

Principles of Prophetic Interpretation

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Do not believe the startling predictions being brought to you today, by those who claim that this political event and that war is a fulfillment of Daniel or Revelation.

The truth is that there are no more literal prophetic fulfillments about Palestine, the Jews, Jerusalem, and the Near East in Biblical latter-day prophecies.

Here are the approximate teachings of a number of groups and individuals (“approximate” because the teachings change as world events change):

The teaching of modern Evangelicals, that God has restored control of Jerusalem to the Jews and that, after the rapture, He will bring salvation and great glory to them.

The teaching of Victor Houteff and the Shepherd’s Rod (Davidians), that their members will eventually return to Jerusalem and make it their capital, from which they will rule the world.

The teaching of Uriah Smith, that Turkey will fight against Egypt over control of Jerusalem, and not until the nation of Turkey is destroyed can the end of the world come and Christ return.

The teaching of Charles Wheeling, that a key factor triggering final events will be a Near Eastern war.

The teaching of William Grotheer, that Bible prophecy was fulfilled in 1967 when the Jews regained full control of literal Jerusalem.

The teaching of Robert Houser, that literal Rome will be burned down and faithful Adventists will be persecuted because of it.

The teaching of some others that the Soviet Union, China, Iran, or Iraq will play a prominent role in a final war which will usher in the Second Advent.

That listing only touches the surface. There are a hundred other interpretations of Bible prophecy out there which, like these, are based on the theory that final events in the books of Daniel, Revelation, and Matthew 24 focus on specific political events of the late 19th and 20th centuries.

Here are some basic principles to keep in mind, when studying the prophecies—

Scripture must be compared with Scripture—The proper way to understand the prophecies is by adhering to the principle of “turning to and fro in the prophecies.”

This is a concept given us by Isaiah:

“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little.”—*Isaiah 28:10*.

It is also mentioned by Daniel:

“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.”—*Daniel 12:4*.

It is generally believed that Daniel 12:4 refers primarily to an increase of general knowledge in the last days. But the angel is actually instructing the prophet that the “shut book” of Daniel will be opened at the end of time. Men will compare Scripture with Scripture.

This is the thought conveyed in the following statement:

“The prophecies present a succession of events leading down to the opening of the judgment. This is especially true of the book of Daniel. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal ‘to the time of the end.’ Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on the fulfillment of these prophecies. But at the time of the end, says the prophet, ‘many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.’ Daniel 12:4.”—*Great Controversy, 356*.

The phrase, “many shall run to and fro,” is a Hebrew idiom, and means “searching here and there in Scripture.”

We are to compare spiritual things with spiritual things.

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”—*1 Corinthians 2:13*.

“No prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private

interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20). This means that we must let Scripture explain Scripture. That is why it is so important to let the Spirit of Prophecy—the only inspired commentary on the Bible—help explain the deep truths of Inspiration.

“Investigate, compare Scripture with Scripture, sink the shaft of truth down deep into the mine of God’s Word.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 476.

“You must dig deep in the mine of truth if you would find its richest treasures. Comparing Scripture with Scripture, you may find the true meaning of the text.”—*My Life Today*, 22.

Unfortunately, this rule has been violated. While other lines of prophecy end in the antichrist being overcome by Christ, it has been said that Daniel 11 ends with the conquest of a minor power of the 19th century: the nation of Turkey.

The explanation of each prophecy will harmonize with the others—As an example of this, compare 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 8; Revelation 16:12-16; 17:13-14; 18:1-24; 19:11-21; and Daniel 11:44-45. You can clearly see here the linkage and meaning of these climactic verses.

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition . . . And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.”—*2 Thessalonians* 2:3, 8.

“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”—*Revelation* 16:12-16.

“These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”—*Revelation* 17:13-14.

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns . . . And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him . . . And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations . . . And I saw the

beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken and with him the false prophet . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire.”—*Revelation* 19:11-12, 13-15, 19-20.

“But tidings out of the east and out of north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”—*Daniel* 11:44-45.

Interpretations of Biblical last-day events will agree fully with the clear predictions of final events, as given in the Spirit of Prophecy—The master book of last-day events is *Great Controversy*. All interpretations of Bible prophecy should agree with it.

That book does not support any of the startling, new prophetic interpretations which continually arise.

Just as *Desire of Ages* explains the Gospel writings, and *Patriarchs and Prophets* and *Prophets and Kings* explains Old Testament history, so *Great Controversy* carefully guides us through coming events. Every important issue that we need to know is explained.

We insult the Spirit of God when we do not value what He gives us enough to study and believe it. The God of heaven knew that these final days would be filled with every wind of doctrine and false prophecy. So He mercifully gave us the Spirit of Prophecy, to protect us from taking needless detours and treacherous paths.

Instead of trying to dream up startling new theories about the Bible prophecies,—let us accept the ones clearly revealed.

“It is not a small matter that the counsels and plans of God have been so clearly opened to us. It is a wonderful privilege to be able to understand the will of God as revealed in the sure word of prophecy. This places on us a heavy responsibility. God expects us to impart to others the knowledge that He has given us. It is His purpose that divine and human instrumentalities shall unite in the proclamation of the warning message . . .

“Are we to wait until the fulfillment of the prophecies of the end before we say anything concerning them? Of what value will our words be then? Shall we wait until God’s judgments fall upon the transgressor before we tell him how to avoid them? Where is our faith in the Word of God? Must we see things foretold come to pass before we will believe what He has said? In clear, distinct rays light has come to us, showing us that the great day of the Lord is near at hand, ‘even at the doors.’

Let us read and understand before it is too late.”—
9 Testimonies, 19-20.

The chain prophecies of Daniel are more concerned with the Christian era and beyond than with the Old Testament era—For example, in Daniel 7, the prophet quickly passes over the powers symbolized by the lion, bear, and leopard, and then dwells on Rome, pagan and papal, which would span the Christian era. The very wording of Daniel and Revelation indicates that it is the prophecies about final events which are the most crucial and climactic. Daniel 11 introduces the Christian era by its mention of the breaking of the prince of the covenant in verse 22. From that verse onward till the end of chapter 12, events of the Christian age are the focus of attention.

A gap occurs in those prophecies between earlier events and the events of the last days—We find this pattern in every one of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, even in those which appear to run all the way through to the end.

A description of events generally ends in 1798 or in 1844. After that there is a distinct gap. Then a description of the final crescendo of events is given. Not once in a major chain prophecy, covering the span of many centuries, are we told of events in the latter part of the 19th century or the 20th century.

Prophecies of earlier events are literal, and those of final events deal with major spiritual powers—Consider the prophecies of Daniel. In each one a number of literal events in earlier history are mentioned,—but final events are symbolically applied to major spiritual forces. The powers of good and evil are pitted against one another: God, in the person of His saints, against Satan and the host of the wicked.

Nations are noticed in prophecy when they become connected with God's people—It is not until a nation decidedly affects God's children, and the outworking of the great controversy, that the power is noticed. This becomes especially evident as we near the end of time.

“It is a manifest rule of interpretation that we look for nations to be noticed in prophecy when they so far become connected with the people of God that mention of them becomes necessary to make the records of sacred history complete.”—*Uriah Smith, Daniel and Revelation, p. 45 (1891 edition).*

That is a remarkable statement, in view of the fact that Uriah Smith wrote it. But he forgot it when he applied Daniel 11:40-45 to the small nation of Turkey. Because of local events in the late 19th cen-

tury, he imagined those verses might apply to Turkey.

But, in reality, whatever power is the subject of those climactic verses must, in the last days, be leading out in trying to do something to God's people. In all Daniel's previous prophecies, that power was the papacy.

Daniel 10:14 specifically says that this final prophecy of Daniel was given to show what would “befall” God's people “in the latter days.”

“Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.”—*Daniel 10:14.*

Daniel's last prophecy was given to him after he had prayed earnestly for three weeks in order to obtain light on the prophecy of Daniel 8 and 9.

“For what purpose did this aged servant of God thus humble himself and afflict his soul? Evidently for the purpose of understanding more fully the divine purpose concerning events that were to befall the church of God in coming time; for the divine messenger sent to instruct him says, ‘From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand,’ etc. Verse 12. There was then still something which Daniel did not understand, but in reference to which he earnestly desired light. What was it?—It was undoubtedly some part of his last preceding visions; namely, the vision of chapter 9, and through that of the vision of chapter 8, of which chapter 9 was but a further explanation. And as the result of his supplications, he now received more minute information respecting the events included in the great outlines of his former visions.”—*Uriah Smith, Daniel and Revelation, 219.*

Since Turkey had not been mentioned in the earlier prophecies, it could not be the concluding power in Daniel's final prophecy.

Correct prophetic interpretations are in agreement with God's covenant with His people—A little thought reveals that many of these imaginative, literal interpretations of final event prophecies are based on God's covenant with the Jews. According to the prediction in Daniel 9:27, that ended in A.D. 34. We are not now to expect a literal Palestinian fulfillment of such prophecies as Daniel 11:40-45; Ezekiel 38; 39; Joel 3; Zechariah 14; Isaiah 2:1-5; Micah 4:1-8; or Revelation 16:12-16.

All Bible predictions regarding favor to Israel are, in the centuries after Christ, to be fulfilled in God's church—a church composed of men and women of all nationalities and races. The Jews are no longer God's favored people.

The prophecies which refer to a military conflict, to be waged in Palestine, apply to the great final conflict between God (in His earthly children)

and Satan (in his followers).

Daniel 11, which climaxes that conflict, mentions “the covenant” five times (Daniel 11:22, 28, 30, 32). That covenant is made to everyone who, by faith in Christ, will keep the law of God (Deuteronomy 7:9; 11:13, 14; Jeremiah 31:33-37; etc.).

At the height of the coming crisis, will come the deliverance predicted in Daniel 12:1. Commenting on it, we are told:

“It was midnight that God chose to deliver His people . . . [They] hear the covenant of peace that God was to make with those who had kept His law . . . God . . . delivered the everlasting covenant to His people.”—*Early Writings*, 285.

All that once belonged to literal Israel now belongs to the church. To interpret Scriptures which speak of the last days, as referring to a literal conflict in Palestine or the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem, is to ignore the truths given us in the New Testament, as well as in the Spirit of Prophecy.

The eyes of Evangelicals today are on literal Palestine and Jerusalem. Why should any of our people want to unite with them?

The Apostles applied the prophecies about the Jews to the Christians—There are no literal Palestinian or Near Eastern fulfillments to the latter part of any of these major prophecies, because those prophecies extend into and beyond the New Testament transition. Carefully study the sermons of the Apostles. They took Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel and spiritually applied them to the Christians. Jesus was the Son of David (Acts 2:29, 32). Jesus was the promised Messiah (Acts 13:22-23). Christ is Redeemer, saving Israel out of “all people.” That salvation is “in Zion”—in the church, with Christ as its head (Joel 2:32; Romans 11:26; 9:23; 1 Peter 2:4-7).

Compare Joel 2:32 with Acts 2:21-39:

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.”—*Joel 2:32*.

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved . . .

“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”—*Acts 2:21,39*.

Let no one turn your eyes to the Jews and Jerusalem as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. We agree

that the Evangelicals are doing that, but we do not have to join their company.

A type and antitype pattern runs all through the prophecies, as they take us from ancient fulfillments to later fulfillments—From the time of Pentecost, onward, the Old Testament prophecies concerning Zion, Jerusalem, the land of Israel, etc.—were interpreted spiritually as applying the preaching and acceptance of the Gospel and redemption in Christ.

When passing over into the Christian era there is an automatic transition from literal to spiritual Babylon, from the literal lands of Israel and Babylon to their spiritual antitypes. What literal Babylon did to the literal Jews, Jerusalem, and the temple was to be done by spiritual Babylon in her spiritual warfare against spiritual Israel.

Nebuchadnezzar was king of literal Babylon, and he called his kingdom “great Babylon” (Daniel 4:30). As he was absolute monarch of the literal kingdom (Daniel 2:38), so spiritual Babylon will also be a vaunted queen (Revelation 18:7)—“Great Babylon” (Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:2, 10, 16, 18; 19:3)

Daniel 7 begins with literal Babylon (the winged lion) and passes on to spiritual Babylon (the little horn). The pagan principles of those earlier nations and their religions are adopted into the practices and teachings of spiritual Babylon (Revelation 13:2).

We find this same literal to spiritual transition in pagan to papal Rome. The words, “shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people,” fit both literal and spiritual Rome—pagan and papal Rome. Both invaded the land and habitations of God’s people, in order to overcome them.

Jesus predicts the coming of “the abomination of desolation”—the Roman armies (Luke 21:20; GC 21, 26)—to “destroy the city and the sanctuary” (Daniel 9:26-27; Luke 21:20). Then, with hardly a pause, He tells about the destruction of God’s people in the Dark Ages (Matthew 24:15-22). Christ gave a double application, both literal (by pagan Rome against the Jews and Jerusalem), and spiritual (by papal Rome against God’s people and their spiritual city—the church).

Another type-antitype relationship, which we are all well-acquainted with, is the defilement and cleansing of the earthly tabernacle and heavenly Sanctuary (Leviticus 16; Daniel 8:14).

Principles of Prophetic Interpretation

**PART TWO
OF TWO**

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Yet another type-antitype pattern is found in the events of Daniel 1 through 6 and the prophecies of 7 through 12. In those earlier chapters we find the type of the National Sunday Law, the Judgment on the wicked, and much more.

From the last hours of literal Babylon (Daniel 5), we pass on to the last hours of spiritual Babylon (Daniel 11:45). It is a lesson for us to remember, lest we too be “weighed in the balances and found wanting” (Daniel 5:27).

And how was the final judgment upon ancient Babylon accomplished? By the drying up of the waters of the Euphrates (Isaiah 44:27; Jeremiah 50:38)! In what manner will the judgment on spiritual Babylon occur? At the end time, the coming Conqueror will dry up the waters of spiritual Euphrates (Revelation 16:12). These, the waters on which the whore sits (Revelation 17:1), are the multitudes of people (Revelation 17:1, 15; Jeremiah 51:13) which supply Babylon with its wealth and power. We are told, in *Great Controversy*, how the people will turn on their spiritual leaders.

Who was it that destroyed ancient Babylon? A great king from the East—Cyrus (Isaiah 41:2, 25; 46:11; Jeremiah 51:11, 28). Daniel’s last prophecy begins with Cyrus, the deliverer of ancient Israel (Daniel 10:1) and destroyer of her Babylonian oppressors (Jeremiah 50:33-34; Isaiah 45:13; etc.), and ends with the deliverance of spiritual Israel (Daniel 11:45; 12:1).

The literal fulfillment theories are wrong. No literal last-day Palestinian attacks, returns, or enthronements are predicted in Scripture. The pope will not move to Jerusalem. Satan is not going to be crowned at Jerusalem. The Jews will not rebuild their Temple at Jerusalem. The Middle East no longer literally applies to anything.

The great controversy between Christ and Satan is mirrored in the war over the Sanctuary, as Satan can attack Christ only by attacking His truth and His people. In order to understand exactly what is involved in this final attack, read the book, *Great Controversy*.

All major prophecies end with the destruction of Rome and the establishment of Christ’s kingdom—This is another key principle in help-

ing us understand the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

Daniel 2: “Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet.”—*Daniel 2:34*. The modern nations, under the rule of the papacy, are destroyed. The Roman controlled feet of the image will be destroyed.

Daniel 7: “I beheld till the beast was slain.” “But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”—*Daniel 7:11, 26-27*. The Roman beast will be slain.

Daniel 8: “And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart and by peace shall destroy many. He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.”—*Daniel 8:25*. The Roman desolator shall be broken, beyond any human power to save him.

Daniel 9: “For the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”—*Daniel 9:27*. The desolator will be destroyed.

Daniel 11: “Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”—*Daniel 11:45*.

In view of this, it would be foolish for Daniel to give a series of prophecies, each one describing the end of the forces of Babylon—and then, in the last, climactic vision, to call the final desolating power—little, third-rate Turkey.

Each major prophecy in Daniel helps explain the previous one—A divine Mind guided in the writing of the book of Daniel. It is a sound method, gradually building more and more on the instruction earlier given. This is what we find in Daniel and Revelation.

Daniel 7 covers the same ground as chapter 2, but adds to the details.

Daniel 8 deals with the same empires which are still future at the time the prophet writes. Daniel 8 explains more about the persecuting little horn mentioned in Daniel 7.

Daniel 11 and 12 begins where Daniel 8 begins—with Medo-Persia, and then enlarges and adds to it. The future history of Greece, pagan Rome, and the papacy is described in greater detail. The “abomination of desolation,” of Daniel 11:31, is an obvious parallel to the power of Daniel 7 and 8 which dares to oppose God.

Daniel 7: “He shall speak words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and shall think to change times and the laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and half a time.”—*Daniel 7:25.*

Daniel 8: “A king of fierce countenance . . . shall stand up . . . His power shall be mighty . . . he shall destroy wonderfully the holy people . . . And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart . . . he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes.”—*Daniel 8:23-25.*

Daniel 11: “And the king shall do according to his will; he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished.”—*Daniel 11:36.*

Each of those chapters leads us to the antichrist and how he is overcome by Christ. In Daniel 7, five verses are given to a description of the antichrist; in Daniel 8, eight verses. And in Daniel 11 there are more than 20 verses.

Here is another comparison. Daniel 8 and 9 have the same five features:

- The rise and end of Medo-Persia.
- The rise and end of Greece.
- The invasion by Rome of the “pleasant” or “glorious land.”
- Papal Rome’s war against the people of God.
- Both prophecies end with the destruction of the papacy.

The only difference is that Darius was still alive when Daniel 8 was written; but his successor, Cyrus, ruled by the time Daniel 10 was penned.

Last-day applications especially worldwide—We have noted that, prior to the death of Christ and the rejection of the Jewish nation as the special people of God, the tendency was for fulfillments of major Bible prophecy to be literally applied to the Jews and to specific nations. After the time of Christ, the prophecies dealt with God’s people (spiritual Israel) and spiritual Babylon (papal Rome).

But in addition, prophecies which find their complete fulfillment in the last days—tend to have a more universal scope. Although God’s people and the papacy are still the subject of those prophe-

cies, the area of persecution and final battle is worldwide.

And is not that what we see about us today? More than at any other time in history, God’s people are scattered all over the world, and so is the influence of the papacy. As a result of the immense influence of the United States, after enactment of its Sunday Law, similar laws will be soon be passed all over the world—and the effect will be a “universal Sunday law.”

Just as the final crisis will be worldwide; so also will be the persecution, the loud cry, the close of probation, the plagues, and the final deliverance.

You will not find the slightest hint of Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, the literal Jews, or old Jerusalem in the closing chapters of *Great Controversy* (chapters 23 to 42).

No return of the Jews to Jerusalem—God never predicted that, in the last days, the literal Jews would return to literal Jerusalem. Instead, He predicted they would never again control that city—and they never have, they still do not, and they never will. The prediction of God cannot be changed.

The Jews will not have “returned” to Jerusalem until they gain full political control of the city and the temple area, are able to rebuild their Temple, and once again institute sacrifices on the dome of the rock. The “times of the Gentiles” has not ceased; indeed, the Temple Mount swarms daily with thousands of Gentile tourists and heathen Arabs. Ellen White predicted the Temple worship would never be restored (*Mount of Blessing, 120*).

Read *Great Controversy, 36-37*. Just as Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70, so the wicked will be destroyed at the end of time. There is no second chance.

More on this in our forthcoming book.

The day-year principle—There is literal time and there is prophetic time. We are all acquainted with literal time: days, months, years, as they are applied in the Bible and daily life.

But there is a certain type of prophetic time which is different. It follows a special divinely arranged pattern.

Normal prophetic time periods are based on literal time; whereas non-literal periods employ a day to represent a year.

Normal prophetic time is written as years (example: the 70-year prophecy of Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10 (cf. Daniel 9:2), and means years.

Day-year prophecies are written as days or weeks (example: the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27) and must be changed into years.

Day-year timing is especially found in the figurative prophecies (those which use representations such as beasts, horns, etc.). *How do we arrive at the day-year principle?*

One key in unraveling this is Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6:

“After the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know My breach of promise.”—*Numbers 14:34*.

“Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.”—*Ezekiel 4:6*.

Another key is the use of the word, “time,” in certain passages: One time prophecy mentions “an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year” (Revelation 9:15). An hour is obviously the 24th part of a day.

But two questions remain: the length of a year, in prophetic time, and the meaning of “time” in prophecy. Certain passages explain this:

“And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”—*Daniel 7:25*.

“For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.”—*Daniel 11:13* (*literally: at the end of times, years*”).

Those are two of the passages, but there are more.

The interrelationship between several different ways God uses to describe the 1260-year prophecy is a powerful key in explaining both the length of the prophetic year and the meaning of “time” in prophecy.

When we compare certain verses, we find that a “time” in prophecy is a year. Notice this:

Three and a half times equals 1260 days:

“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”—*Revelation 12:6*.

“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.”—*Revelation 12:14*.

Forty-two months equals 1260 days:

“The holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.”—*Revelation 11:2, 3*.

Therefore, 3½ “times” equals 42 months, or 3½ 12-month years.

Therefore, from the total of 1260 days for this period, it can be figured that one “time,” or year, has 360 days; and that the 42 months have 30 days in each of those months. The result is a year of 12 thirty-day months, totaling 360 days.

One might wonder why this is, since neither the Hebrews nor anyone else used a 360-day calendar. The reason is the fact that, because none of the ancients knew the exact starting point of the year, the Hebrews used a lunar calendar. They measured the beginning of the year by when the moon was first seen in the spring. The closest they could come was that it was somewhere between 364 and 366 days in length. The Lord wanted something more exact, so He chose to use a 360-day calendar in computing Bible prophecies.

What about time setting in the last days?—

Some people take the already fulfilled major time prophecies (1260, 1290, 1335, and 2300 years)—and declare that those prophecies will have a second day-day application in the last days.

Later in the book, you will find a large chapter—filled with remarkably urgent Spirit of Prophecy statements, objecting to time setting in these last days.

- As we have just noticed, Scripture requires that the day-year (not a day-day) principle be applied to the 1260, 1290, 1335, and 2300 day prophecies.

- A secondary day-day application of these time periods, in these last days, would be fallacious; for, over and over again, Ellen White warned us not to set time—any time—after 1844.

- Revelation 10:6 predicted that there would be no more time prophecies in the last days. Ellen White confirmed this as the meaning of that verse (*7A Bible Commentary, 971*).

Our need for divine guidance is urgent as we study God’s Holy Word—Here are several passages which will help us develop the proper balance as we carry on our study of the Bible prophecies:

“There must be patient study and meditation and earnest prayer. Every student, as he opens the Scriptures, should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.”—*Testimonies to Ministers, 108*.

“Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.”—*4 Signs, 430*.

“Let the heart be softened and subdued by the spirit of prayer before the Bible is read.”—*6 Review, 526*.

Is it possible that, while we are busily search-

ing Daniel and Revelation for details about political events,—we should instead be learning lessons of character development from those books?

“When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such a glimpse of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 114.

“Daniel’s clearness of mind and firmness of purpose, his strength of intellect in acquiring knowledge, were due in a great degree to the plainness of his diet in connection with his life of prayer.”—*4 Testimonies*, 515-516.

“In the Revelation, the deep things of God are portrayed. Those whose hearts are wholly sanctified to God will be brought nigh to see priceless gems through the telescope of faith. And as they apply the truth to practice, the still deeper mysteries are stamped on the soul.”—*1 Manuscript Releases*, 42.

“Our lesson for the present time is, How may we most clearly comprehend and present the gospel that Christ came in person to present to John on the Isle of Patmos,—the gospel that is termed ‘the revelation of Jesus Christ?’”—*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, 29.

Personal character development and a close, daily walk with God is what we need today.

“We are to receive the very same glory that was revealed to Daniel, because it is for God’s people in these last days, that they give the trumpet a certain sound.”—*1 Manuscript Releases*, 40.

“As fast as the soul resolves to act in accordance with the light given, the Holy Spirit gives more light and strength . . . Success in the Christian life depends upon the appropriation of the light that God has given.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 518.

“Truth is not truth to those who do not practice it. Truth is only truth to you when you live it in your daily life, showing the world what those people must be who are at last saved.”—*General Conference Bulletin*, April 3, 1901.

“It is impossible for men to refuse to walk in the light God has given them and still have a living connection with Him.”—*3 Review*, 391.

Here are additional counsels on how to properly study the Word of God:

“The spirit in which you come to the investigation of the Scriptures will determine the character of the assistant at your side. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility

of heart seek for divine guidance. But if the Bible is opened with irreverence, with a feeling of self-sufficiency, if the heart is filled with prejudice, Satan is beside you, and he will set the plain statements of God’s Word in a perverted light.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 108.

“We should come with reverence to the study of the Bible, feeling that we are in the presence of God. All lightness and trifling should be laid aside.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 107.

“Let the seeker for truth who accepts the Bible as the inspired Word of God, lay aside every previous idea, and take the Word in its simplicity. He should renounce every sinful practice, and enter the Holy of Holies with heart softened and subdued, ready to listen to what God says.”—*6 Review*, 526.

Beware lest you study God’s Word in the wrong way.

“Scripture is the key that unlocks Scripture. The suppositions of men are worthless. Great care should be exercised, lest human fallacies be brought in . . . We are not to seek for revelations that have not been made in the Word of God.”—*Upward Look*, 86.

“Those who trust in their intelligence he [Satan] will make believe that they can correct the Scriptures. You are going to meet this infidelity in high places. You need the Holy Spirit of God, the divine power to cooperate with you to discern the trap that the devil is preparing, and escape it.”—*Upward Look*, 101.

“God’s Word, they assert, is modified, remodeled to suit the changing times, to suit their own mind and ideas. They have been educated from the wrong books, and have left a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ ”—*Spalding-Magan*, 131.

“They had not studied the Scriptures with a desire to conform to the will of God. They had searched for prophecies which could be interpreted to exalt themselves.”—*Desire of Ages*, 65.

How William Miller studied the Bible is very much worth our consideration. Read *Great Controversy*, p. 320.

“None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men?”—*Great Controversy*, 593-594.

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