

Sir Isaac Newton Interprets Daniel's Prophecies

by John P. Pratt

Reprinted from Meridian Magazine (11 Aug 2004)

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[Index, Home](#)

Contents

1. Isaac Newton

1.1 Newton's Religion

1.2 Awaited Latter-day "True Church"

2. Prophecies of Daniel

2.1 Giant Statue

2.2 Four Beasts

2.3 Ten Kingdoms Identified

2.4 Enduring Nations

2.5 Little Horn

2.6 Book of Revelation

3. Newton's Contributions

4. Conclusion

Notes

Sir Isaac Newton, the author of classical physics and a devout Christian, interpreted the Book of Daniel, providing insights which are still profound today.

Sir Isaac Newton, upon whose work nearly all of classical physics is built, was a deeply religious Christian, who saw the hand of God in all things. To him, all of the great laws of physics which he discovered, were the laws of God that testify of his design. He would have been appalled to know that centuries later,

atheists would be claiming that he had really discovered self-existent laws, which explain the universe so well that God is no longer needed in the equation.

Sir Isaac Newton.

Newton wrote an entire book interpreting the prophecies of the Biblical books of Daniel and the Revelation of John (also called "The Apocalypse"). His insights vary in several respects from the "standard" modern Christian interpretations, and his perspicacity might well be vindicated as the rest of these prophecies are yet fulfilled. Besides his immense intellect, he provides a huge contribution which few can supply even today. He had a wealth of knowledge of ancient history, obtained by reading mountains of documents in the original Greek, Latin and Hebrew, in which he saw many of those prophecies literally fulfilled long after they had been revealed. To him, it was a proof of the foreknowledge of God, which was his purpose in writing the book.

His work, *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*, published in 1733 (six years after his death and the year after George Washington's birth), has recently been reprinted.[1] This article is essentially a review of that book, focusing especially on the new contributions he made to the study of the first two visions of Daniel, in identifying exactly what kingdoms of the world are indicated.

1. Isaac Newton

Sir Isaac Newton was one of the greatest physicists and mathematicians of all time, born in England in 1642, about 22 years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. Galileo had laid a cornerstone of physics called "relativity" upon which Newton would build much of the rest of the edifice. Johannes Kepler had just died in 1630, who had discovered three laws of planetary motion, which Newton would derive from his own laws. Physics can be divided into the pre-Newtonian period, which had changed little from the times of ancient Greece, and our modern post-Newtonian period after he provided his three laws of motion, law of gravity, and the mathematics of calculus. Words like inertia, momentum and acceleration had to be added to the language and then also given precise mathematical definitions. Finally in the twentieth century, Einstein and others added refinements in the fringe areas of the very fast, very small and very large, but for most physics problems of everyday life, and even to put a man on the moon, Newton's laws suffice. Newton himself solved an incredible number of problems, including the refraction of light to make rainbows and explaining how the bulge at the equator of the earth causes the 26,000-year precession of the equinoxes. He even applied his law of gravity to determine the ancient position of the moon, reconstructing the Judean calendar to determine the date of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.[2] An excellent biography of Newton is that by the science writer James Gleick who shows just how revolutionary Newton's work was.[3]

1.1 Newton's Religion

Newton was a devout Christian. He hoped that his entire work in physics would inspire men to believe in God. He stated that:

"When I wrote my treatise about our System I had an eye upon such Principles as might work with considering men for the belief of a Deity and nothing can rejoice me more than to find it useful for that purpose."[4]

He spends the first part of his book showing that while many of the other books of the Old Testament contain a wonderful and sacred history of God's dealings with men, the Book of Daniel holds a special place of containing many detailed revelations directly from God about the kingdoms of the earth. Those kingdoms can be traced in history, verifying the foreknowledge of God. Even in his day people doubted the authenticity of the book (and of course even more so today) but as far as Newton was concerned, anyone who rejected the Book of Daniel rejected Christianity:

Daniel was in the greatest credit amongst the Jews, till the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian. And to reject his prophecies, is to reject the Christian religion. For this religion is founded upon his prophecy concerning the Messiah.[5]

He concluded his introductory chapter with:

Daniel is most distinct in order of time, and easiest to be understood, and therefore in those things which relate to the last times, he must be made the key to the rest.[6]

In other words, if you want to understand the Book of Revelation, be sure to understand the Book of Daniel first. However, he was careful only to use history to interpret already fulfilled prophecy, and not to fall in to the trap of predicting the future, as if he were a prophet himself:

The folly of Interpreters has been, to foretell times and things, by this Prophecy, as if God designed to make them Prophets. By this rashness they have not only exposed themselves, but brought the Prophecy also into contempt. The design of God was much otherwise. He gave this and the Prophecies of the Old Testaments, not to gratify men's curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but that after they were fulfilled they might be interpreted by the event; and his own Providence, not the Interpreters, be then manifested thereby to the world. For the event of things predicted many ages before, will then be a convincing argument that the world is governed by providence.[7]

1.2 Awaited Latter-day "True Church"

One final point on Newton's theology is that he looked forward to a time in which the Church of Jesus Christ would someday be restored in the latter days, complete with living prophets.

For the prophets and apostles have foretold that as Israel often revolted and brake the covenant, and upon repentance renewed it, so there should be a falling away among the Christians, soon after the days of the Apostles, and that in the latter days God would destroy the impenitent revolters, and make a new covenant with his people. And the giving ear to the prophets is a fundamental character of the true church.[8]

This restoration of lost gospel truths he expected to be accomplished by the appearance of an angel, which shows how literally he believed the scriptures to be interpreted:

An angel must fly through the midst of heaven with the everlasting Gospel to preach to all nations, before Babylon falls, and the Son of man reaps his harvest. (quoting Rev. 14:6).[9]

Moreover, in addition to expecting long-lost truths of the gospel to be restored, he awaited the day, described in Daniel and Revelation, that the political Kingdom of God would be established:

For as the few and obscure Prophecies concerning Christ's first coming were for setting up the Christian religion, which all nations have since corrupted, so the many and clear Prophecies, concerning the things to be done at Christ's second coming, are not only for predicting but also for effecting a recovery and re-establishment of the long-lost truth, and setting up a kingdom wherein dwells righteousness. The event will prove the Apocalypse, and this Prophecy, thus proved and understood, will open the old Prophets and all together will make known the true religion, and establish it.[10]

So with that background on just who Newton was, let us look at his insights into Daniel.

The Giant Statue of Daniel's First Vision.

2. The Prophecies of Daniel

Daniel's first vision was a repeat of that given to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, when Daniel was being trained to become a future governor. Daniel was also given the interpretation (Daniel 2). Let's review the vision, and then see what Newton adds to the traditional interpretation.

2.1 The Giant Statue

The first vision was of a huge image or statue of a fierce man, which had a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay mixed. A stone cut out without hands struck the statue on its feet, causing it to fall, break into pieces, turn to dust, and be blown away in the wind. The stone then became a mountain which filled the earth. The Lord told Daniel the interpretation that the four metals represented four world-dominating kingdoms. The first was Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar, and that the next three kingdoms would be increasingly inferior, as indicated by the worth of the metals. But the iron kingdom would be very strong and break many other kingdoms. The clay mixed in with the iron implied that the ten toes would be separate and not stick together much, even as iron and clay don't mix. The stone represented a kingdom set up by the God of heaven which would break into pieces and consume all of these kingdoms and which would reign forever after and never be destroyed. (Dan. 2:31-45).

Silver-tipped Grizzly Bear. The second kingdom was represented by a bear.

2.2 The Four Beasts

Daniel was given a second vision which helps make it clear just what the later kingdoms were. He saw four beasts: a winged lion, a bear, a 4-winged, 4-headed leopard, and then a dreadful, ten horned beast with iron teeth and brass claws.[11] It devoured enemies, broke up their bodies and then stamped on them. Then another little horn arose with eyes and a mouth, and three of the former horns were plucked by their roots. Then he saw thrones overturned and the Ancient of Days come and judge millions of people. His judgment of the fourth beast resulted in its being slain and burned, because of the great words spoken against the most High by that little horn. The other three beasts were allowed to remain and the Son of Man came in the clouds of heaven and received all the kingdoms of the world from the Ancient of Days, and then began a kingdom which would never pass away (Dan. 7:1-14).

Daniel was given the brief interpretation that the four beasts represent four kings, but that the saints of God would take the kingdom and possess it forever. Fortunately, Daniel asked the angel several questions about that fourth beast. He was shown that the little horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them until the Ancient of Days came. That kingdom would devour the whole earth, tread it down and break it to pieces. The ten horns represented ten kings and when the little horn arose, he subdued three of them. He would speak great words against the most High and would wear out the saints for time, times and a half. Then he would be judged and the kingdoms of the earth given to the saints forever.

Was Augustus Caesar the Fourth King?

Daniel was then given a third vision, which explained more about the second and third kingdoms. This time the beginning of the second kingdom is extended back from the time of Persian domination to the time of the Medes, which Newton points out began at the same time Nebuchadnezzar did, when they jointly conquered Assyria and divided up that empire. The second vision also clearly identified the third

kingdom as the Greeks (brass, leopard), with Alexander the Great as the principal king, with the kingdom later being divided up among four successors. Daniel saw a little horn arise in the area of one of those successors which would cast down even stars from heaven and stop the daily sacrifice, but that the sanctuary would finally be cleansed (Daniel 8:1-26).

Thus, there seems to be no question in any commentator's mind about the identity of the first four empires. Those kingdoms, and the dates traditionally assigned to them are first Babylon (605 - 538 BC), second Persia (538 - 331 BC), third Greece (331 - 168 BC), and fourth Rome (168 BC - 476 AD). All seem also to agree on the first three principal kings being Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Cyrus of Persia, and Alexander of Greece. I'm not aware of anyone, including Newton, identifying the principal king of Rome. My speculation would be that it might well be Augustus Caesar, the first emperor of the Roman Empire. Figure 1 shows how the extent of the empire was enlarged during his reign (the shaded yellow area).

Figure 1. Augustus expanded the Roman Empire into the shaded yellow areas.

But what were the ten kingdoms into which the Roman Empire divided when it fell? Whereas most modern commentaries skip over this detail, Newton attempts to identify all of them.

2.3 Ten Kingdoms Identified

Both of the first two visions implied that the Roman Empire would break into ten kingdoms, even as the statue had ten toes on its feet, and the fourth beast had ten horns. Today most Christian commentaries identify these nations as the modern European Union and interpret the feet of clay and iron as having been fulfilled by the fact that all attempts to unify the European nations again into one massive empire, such as by Charlemagne, the Hapsburgs, Napoleon, and Hitler, have failed to endure. While that seems to be correct enough at the high level, the question arises, exactly which nations were the ten implied by both visions? That is a detail, but it may be important, especially because the number ten is implied twice, and in the second vision the point is made that three of those ten are overcome by a little eleventh kingdom which arises later.

How did Newton identify these nations? An important first step is that he concluded that the imagery of the beasts was non-overlapping in geographical area, even though the empires did in fact overlap when each was at its greatest extent. He based this interpretation on the important detail that the first three beasts did not each die when the next appeared, but rather all of the first three actually outlived the fourth. Thus, he saw the lion as representing modern-day Iraq, the bear being Iran (the combined original area of the Medes and Persians), and the leopard as the four areas of Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey, Syria, and finally Palestine, Arabia, Egypt and Libya. Thus, if none of these were part of the fourth beast, then what was left was the Western Roman Empire, which included all of the rest of the

area surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, north to the Danube and Rhine rivers, and the southern part of modern England.

The Roman Empire had included all of the Greek empire for centuries, but in AD 395 the empire was divided into the Western and Eastern halves. The Western Empire then fell to rebelling subdued nations as well as Germanic tribes invading from north of the Danube. Rome itself was sacked in AD 410, which is Newton's date for the fall of the Empire, but the usual modern date often given is that of the last gasp of the Empire in AD 476. The Eastern half lived on as the Byzantine Empire for centuries. The main point of this historical review is that Newton identified, as do most modern commentators, the ten kingdoms as the kingdoms into which the Western Roman Empire subsequently divided.

Newton read the ancient histories and found that there were ten nations which appeared soon after the invading nations carved up the Western Roman Empire. Most of us have never even heard of any of these nations, but Newton includes a list of the kings of each for several hundred years, or a least for as long as they lasted. I spent one whole day looking up articles and maps in encyclopedias and the internet, and finally created the map shown in Figure 2 with the names of those nations on them. Newton simply assumes that his readers are educated, being able to read both Greek and Latin, and also know all of the provinces of ancient Rome as well as we moderns know the names and locations of the states of the United States. Because common knowledge of the ancient world has been so badly eroded, I created this map to save readers the trouble of looking up the details.

Figure 2. The Ten Nations born of the Roman Empire.

Notice on the map how neatly the Rhine and Danube Rivers divide the continent of Europe into two pieces. These rivers today still form large parts of the borders between countries. As stated above, the Roman Empire only extended to the Danube. The ten nations which Newton identified are the ten with names in underlined italics on the map in Figure 2. All ten are south of the Danube and west of Greece, in the area of the Western Roman Empire.

The exact date of the Fall of Rome may be important for understanding this vision, especially because three of the nations were said to have been subsequently uprooted. The nations really seemed to play "musical chairs" during the centuries after Rome fell. That is, they not only did not combine into one big empire, they also did not stay in one place. They each grabbed up what they could of the empire, and then had wars to try to hold onto what they had. So the map in Figure 2 is only a "snapshot" of the empire in AD 425 when nations were still on the move.

For example, the "English", meaning Anglo-Saxons, were not yet in England. The Saxons first went there in AD 428 to help the Britons in a war against the Picts and Scots in the North, and then stayed there

after being victorious. The Britons, who had lived on those isles for nearly 2,000 years, moved to the west side of the island and became known as the Welsh. Similarly, the Alans in northwestern Spain were soon defeated by the Suevians who took their place only decades later, and the Visigoths spread over all of eastern Spain when they were driven out of France by the Franks. There are wonderful maps of Europe on the internet which show where each of the nations was every century,[12] which are very interesting to view in succession, to see Europe slowly "morph" into what it is today. The reason I felt the need to create yet another map was that so much action occurred right at the fall of Rome that this map detailing what Newton was explaining seemed necessary.

Let us look very briefly at each of the kingdoms identified by Newton. Some of these kingdoms had been in place for a thousand years or so, and others had just formed when the conquerors of Rome divided up the lands. The tribes called the "Germanic" tribes, often referred to as "barbarians" by the Romans, included the Vandals, Suevians, Alans, Goths, Lombards, and the Burgundians. Newton points out that these groups all spoke the same language and had the same customs, but that they didn't mix together much, even as the clay kept the toes of the statue from coalescing.[13]

Here are the ten nations as Newton numbered them:

1. The Vandals. According to Newton, they had come from north of the Rhine and had a colony in France in 407, into Spain in 409, but were driven out by the Visigoths in 419 to the north shore of Africa. There they formed a huge colony which included the north part of modern-day Morocco, Algeria and Libya. It was not only extensive, it was very populated, and it lasted until AD 533, when it was totally annihilated. Newton quotes an ancient source stating that some five million people had been slain there when that nation was destroyed.[14]

2. The Suevians. They had first been seated in Spain, but were driven by the Visigoths to the area of modern day Portugal, and are apparently the ancestors of the Portuguese.

3. The Visigoths. These are the southern division of the Goths, who came from the east side of the Black Sea, and settled on the west side. The Goths were divided into two groups by the Danube River, with the northern portion being called Ostrogoths, who lived in Romania, and the southern group the Visigoths in the Bulgaria to Yugoslavia area, within the Roman Empire. Then the Visigoths removed to southern France (as in Figure 1), and later to Spain, where they successfully conquered the land in AD 455. They were totally driven out of France in AD 506, and finally subdued the Suevians in 585, who retreated to Portugal. Things have not changed much since then, and many of the Spanish today descend from the Visigoths, who may well be the Castillians.

4. The Alans. This Germanic tribe invaded France in AD 407 and set up a kingdom with the capital at Orleans, France. When Attila the Hun conquered much of Europe north of the Danube later that century, he was finally stopped by the Alans at Champagne, France, which was named for the battle (Campaign) in which 162,000 men were killed on both sides according to Newton. The Huns had been fighting and pursuing the Alans since the Huns had forced them out of their homes on the far side of the Black Sea, beginning about AD 372. But even after their victory over the Huns, the Alans who had survived were later either driven out or assimilated by the Franks when they conquered most of France. It is not clear to me what modern nation, if any, might be represented by the Alans.

5. The Burgundians. This Germanic tribe was driven more and more to the east of France (Burgundy) and from what I can tell became at least part of the modern-day Swiss people.

6. The Franks. This seems to be the easiest nation to identify with a modern country, that being France. The Franks were not an invading Germanic tribe, but had probably been in the area of France for centuries. During the reshuffling of border lines after the Fall of Rome, the Franks were able to reclaim much of their land, which is modern day France.

7. The Britons. These ancient people became the modern day Welsh, and right at this same time of national migrations, the Anglos and Saxons invaded England. So this country is probably best identified as modern England.

Figure 3. Attila the Hun's Empire about AD 450.

8. The Huns. The Huns were from east of the Caspian sea in Asia, and of uncertain ethnic origin, though sometimes said to be mongoloid. They had been driven west by the Chinese, and they in turn invaded the area east of the Black Sea about AD 372. They drove out many of the Germanic tribes, such as the Alans, into Eastern and then Western Europe. Shortly after the Fall of Rome, from AD 445-453, Attila the Hun created a huge empire north of the Danube that covered most of Europe, all the way over to France (See Figure 3.). Thus, the invasion of the Germanic tribes into the Western Roman Empire was due largely to them having been driven out of their own homelands by the Huns. Looking at Figure 3 might also give insight as to why the Saxons and Anglos might not have been eager to return to their own homeland after having moved to England to help the Britons, for it was being invaded by the Huns. Attila's capital city was in modern-day Hungary, but the Huns were finally driven out later that same century, and I don't know if any nation remains from them. They were replaced in Hungary by the Magyar, who later came from east of the Black Sea, but who are probably not related to the Huns.

9. The Lombards. This was a Germanic tribe who colonized Austria and later invaded Italy. They ruled northern Italy until they were conquered by Charlemagne in AD 774. They were not Italians (Romans), and I do not know if they have disappeared or if they survived as part of the Austrian people.

10. Ravenna. This last kingdom is what was left of Italy (Rome) itself. The capital of the Western Empire was moved to the city of Ravenna, Italy in AD 408, just before Rome was overthrown. To avoid confusion, I simply refer to this country as the "Romans" in Figure 2. Newton lists its demise as occurring in AD 754. The Romans would later be called the nation of Italy.

What about all the Slavic nations, including Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, Serbia, and the Ukraine? From what I could tell preparing this article, the great Slavic migration into Europe came a few centuries later, so they are not shown on the map.

2.4 Enduring Nations

One fulfillment of prophecy which became clear to me as I created the map in Figure 2 was that certain nations have been in exactly the same location since the scattering after the Tower of Babel, about two millennia before Christ. While the nations of Europe were scurrying about, making it difficult to identify which modern nations are represented by each, most of the rest of the world continued on with business as usual. Newton pointed out that such was even stated in the prophecy, and that the first three of the four empires described actually all endure to when the Savior comes and replaces them with his new Millennial Kingdom of God. As noted above, we can easily locate each of those nations on a modern map in approximately the same location where they have been since the Tower of Babel. Understanding this shows why the great statue in the first vision did not begin with the Assyrian Empire, with Babylon second, or even earlier with Nimrod's world empire. Those empires were replaced by the later ones, but the empire of Nebuchadnezzar was the first world empire which would have a remnant endure to the end. The fact that this is true to this day is a witness of the fulfillment of these two great visions of Daniel.

One reason that I chose to include in my map in Figure 2 something of the family origin of each nation is because of that permanence of location. The three sons of Noah each essentially received one entire continent for an inheritance: Shem received Asia, Japheth got Europe, and Ham inherited Africa, and to the best of my knowledge, I put the names of nations descending from those three in the colors of blue, red and black, respectively. The tradition is that the five sons of Shem became the nations of Persia (Elam), Assyria (Asshur), Babylon or Chaldea (Arphaxad), Lydia (Lud), and Syria (Aram) (Gen. 10:22). Those nations are each shown on the map in blue. What appear to be original nations of Europe are shown in red, with several having been traditionally associated with sons or grandsons of Japheth: the Medes (Madai), the Franks (Gomer), the Greeks (Javan), the Romans or Latins (Chittim, son of Javan), and the Spanish (Tarshish, son of Javan) (Gen. 10:2,4). Ham had four sons who founded the nations of Ethiopia (Cush), Egypt (Mizraim), Lybia (Phut) and Palestine (Canaan) (Gen. 10:6).[15] The only

disagreement I found between these ancient traditions and modern was that Jasher says the Lombards are descendants of Japheth, whereas all the modern sources agree they were one of the Germanic tribes.

So if Japheth inherited Europe, why are so many nations shown in blue on the map, implying they are descendants of Shem? It is because all of the ancient sources identify those "Germanic tribes" as having invaded Europe from Asia, and having the same language, appearance, and customs. Some came south from the areas of Denmark and Sweden, but most came from the Caucasus Mountains on the eastern side of the Black Sea. There were apparently several migrations from this area, one including the Irish and Scots and Scandinavians about 600 BC from that same area[16], one about A.D. 100, affecting most of the nations shown in middle Europe, and then the Slavic migration later also from that area. These are apparently all descendants of Abraham, scattered from those taken into Assyria into captivity before 700 BC.

And finally, under the banner of enduring nations, note that I included no name in the Palestine area. It had first been inhabited by the Hamitic nations of the Canaanites. Then it was given to Abraham for his seed, along with all of the land between the Euphrates and the Nile (Gen. 15:18). But after AD 100 Jews and Christians were forced out of Palestine on pain of death, with many migrating to Europe and Asia. This is only a cursory overview of the situation, intended to help understand these visions, but it is an indication of how much depth there is to understanding a few toes on a giant.

2.5 The Little Horn

Newton identifies the time of the rise of the little horn with the beginning of the Holy Roman Empire with Charlemagne, about AD 750-800. One reason for this is that in the revelation, there were three of the ten horns which were uprooted when the little horn came up. He points out that there were three kingdoms which fell at that time, namely Ravenna (754), the Lombards (774), and Rome (794), all of which were combined into a new little state which replaced those three, and became part of the larger empire. Newton's interpretation was that no matter how the exact number of these European nations varied thereafter, that the number ten is always used to represent them in these visions.

To me it is difficult to identify exactly which nations disappeared, and which tribes survive until today, perhaps in a different location. One striking example which Newton chooses not to include in the list overcome was the vast nation of the Vandals, covering the north coasts of modern Morocco and Algeria in Africa, which was totally annihilated.

Another kingdom that apparently disappeared was that of the Alans. So with both the Alans and the Vandals losing their kingdoms, was Newton wrong in not counting them in the three missing nations? Perhaps not, because both groups had begun from north of the Danube as shown in the map, and may

have survived there and developed in to modern European nations. Much more research needs to be done in this area.

What about the common interpretation that the little horn has not appeared yet and that those three nations have yet to fall in the last days? That might be true and yet Newton might also be correct. Perhaps the prophecy was written vaguely enough to be fulfilled twice with the same symbolism. Perhaps the "time, times and a half" measuring the time given to the beast to have power over the saints (Dan. 7:25) refers both to 1,260 years as Newton proposes and also to a future period of 1,260 days (three and a half years) as is more commonly understood. To me his interpretation was so well thought out that it merited at least our consideration. My main intent in writing this article is actually just to get us thinking about these revelations at all. They can be very confusing and seem opaque, which might discourage us from trying to understand them. This brings us to the Book of Revelation.

2.6 The Book of Revelation

Newton made the observation that the Book of Revelation is a continuation of the five visions of Daniel. He states that if you haven't got the imagery in mind from Daniel, then you won't understand the Book of Revelation. One example should demonstrate his point convincingly.

In chapter 13 of Revelation, John sees a beast with seven heads and ten horns, which looks like a leopard having mouths like a lion and feet like a bear. Because we have just reviewed the visions of Daniel, even without Newton's genius, we can easily recognize the lion, bear, leopard, and a 7-headed, 10-horned beast, as being the same four images straight out of the second vision of Daniel. When you see the same identical cast of four specific beasts, you can bet that this vision is a sequel of some kind, using the same imagery which we are supposed to already understand. But if we hadn't been treasuring up the visions of Daniel in our minds, John's words might have sounded like a mass of confusion. The Lord apparently expects us to remember every word he has spoken.

Newton provides a detailed interpretation of the Book of Revelation, which is beyond the scope of this article. It is very different from modern interpretations, having many more parts interpreted as already having occurred than most commentators believe. My point in this article is not necessarily that Newton's genius always led to the correct meaning, but rather to consider that one of the greatest scientists of all time believed these books to be true revelations from God, and to merit taking a lot of time to study them and understand them.

3. Newton's Contributions

Without going through a detailed analysis of all that Newton said, let me summarize what appear to be his main contributions to the subject.

The five visions of Daniel and the Book of Revelation are to be read as one coherent set using the same imagery.

Each vision adds more details to the earlier, so that the final picture can be pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle.

Each horn is an entire kingdom, as well as at least one principal king, such as Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon or Alexander of Greece.

Each of the four beasts represents non-overlapping countries which endure until the Ancient of Days comes in judgment.

Divine imagery uses fixed rules, so any true understanding must involve a self-consistent interpretation derived from a set of precepts. He derived the laws of physics believing God follows set laws, and he assumes the revelations from God also follow set laws.

Some of the revelations may find a dual fulfillment in both the first and second coming of Jesus Christ.

The three and a half times of the little horn of the fourth beast are to be reckoned as 1,260 years, rather than three and a half years (1,260 days), the more common modern interpretation.

There is one more huge point which Newton contributed which to me is worth an entire article on its own. It is his understanding of the most precise prophecy of the timing of the first coming of the Messiah. Next month's article will show how Newton provided the key to understanding Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks (Dan. 9:24-27) in a manner so precise that it should silence all critics.

4. Conclusion

Sir Isaac Newton, having perhaps the greatest scientific mind of all time, accepted the books of Daniel and Revelation as revelations from God, being very detailed and accurate representations of the history of the world's dominating kingdoms, and prophesying both the first and second coming of Christ. He understood that the scriptures taught that the true Church of Jesus Christ had been lost, and he awaited

three separate future events: 1) the restoration of the gospel by an angel, 2) the re-establishment of the true church, and 3) the rise of a new world kingdom led by the Savior himself, which will crush the kingdoms of the world as the stone pulverized the statue to powder. He saw the whole purpose of these revelations is not to satisfy man's curiosity about the future, but to be a testimony of the foreknowledge of God after they are all fulfilled in the last days. He proposed that the revelations can be understood by discovering rules governing their consistent imagery, but only after they have been fulfilled, unless an interpretation is given with the revelation. Truly Newton's genius was remarkable, and we could learn much from his insights and systematic methods.

Notes

Isaac Newton, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse*, (Hyderabad, India: Printland Publishers, 1998) being a reprint of *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*, (London: Darby & Browne, 1733).

Pratt, John P., "Newton's Date for the Crucifixion," *Quar. Journ. of R.A.S.* 32, (Sept. 1991), 301-304. It is a summary of Chapter 11 of this very book by Newton. Newton's purpose for the calculation was to show that Christ's life fulfilled the 70-week prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 9:24-27).

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Prophecies, pp. 243-244.

Prophecies, p. 245.

Newton does not comment on the brass claws, which seems to imply that this fourth beast combines aspects of both the brass and iron parts of the statue, namely both the Eastern and Western parts of the Roman Empire. Note also that the colors of the animals seem to match the metals: lions are a golden color, grizzly bears are named for the silvery tips of their fur, and leopards can be brass colored.

An excellent set of maps is found on the internet at www.euratlas.com which has detailed maps for every century. It makes a great exercise just to step through them in order and watch the Anglo-Saxons leave Denmark and the Danes fill in there, and to watch the related Slavic nations of Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, and the Ukraine all come in due time.

These Germanic tribes all migrated from the other side of the Black Sea or south from Scandinavia, and almost certainly are part of the scattered ten tribes of Israel. Some even retain recognizable parts of the names, such as Saxons (Isaac's sons), Danes (Dan), Goths (Gad), and Jutes (Judah). There is also apparently a group who remain intact called the "Lost Ten Tribes," who are still lost. Thus, the blessings

of Abraham were spread throughout all the earth to the descendants of Japheth, such as the Franks (Gomer), Greeks (Javan), and Romans (Chittam, son of Javan).

Newton quotes Procopius, who estimates that 5,000,000 men perished in AD 534 when the Vandal kingdom in Africa was destroyed (Prophecies, p. 292).

The identifications of these descendants of Noah are mostly from Josephus and Jasher. The references for each are given in my "Genealogy from Adam to the Twelve Tribes," (Salt Lake City: HandKraft, 1968). The Bible often simply equates the name to the country, such as Elam meaning Persia in Dan 8:2.

Pratt, John P. "Geological Evidence for the British Throne of David?" Meridian Magazine (2 June 2003).