period this principle does not hold true is to miss the point that *all* believers are removed prior to the tribulation:

Conclusion

Gundry's idea of protection amounts to none at all. But what can the *promise of hope* in Rev 3:10 mean if it is posttribulation? It is clear that saints in the tribulation period are not protected, but suffer intensely. Neither is there any apparent purpose for a rapture if it is posttribulation. Why not let the living saints go on into the millennium and die normal deaths as those of other ages?

Posttribulationism does not fit Rev 3:10 or 2 Pet 2:9 and it is not logical.⁷¹

CONCLUSION

Gundry's view of Rev 3:10 obviously is impossible. The verb τηρέω cannot imply "in" when used with the preposition ἐκ meaning "out." Ἐκ does not necessarily imply emergence, and when used with τηρέω, a verb which has no indication of motion, it cannot. The expression τηρέω ἐκ can only mean "keep from," in the sense of "separate from." The inclusion of the expression "hour of trial which is to come upon the entire inhabited earth" has been shown to require removal or rapture rather than "keeping" in the sense of protection on the earth. The fact that "protection" of the saints on earth is contrary to the description of what happens to believers during the tribulation period precludes the idea of protection within the period. That Rev 3:10 is a promise of reward in the sense of deliverance also precludes the concept that Rev 3:10 means most saints will suffer intensely, worse than ever before, but a few will survive.

however, the effects of the period do result in some being saved *during* that time but after the rapture has occurred.

⁷¹Some have recognized the force of the Greek more accurately than Gundry and tried to argue that passages such as Gal 1:4 use ἐκ with an expression of time when the believers are still in the time of trial (e.g., G. E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956] 85). Gal 1:4 states: "Who gave Himself for our sins in order to deliver us (ἐξέληται ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος) out of the present evil age." Several things should be noted regarding Gal 1:4. The verb "deliver" is used rather than "keep." Furthermore, the expression does not describe protection or presence within as claimed. It is also unlikely that Christ died *for the purpose of* protecting us during the present. He died to save from sins in the eternal sense. To take it as the purpose of "protecting us from this evil age" at present would require a highly figurative view since saints are not kept from sin or from the evils of this world in a literal sense. One possibility is that Gal 1:4 refers to Christ's ultimate purpose to deliver believers from the age in the eschatological sense, a common view of this verse. But this would mean physical "deliverance out" and would, therefore, not be an example of ἐκ with a time expression describing presence in the time. It could mean emergence, but with τηρέω in Rev 3:10 rather than the verb in Gal 1:4 emergence is not probable. Another possibility is to regard Gal 1:4 as figurative, but then the figure still refers to the *figure* of actual deliverance from or out of rather than "presence in."

The idea that τηρέω ἐκ in Rev 3:10 indicates protection or preservation in the hour of trial has been shown as highly improbable, even impossible. Some have argued that it refers to a figurative rather than actual keeping. But what kind of promise is a figurative deliverance from literal trials which does not literally deliver at all? In addition, there is no evidence for taking this as a figure. Nothing in the surrounding context is figurative; all of it is very literal, i.e., the wrath, the people, the prophesied time, etc. The events are prophesied *facts*. The promise of deliverance must rest on a literal deliverance or it is not a promise. A deliverance from the entire earth might seem figurative, except for the fact that such a literal deliverance is promised in the time frame of the events described in Rev 3:10. There is no reason to regard the promise as a figure and, in effect, a figurative promise would be no promise at all when the literal fact (intense persecution) is clearly prophesied to be contrary to a figurative deliverance *during* the period.

This lengthy discussion involves Gundry's handling of only one verse, Rev 3:10. To point out the numerous similar discrepancies and *non sequitur* nature of his book would take many pages and be relatively not worth the effort. It is hoped that readers may pay attention to the details and note the obvious discrepancies, for example, the statements on pp. 57 and 58 of Gundry's book arguing that τηρέω and ἐκ imply immediate presence of danger. The words may often be used in such a context, but the words themselves imply nothing regarding proximity of danger. Some languages such as Kiowa, which developed in a hunting, warlike culture, have words meaning "to hear something near" and another word meaning "to hear something far away," but there is no such implication in τηρέω and ἐκ in the Greek language. Such statements by Gundry may seem scholarly to a novice, but are completely empty of evidential value to someone familiar with language. Gundry's arguments explaining why the preposition διὰ, the obvious choice if a posttribulational rapture is in view, is not used⁷² are not arguments at all.⁷³ They are merely a series of dogmatic pronouncements without argumentation. They are based on his impossible, self-contradictory meaning for τηρέω ἐκ. He argues that διὰ would distribute the emphasis throughout the period. What is wrong with this? As we have seen, it is impossible to emphasize two separate actions with τηρέω ἐκ, as he does. Therefore τηρέω with a preposition must put the emphasis on one aspect or the

⁷²Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 57-58.

⁷³In an unpublished "Open letter to John F. Walvoord," Gundry regards this as dealing "thoroughly" with the issue. However, he does not "deal" with it at all.

other. For posttribulationism, the obvious place to emphasize protection is through (διὰ) the period. It cannot be emphasizing protection out or emerging (ἐκ).

A further word of caution is in order. Gundry has not merely argued for a chronological change of the rapture of seven years with other issues remaining the same. To uphold his view Gundry has been forced to regard Matthew 25 as a reference to the eternal kingdom rather than the millennium. What does this do to other passages such as Matthew 13? He has also reinterpreted other passages. A different position regarding the rapture affects many passages. His "exegesis" affects even more. Any attempt to refute a clear biblical statement, such as Rev 3:10, will of course require dubious exegesis.