

## Isaac Newton on Symbology:

Extract from Sir Isaac Newton, annotated by Brother Thomas. Of the Prophetic Language

For understanding the prophecies we are in the first place, to acquaint ourselves with the figurative language of the prophets. This language is taken from the analogy between the world natural and an empire or kingdom considered as a world politic.

Accordingly the whole world natural consisting of heavens and earth, signifies the whole world politic, consisting of thrones and people, or so much of it as is considered in the prophecy: and the things in that world signify the analogous things in this. For the heavens and the things therein, signify thrones and dignities, and those who enjoy them; and the earth, with the things thereon the inferior people; and the lowest parts of the earth called hades or hell, the lowest or most miserable part of them.

Whence ascending towards heaven, and descending to the earth, are put for rising and falling in power and honor; rising out of the earth, or waters, and falling into them, for the rising up of any dignity or dominion, out of the inferior state of the people, or falling down from the same into that inferior state; descending into the lower parts of the earth, for descending to a very low and unhappy estate: speaking with a faint voice out of the dust, for being in a weak and low condition: moving from one place to another, for translation from one office, dignity, or dominion, to another; great earthquakes, and the shaking of kingdoms, so as to distract or overthrow them: the creating a new heaven and earth, and the passing away of an old one, or the beginning and end of the world, for the rise and the ruin of the body politic signified thereby.

In the heavens, the Sun and Moon are, by interpreters of dreams, put for the persons of kings and queens; but in sacred prophecy, which regards not single persons, the Sun is put for the whole species and race of kings in the kingdom or kingdoms of the world politic, shining with regal power and glory; the Moon, for the body of the common people, considered as the King's Wife:

(Sir Isaac Newton is not here in harmony with himself. In the second paragraph, he hath already told us, that "the things in the heavens signify thrones and dignities, and those who enjoy them. Now the Moon is one of the things in the heavens, and must therefore represent a dignity; which cannot be affirmed of, "the common people," who constitute "the earth."

It may be admitted that the Moon represents the King's Wife; but that wife is the body ecclesiastical of his kingdom: the stars are his sons or nobles in their several constellations or ranks and orders: the peoples, those only upon whom they shine. - J. Thomas.)

the stars for subordinate princes and great men, or for bishops and rulers of the people of God, when the Sun is Christ: light for the glory, truth, and knowledge, wherewith great and good men shine and illuminate others: darkness for obscurity of condition, and for error, blindness and ignorance: darkening, smiting, or setting of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, for the ceasing of a kingdom, or for the desolation thereof, proportioned to the darkness: darkening the Sun, turning the Moon into blood, and falling of the stars, for the same; New Moons for the return of a dispersed people (or a hierarchy - J Thomas.) into a body politic or ecclesiastic.

Fire and meteors refer to both heaven and earth, and signify as follows:-burning anything with fire, is put for the consuming thereof by war; a conflagration of the earth, or turning a country into a lake of fire, for the consumption of a kingdom by war: the being in a furnace, for the being in slavery under another nation:

the ascending up of the smoke of any burning thing for ever and ever, for the continuation of a conquered people under the misery of perpetual subjection and slavery: the scorching heat of the sun, for vexatious wars, persecutions, and troubles inflicted by the King: riding on the clouds, for reigning over much people: covering the sun with a cloud, or with smoke, for oppression of the king by the armies of an enemy:

tempestuous winds, or the motions of clouds, for wars; thunder, or the voice of a cloud, for the voice of a multitude, a storm of thunder, lightning, hail, and overflowing rain, for a tempest of war descending from the

heavens and clouds politic, on the heads of their enemies: rain, if not immoderate, and dew, and living water, for the graces and doctrines of the Spirit.

In the earth, the dry land and congregated waters, as a sea, a river, a flood, are put for the people of several regions, nations, and dominions: embittering of waters, for the mystical death of bodies politic, that is, for their dissolution: the overflowing of a sea or river, for the invasion of the earth politic, by the people of the waters: drying up of waters, for the conquest of their regions by the earth:

(That depends upon whether the drying up results from infiltration, evaporation, or diversion into another channel. The waters of ancient Babylon, were dried up by diversion into new geographical and political channels. This was effected by Cyrus and his successors; not by "the earth" or common people - J. Thomas.)

fountains of waters for cities, the permanent heads of rivers politic: mountains and islands, for the cities of the earth and sea politic, with the territories and dominions belonging to those dens and rocks, for the shutting up of idols in their temples: houses and ships for families, assemblies, and towns, in the earth and sea politic: and a navy of ships of war, for an army of that kingdom that is signified by the sea.

Animals also and vegetables, are put for the people of several regions and conditions: and particularly, trees, herbs, and land animals, for the people of the earth politic: flags, reeds, fishes, for those of the waters politic: birds and insects, for those of the political heaven and earth; a forest for a kingdom: and a wilderness for a desolate and thin people.

If the world politic, considered in prophecy, consists of many kingdoms, they are represented by as many parts of the world natural: as the noblest by the celestial frame, and then the Moon and clouds are put for the common people:

(We do not find that Moon and clouds represent the common people in prophecy in which the terms are used. They pertain to the heavens politic, not to the earth.- J. Thomas.)

the less noble by the earth, sea, and rivers: and by the animals or vegetables, or buildings therein: and then the greater or more powerful animals and taller trees, are put for kings, princes, and nobles.

And because the whole kingdom is the Body Politic of the king, therefore the Sun, or a tree, or a beast, or a bird, or a man whereby the king is represented, is put in a large signification for the whole kingdom: and several animals, as a lion, a bear, a leopard, a goat, according to their qualities, are put for several kingdoms and bodies politic: and sacrificing of beasts, for slaughtering and conquering of kingdoms: and friendship between beasts, for peace between kingdoms.

Yet sometimes vegetables and animals are by certain epithets or circumstances, extended to other significations; as a tree, when called the Tree of Life or of Knowledge; and a beast, when called the Old Serpent, or worshipped.

When a beast or man is put for a kingdom, his parts and qualities are put for the analogous parts and qualities of the kingdom as the head of a beast for the great men who precede and govern; the tail for inferior people, who follow and are governed: the heads, if more than one, for the number of capital parts or dynasties or dominions, in the kingdom, whether collateral or successive, with respect to the civil government:

the horns on any head for the number of kingdoms in that head, with respect to military power: seeing for understanding, and the eyes for men of understanding and policy; in matters of religion, for bishops; speaking, for making laws: the mouth for a lawgiver, whether civil or sacred: the loudness of the voice, for might and power: the faintness thereof, for weakness: eating and drinking, for acquiring what is signified by the things eaten or drank: the hairs of a beast or man, and the feathers of a bird, for people: the wings for the number of kingdoms represented by the beast:

the arm of a man for his power, or for any people wherein his strength and power consists: his feet, for the lowest of the people, or for the latter end of the kingdom: the feet, nails, and teeth of beasts of prey, for armies, and squadrons of armies: the bones, for strength, and for fortified places: the flesh for riches and possessions:

and the days of their acting, for years: and when a tree is put for a kingdom, its branches, leaves and fruit, signify as do the wings, feathers, and food of a bird or beast.

When a man is taken in a mystical sense, his qualities are often signified by his actions, and by the circumstances of things about him. So the ruler is signified by his riding on a beast; a warrior and

conqueror, by his having a sword and bow: a potent man by his gigantic stature: a judge, by weights and measures:

a sentence of absolution or condemnation, by a white or a black stone: a new dignity by a new name: moral or civil qualifications, by garments: honor and glory, by splendid apparel: royal dignity, by purple or scarlet, or by a crown:

righteousness, by white and clean robes: wickedness, by spotted and filthy garments: affliction mourning, and humiliation, by clothing in sackcloth: dishonor, shame, and want of good works, by nakedness: error and misery, by drinking a cup of his or her wine that causeth it: propagating any religion for gain, by exercising traffic or merchandize with that people whose religion it is: worshipping or serving the false gods of any nation, by committing adultery with their princes, or by worshipping them: a council of a kingdom, by its image:

idolatry by blasphemy: overthrow in war, by a wound of man or beast: a durable plague of war, by a sore or pain: the affliction or persecution which a people suffers in laboring to bring forth a new kingdom, by the pain of a woman in labor to bring forth a man-child: the dissolution of a body politic or ecclesiastic, by the death of a man or beast: and the revival of a dissolved dominion, by the resurrection of the dead.

In his exposition of Revelation chapter 6, Hanserd Knowles identifies a number of Biblical symbols as they are used in prophecy:

12. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth Seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.

In this Vision of the [sixth Seal] St. John had the revelation of the great revolution of the Roman pagan empire, which should put an end unto the bloody persecutions of the heathen emperors, and all their tyrannical torturing of the Christians by cruel deaths; which revolution is there set forth in a prophetic style and manner of speaking.

For when the Prophets did foretell the destruction of Kingdoms, or some great changes and revolutions therein they used such figurative and metaphorical terms, words and expressions, as are in the following verses; viz. [a great earthquake, the Sun black, the Moon blood, &c.]. (Read Isa. 26:6; Matthew 24:7; Joel 3:16; Hag. 2:6,7,21,22; Isa. 2:19-22; 13:10, Jer. 15:9; Joel 2:10,11; Ezek. 32:7; Amos 8:9; Isa. 24:13).

13. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mightily wind.

By [heaven] here, we are to understand the Roman pagan empire in its glorious state, with their temples, altars, idols, and worship (Isa. 34:4,5). [And by the stars of that heaven], is meant, the kings, princes, dukes and earls (who wear a golden Star), also the arch-clams, clams, and all the orders of the pagan priests (vv. 14,15; Read Ezek. 32:7,8; Joel 2:10; Jer.13:9,10,11 and Matthew 24:29).

The fall and ruin of the Roman kings and priests, are here fitly resembled by [a fig-tree that casteth her untimely figs when it is shaken with a mightily wind]; that is the dispensation of the wrath of almighty God (Dan. 2:34,35,44,45).

14. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places:

The departing of the [heaven] signifies the total revolution, and final destruction of the pagan sate of the Roman Empire; by Constantine the Great. [And every mountain], that is their high places on which they worshipped

their idols. (Read Ezek. 18:6, Isa. 57:7. Eze. 6:13) Then shall ye know that I am JEHOVAH, when their slain men shall be among their idols, round about their altars, upon every high hill in all the tops of the mountains- The place where they did offer sweet savours unto all their idols.

And by every island, we may understand every separated place (as islands are from the land) so all their consecrated temples, altars, &c., were dedicated unto their idol gods, and separated from there common places, and [were removed]; that is taken away and abolished. Their [pantheon] and all the rest of their idol temples, were taken away by the Christian emperors; and the worship of Christ set up gradually throughout the whole Roman Empire, by the edicts, decrees, and government of Constantine; (as Zeph. 2:10,11). JEHOVAH will famish all the gods of the earth, and destroy the idols and the heathen.

15. And the kings of the earth, and the great men and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains,

By [the kings of the earth], we are to understand the chief rulers of the whole Roman pagan empire, called the whole world (Luke 2:1). [And the great men]; that is, their nobles and honorable persons, and their princes (Nahum3:10). [And her great men] (honorable men) were bound in chains. This honor have all the saints (Ps. 149:7,8,9). [And the rich men]; that is, their rich merchants (Isa. 23:8,11; Rev. 18:3,15). [And the chief Captains]; that is, the chief generals, and all the great commanders in the imperial armies (Acts 25:23).

[And every bondman, and every freeman] (that had been persecutors of the Christians) [hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains]; as (Job 29:8), They were terrified, and frightened, yes, amazed at this dispensation of God, and wrath of the Lamb our Lord Jesus Christ. But there is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of Iniquity may hide themselves (Job 34:22).

16. And said to the mountains and the rocks, fall on us, hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

These idolatrous potentate kings, priests, and captains, in the day of God vengeance (his temple vengeance) seek for hiding places, but find none. They had rather the rocks and mountains should have fallen on them and destroyed them, than to be brought before the judgment of seat of God and Jesus Christ, whose name they have blasphemed, whole churches, ministers, and members, they had persecuted, imprisoned, martyred and murdered, by their edicts, decrees, laws, and soldiers, and by the judges, juries, and the false witnesses (Amos 9:1,2,3).

17.

For the great day of His wrath has come; and who shall be able to stand?

This great day of God, and the Lamb's wrath, was at last acknowledged and confessed by those persecutors. This dreadful dispensation of God's wrath happened in the days of the 10th and last bloody persecution of the Christians, when Dioclesian was Emperor; as all historians testify.

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