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The Protestant Interpretation of Bible Prophecy,
The Historical Alternative

OBSERVATIONS ON DANIEL AND THE APOCALYPSE OF ST. JOHN

by *Isaac Newton*

[The Gift of Prophecy](#)

Many students of Bible Prophecy know of the Jesuit origins of Futurism and Preterism but, few know the role that Isaac Newton played in creating the Protestant Historicist interpretation. Unlike the two Catholic interpretations which were created during the Counter-Reformation to defend a corrupt church, the [Historicist Interpretation](#) evolved over many centuries.

Lost during the dark ages, the prophetic insights of the early fathers were rediscovered by Wycliffe, snuffed out and then rekindled by Luther. John Knox fanned them to an open flame which was brought to brilliant radiance during the enlightenment.

For some time after Luther's bold accusation that the Papacy was AntiChrist, Roman Catholic leadership responded by suppression and persecution. But, suppression proved impossible and persecution only fanned the flames for the stake proved a powerful pulpit. When England defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588 the island citadel of Protestantism was established. Rome finally had to meet the reformer's challenge on their own ground - in the scriptures.

Through a collaboration of Jesuits Francisco Ribera of Spain and Robert Bellarmine of Rome, the Papacy put forward its counter interpretation, [Futurism](#). The Pope was not AntiChrist they contended for he was not to appear until "in the future". Their new interpretation was published in 1591 - three years after the defeat of the Spanish Armada when all hope of crushing Protestantism was gone. Luis de Alcazar published the contradictory [Preterist interpretation](#) in 1614. He argued that AntiChrist had come and gone

PART 1.

Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel.

Chapter 1 Introduction concerning the Compilers of the Books of the Old Testament

Chapter 2 Of the Prophetic Language.

Chapter 3. Of the vision of the Image composed of four Metals.

Chapter 4 Of the vision of the four Beasts.

Chapter 5 Of the Kingdoms represented by the feet of the Image composed of iron and clay.

Chapter 6 Of the ten Kingdoms represented by the ten horns of the fourth Beast.

Chapter 7 Of the eleventh horn of Daniel's fourth Beast.

Chapter 8. Of the power of the eleventh horn of Daniel's fourth Beast, to change times and laws.

Chapter 9. Of the Kingdoms represented in Daniel by the Ram and He-Goat.

Chapter 10. Of the Prophecy

before the book of Revelation was written.

There was method in the seeming madness of Rome's contradictory interpretations. The preterist system appeals to the liberals in the church who deny the miraculous and scoff at the idea that prophecy is history pre-written. Futurism assigns the fulfillment of the book of Revelation to a 3 ½ year period at the end of time which appeals to fundamentalists. The historicist interpretation, also called the continuist interpretation finds fulfillments in the past, present and future. There is a living book always unfolding revelations to each generation. For as William Blake wrote:

Hear the voice of the Bard! (Prophet)

Who **present, past and future** sees;

Whose ears have heard the Holy Word

That walked among the ancient trees.

Futurism would not be popular for 350 years, but Preterism took hold quickly. Rome was still the intellectual center of the church and her response was all the more effective because Protestantism had no systematic interpretation of the prophecies, no seminaries, and no lofty ecclesiastical citadel to command respect.

If Rome's arguments could not be answered then Protestantism would be defeated and the martyr's blood would be spilt in vain. There was no one living that could answer Goliath's taunt, but God was to send a man more than equal to the challenge.

From time to time, a man arises like a bubble from the deep whose work changes the course of human thought pointing to the true path away from the trackless desert. Such a man was born in Lincolnshire, England in 1642. There entered the world one of the strangest and most baffling figures in the history of human thought. Einstein remarked that Newton was a more significant figure than his own mastery makes of him, since he was placed by fate at the turning point of the world's intellectual development. Isaac Newton was to be the starburst of the Enlightenment.

In the world of English academic prophecy expositors,

of the Seventy Weeks.

[Chapter 11.](#) Of the Times of the Birth and Passion of Christ.

[Chapter 12.](#) Of the Prophecy of the Scripture of Truth.

[Chapter 13.](#) Of the King who did according to his will, and magnified himself above every God, and honoured Mahuzzims, and regarded not the desire of women.

[Chapter 14.](#) Of the Mahuzzims, honoured by the King who doth according to his will.

PART 2

Observations upon the Apocalypse of St. John.

[Chapter 1.](#) Introduction, concerning the time when the Apocalypse was written

[Chapter 2.](#) Of the relation which the Apocalypse of John hath to the Book of the Law of Moses, and to the worship of God in the Temple.

[Chapter 3.](#) Of the relation which the Prophecy of John hath to those of Daniel; and of the Subject of the Prophecy.

Issac Newton Links

something resembling a Copernican revolution had taken place in the decade before Newton was born. A novel interpretive system for Daniel and Revelation had been devised by Cambridge Greek professor Joseph Mede.

During the reformation, exposition of prophecy had been piecemeal. Fragments of light fell here and there to form a patchwork quilt totally lacking in design. Mede observed that the historical events foretold by the symbols in the Apocalypse did not parallel the order of the visions themselves chapter by chapter. A system had to be invented to determine the chronological sequence which had been confused by earlier expositors.

God gave the prophecies, not to gratify men's curiosity by enabling them to fore know things, but that after they were fulfilled they might be interpreted by the event, and His own providence, not the interpreters, be thereby manifested to the world.

Sir Isaac Newton (1642 - 1727)

Mede discovered that there were a number of progressions of visions which were synchronized one to another. Some began where others left off, others overlapped. For instance, the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 overlap the history of the seven seals and treat a different theme. In identifying and regrouping these preparatory to interpretation, he came upon a method that was to be the model used by all reputable expositors. His admirers glorified his discovery by equating it in importance to Aristotle's syllogistic reasoning. Isaac Newton was heir to Mede's methodology and extended Mede's syllogistic logic into a completed interpretive system which would stand the test of time.

Even though his reputation rests on his scientific work, science occupied Isaac Newton's interest for a relatively short period of his life. Even while he was finishing his monumental Principia at age 28, he had grown tired of science and became engrossed in interpreting the book of Daniel which had fascinated him since his youth. Over the remainder of his life he would write over 1,300,000 words on religious subjects with prophecy his principal focus.

(Andrade)

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[Sir Issac Newton and Chronology](#)

[Newton - The Last Sorcerer](#)

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Newton's Birthplace](#)

[Westminster Abbey
Newton's Resting Place](#)

[Jesus and the Emerging
World of Isaac Newton](#)

[Sir Isaac Newton and the
Great Pyramid](#)

[The Testimony of Sir Isaac
Newton](#)

His consuming interest in prophecy stemmed from three fundamental beliefs:

1. The book of Daniel was a pre-written history of the world and to interpret it would unlock a treasure of understanding.
2. The book had been sealed (Dan 12:4) and Newton believed the appointed time had arrived to break the seal.
3. God had chosen him to interpret it. This remarkable fact surfaced from recently discovered manuscripts of his. He was haunted all his life by this calling.

When John completed the book of Revelation, true prophecy ceased. This was the age of the prophecy expositor which was a comparable calling. Newton stated in his observations that previous interpreters had given prophecy a bad name by attempting to foretell the future. The design of God was much different. He gave the prophecies, not to gratify the curiosity of man to know the future, but that after they were fulfilled they might be interpreted by the event. (John 13:19). Then the God who saw all from the beginning would receive the glory and men's faith would increase.

Newton's remarkable work in astronomy, history and chronology all grew out of his consuming interest in the book of Daniel. In tracing the symbolic unfolding of history, Newton devoted several decades to the reading of ancient history. In his generation, chronology was a pivotal battleground upon which the theologians, philosophers, deists and atheists contended. History without sound chronology was confusion. And without historical benchmarks the prophecies in the book of Daniel were in question.

The need for chronological precision led Newton into another discipline, astronomy. In this he had no peer. He determined ancient dates such as Christ's birth and Artaxerxes's decree to rebuild Jerusalem by measuring the precession of equinoxes and locating eclipses, comets and natural disasters which were often mentioned in ancient history. His Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended

when joined with his history of empires and churches since Daniel, forms one complete universal history of mankind, both sacred and profane since creation.

He developed a novel dictionary of prophetic symbols like the little horn, the seals and the candlesticks that demonstrated every notable physical and religious occurrence conformed exactly to the possible meanings of each prophetic verse. There was nothing left over, no random words still unexplained and no images were superfluous. He continued his scientific approach until he felt the system was complete and flawless.

It wasn't of course, especially his chronology which missed the mark widely in certain instances, but his method was sound and he blazed a trail others would follow. Just as his Principia laid the foundation for modern physics, his interpretive system laid the foundation for subsequent protestant prophecy exposition.

In James 3:17 we learn that the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Further, Paul explains that the grace to interpret prophecy is a special gift of the Holy Spirit. Isaac Newton had a double portion of that spirit.

[Woolsthorpe Manor](#)-Newton's Birthplace

He was a “wise virgin”. He never had commerce with the opposite sex and was known for his powers of discernment. He had a nose for the truth



often seeing the solution to complex mathematical problems before proving them. He knew more about the Bible, church history and prophecy than all of England. His library was rich in books of theological interest. He studied the Bible daily and was a firm believer in its authority. His religion

was charged with emotions of praise and glory for the wonder of the infinite powers of the creator.

He was generous, paying for the distribution of Bibles to the poor, supporting friends and others who came to him in need. He rebuked levity regarding the deity in his presence. He had a childlike faith and lived as conscientiously as a Puritan. He was emphatically Protestant. And he feared the God that he believed had called him to open the seals of the Apocalypse.

Knighted by Queen Anne, admired by his nation, Newton's legendary absentmindedness endeared him to many. His countenance was mild, pleasant, comely. He was often seen in later years in his coach riding with an arm hanging out of each window. His pink skin was set off by his flowing white hair which made him a venerable sight.

His funeral ceremonies were those of a national hero. He was borne to his grave on the shoulders of the Lord high chancellor, two dukes and three earls in an age when that meant something. His monument in [Westminster Abbey](#) had been previously refused to England's greatest nobility. No such honors had ever been paid to a man of science.

It is said Newton had a greater influence on the world than had any mortal with the exception of another prophet...Mohammed. His memory has been immortalized by poets and historians. To a remarkable extent the greatest of scientists had the gift of prophecy.

Observations was published in 1733, six years after Newton died. It was the outcome of 42 years of study and yet remarkably he died with no plans for it to be published. Insights into the religion of Isaac Newton were taken from Frank E. Manuel's *The Religion of Isaac Newton*, Oxford University Press,1974.

Isaac Newton was an English scientist and mathematician, who discovered gravitation and Newtonian Mechanics. Read this biography to find more on his life. Isaac Newton was an English scientist and mathematician, who discovered gravitation and Newtonian Mechanics. Read this biography to find more on his life. Quick Facts. Birthday: January 4, 1643. Nationality: British. Famous: Quotes By Isaac Newton Physicists. Died At Age: 84. Sun Sign: Capricorn. Also Known As: Sir Isaac Newton. Born Country: England. Sir Isaac Newton contributed to many branches of human thought, among which physics and mathematics were the fields in which he contributed substantially. In 1687, the sum total of his discoveries in mechanics were published in the legendary book *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (Latin for Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy). Sir Isaac Newton (January 4, 1643 – March 31 1727 or in Old Style: December 25, 1642 – March 20, 1727) was an English physicist, mathematician, astronomer, alchemist, inventor, theologian and natural philosopher. He is often regarded as the most influential scientist in history and is most famous for discovering the Laws of Gravity. *Amicus Plato – amicus Aristoteles – magis amica veritas. Plato is my friend – Aristotle is my friend – but my greatest friend is truth.*