

How to Interpret Scripture

Lesson - 11 — The Bible and Prophecy

Memory Verse

Daniel 8:14 *“And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed”.*

Historicism and Prophecy

The **historicism** method sees these prophecies as being fulfilled through the course of human history beginning at the time of the prophets who wrote them. Protestant Reformers, including John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Thomas Cranmer, John Knox, Roger Williams, Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, and John Wesley, were historicists. Note that Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom is recognized as the head of gold. Thus, Daniel identifies Babylon as the first kingdom (Dan. 2:38). Then Daniel says, “ ‘But after you shall arise another kingdom . . . then another, a third kingdom’ ” (Dan. 2:39, NKJV) and then a fourth (Dan. 2:40). That these are in succession one after another without any gaps also is implied in the image itself, for each of the kingdoms is represented in parts of a larger body moving from the head down to the toes.

Preterism, a Christian eschatological view, interprets some or all prophecies of the Bible as events which have already happened. This school of thought interprets the Book of Daniel as referring to events that happened from the 7th century BC until the first century AD, while seeing the prophecies of Revelation as being complete by first century AD. Preterism sees Daniel as focusing on the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and it sees the book of Revelation as focusing especially on the reign of the emperor Nero. Most preterists agree the Second Coming, resurrection, and Final Judgment however, have not yet occurred.

Futurism is a Christian eschatological view that interprets portions of the Book of Revelation, the Book of Ezekiel, and the Book of Daniel as future events in a literal, physical, apocalyptic, and global context. Two Catholic Jesuit writers, Manuel Lacunza (1731-1801) and Francisco Ribera (1537-1591), proposed the futurist view. It has grown in popularity in the 19th and 20th centuries, so that today it is probably the most readily recognized. Dispensationalism narrows this future fulfillment to the last seven years of earth’s history. This is the left behind scenario.

John 13:19 (NKJV) *Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.*

John 14:29 (NKJV) *“And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.*

The Year-Day Principle

Numbers 14:34 (NKJV) *According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection.*

Ezekiel 4:6 (NKJV) *And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year.*

Luke 13:31–32 (NKJV) *On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, “Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.”³² And He said to them, “Go, tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.’*

Revelation 12:6 (NKJV) *Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

Revelation 12:14 (NKJV) *But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.*

Daniel 7:25 (NKJV) *He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.*

Daniel 12:7 (NKJV) *Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.*

Elijah’s famine. How long did Jesus preach, The Apostles?

Matthew 12:39 (NKJV) *But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.*

Jonah 3:3–4 (NKJV) *So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent.⁴ And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s walk. Then he cried out and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” 3 ½ then 40*

Identifying the Little Horn

There are seven common characteristics between the little horns of Daniel 7 and Daniel 8: (1) both are described as a horn; (2) both are persecuting powers (Dan. 7:21, 25; Dan. 8:10, 24); (3) both are self-exalting and blasphemous (Dan. 7:8, 20, 25; Dan. 8:10, 11, 25); (4) both target God's people (Dan. 7:25, Dan. 8:24); (5) both have aspects of their activity delineated by prophetic time (Dan. 7:25; Dan. 8:13, 14); (6) both extend until the end of time (Dan. 7:25, 26; Dan. 8:17, 19); and (7) both are to be supernaturally destroyed (Dan. 7:11, 26; Dan. 8:25).

History identifies the first kingdom as Babylon (Dan. 2:38), the second as Media-Persia (Daniel 8:20), and the third as Greece (Dan. 8:21). History is unequivocal that after these world empires comes Rome.

In Daniel 2, the iron representing Rome continues into the feet of iron mixed with clay; that is, until the end of time. The little horn of Daniel 7 comes forth from the fourth beast but remains part of this fourth beast. What power came out of Rome and continues its politico-religious influence for at least 1,260 years (see Dan. 7:25)? Only one power fits history and prophecy—the papacy. The papacy came into power among the 10 barbarian tribes of Europe and uprooted three of them (Dan. 7:24). The papacy was “ “different from the previous ones” ” (Dan. 7:24, NASB), indicating its uniqueness compared to the other tribes. The papacy spoke “ “pompous words against the Most High” ” (Dan. 7:25, NKJV) and “exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host” (Dan. 8:11, NKJV) by usurping the role of Jesus and replacing it with the pope. The papacy fulfilled the prediction of persecuting “ “the saints of the Most High” ” (Dan. 7:25, NKJV) and casting down “some of the host” (Dan. 8:10, NKJV) during the Counter-Reformation, when Protestants were slaughtered. The papacy sought “ “to change times and law” ” (Dan. 7:25, NKJV) by removing the second commandment and changing the Sabbath to Sunday.

The Investigative Judgment

Daniel 7:9–14 and Daniel 8:14, 26. What is happening in heaven as depicted in these texts?

After the period of medieval persecution, which ended in 1798 with the capture and imprisonment of the pope by Napoleon's General Berthier (Rev. 13:3), Daniel 7 and 8 speak of judgment. The judgment is to take place in heaven where “ “the court was seated” ” (Dan. 7:10, NKJV) and “ ‘One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven . . . came to the Ancient of Days’ ” (Dan. 7:13, NKJV). This is a judgment scene that occurs after 1798 and before the second coming of Jesus.

This judgment scene in Daniel 7 is directly parallel to the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14. They are talking about the same thing. According to Daniel 8:14, the time of this “cleansing of the sanctuary,” which is Day of Atonement terminology, is 2,300 evening-mornings, or days. With the year-day principle, these days represent 2,300 years.

Typology as Prophecy

1 Corinthians 10:1–11 (NKJV) *Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,³ all ate the same spiritual food,⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.⁶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.⁷ And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”⁸ Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;⁹ nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents;¹⁰ nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*

John 19:36 Bones not broken

John 3:14, 15 As Moses lifted

Romans 5:14 Like Adam

John 1:29 Behold *the Lamb*