

ISAAC NEWTON



**THE PROPHECIES
OF DANIEL AND THE
APOCALYPSE
OF ST. JOHN**

Isaac Newton

The Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John

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EAN 4064066396473

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CHAP. I.

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Introduction concerning the Compilers of the books of the Old Testament.

When *Manasses* ^[1] set up a carved image in the house of the Lord, and built altars in the two courts of the house, to all the host of Heaven, and us'd enchantments and witchcraft, and familiar spirits, and for his great wickedness was invaded by the army of *Asserhadon* King of *Assyria*, and carried captive to *Babylon*; the book of the Law was lost till the eighteenth year of his grandson *Josiah*. Then ^[2] *Hilkiah* the High Priest, upon repairing the Temple, found it there: and the King lamented that their fathers had not done after the words of the book, and commanded that it should be read to the people, and caused the people to renew the holy covenant with God. This is the book of the Law now extant.

When ^[3] *Shishak* came out of *Egypt* and spoil'd the temple, and brought *Judah* into subjection to the monarchy of *Egypt*, (which was in the fifth year of *Rehoboam*) the *Jews* continued under great troubles for about twenty years; being *without the true God, and without a teaching Priest, and without Law: and in those times there was no peace to*

him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries, and nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city, for God did vex them with all adversity. But ^[4] when *Shishak* was dead, and *Egypt* fell into troubles, *Judah* had quiet ten years; and in that time *Asa* built fenced cities in *Judah*, and got up an army of 580000 men, with which, in the 15th year of his reign, he met and overcame *Zerah* the *Ethiopian*, who had conquered *Egypt* and *Lybia*, and *Troglodytica*, and came out with an army of 1000000 *Lybians* and *Ethiopians*, to recover the countries conquered by *Sesac*. And after this victory ^[5] *Asa* dethroned his mother for idolatry, and he renewed the Altar, and brought new vessels of gold and silver into the Temple; and he and the people entered into a new covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, upon pain of death to those who worshiped other Gods; and his son *Jehosaphat* took away the high places, and in the third year of his reign sent some of his Princes, and of the Priests and Levites, to teach in the cities of *Judah*: and they had the book of the Law with them, and went about throughout all the cities of *Judah*, and taught the people. This is that book of the Law which was afterwards lost in the reign of *Manasses*, and found again in the reign of *Josiah*, and therefore it was written before the third year of *Jehosaphat*.

The same book of the Law was preserved and handed down to posterity by the *Samaritans*, and therefore was received by the ten Tribes before their captivity. For ^[6] when the ten Tribes were captivated, a Priest or the captivity was sent back to *Bethel*, by order of the King of *Assyria*, to instruct the new inhabitants of *Samaria*, in *the manner of the God of the land*; and the *Samaritans* had the *Pentateuch* from this Priest, as containing the law or *manner of the God of the land*, which he was to teach them. For ^[7] they persevered in the religion which he taught them, joining with it the worship of their own Gods; and by persevering in what they

had been taught, they preserved this book of their Law in the original character of the *Hebrews*, while the two Tribes, after their return from *Babylon*, changed the character to that of the *Chaldees*, which they had learned at *Babylon*.

And since the *Pentateuch* was received as the book of the Law, both by the two Tribes and by the ten Tribes, it follows that they received it before they became divided into two Kingdoms. For after the division, they received not laws from one another, but continued at variance. *Judah* could not reclaim *Israel* from the sin of *Jeroboam*, and *Israel* could not bring *Judah* to it. The *Pentateuch* therefore was the book of the Law in the days of *David* and *Solomon*. The affairs of the Tabernacle and Temple were ordered by *David* and *Solomon*, according to the Law of this book; and *David* in the 78th Psalm, admonishing the people to give ear to the Law of God, means the Law of this book. For in describing how their forefathers kept it not, he quotes many historical things out of the books of *Exodus* and *Numbers*.

The race of the Kings of *Edom*, before there reigned any King over *Israel*, is set down in the book of ^[8] *Genesis*; and therefore that book was not written entirely in the form now extant, before the reign of *Saul*. The writer set down the race of those Kings till his own time, and therefore wrote before *David* conquered *Edom*. The *Pentateuch* is composed of the Law and the history of God's people together; and the history hath been collected from several books, such as were the history of the Creation composed by *Moses*, *Gen.* ii. 4. the book of the generations of *Adam*, *Gen.* v. i. and the book of the wars of the Lord, *Num.* xxi. 14. This book of wars contained what was done at the Red-sea, and in the journeying of *Israel* thro' the Wilderness, and therefore was begun by *Moses*. And *Joshua* might carry it on to the conquest of *Canaan*. For *Joshua* wrote some things in the book of the Law of God, *Josh.* xxiv. 26 and therefore might

write his own wars in the book of wars, those being the principal wars of God. These were publick books, and therefore not written without the authority of *Moses* and *Joshua*. And *Samuel* had leisure in the reign of *Saul*, to put them into the form of the books of *Moses* and *Joshua* now extant, inserting into the book of *Genesis*, the race of the Kings of *Edom*, until there reigned a King in *Israel*.

The book of the *Judges* is a continued history of the *Judges* down to the death of *Sampson*, and therefore was compiled after his death, out of the Acts of the *Judges*. Several things in this book are said to be done *when there was no King in Israel*, *Judg.* xvii. 6. xviii. 1. xix. 1. xxi. 25. and therefore this book was written after the beginning of the reign of *Saul*. When it was written, the *Jebusites* dwelt in *Jerusalem*, *Jud.* i. 21 and therefore it was written before the eighth year of *David*, *2 Sam.* v. 8. and *1 Chron.* xi. 6. The books of *Moses*, *Joshua*, and *Judges*, contain one continued history, down from the Creation to the death of *Sampson*. Where the *Pentateuch* ends, the book of *Joshua* begins; and where the book of *Joshua* ends, the book of *Judges* begins. Therefore all these books have been composed out of the writings of *Moses*, *Joshua*, and other records, by one and the same hand, after the beginning of the reign of *Saul*, and before the eighth year of *David*. And *Samuel* was a sacred writer, *1 Sam.* x. 25. acquainted with the history of *Moses* and the *Judges*, *1 Sam.* xii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. and had leisure in the reign of *Saul*, and sufficient authority to compose these books. He was a Prophet, and judged *Israel* all the days of his life, and was in the greatest esteem with the people; and the Law by which he was to judge the people was not to be published by less authority than his own, the Law-maker being not inferior to the judge. And the book of *Jasher*, which is quoted in the book of *Joshua*, *Josh.* x. 13. was in being at the death of *Saul*, *2 Sam.* i. 18.

At the dedication of the Temple of *Solomon*, when the Ark was brought into the most holy place, there was nothing in it but the two tables, 1 *Kings* viii. 9. and therefore when the *Philistines* took the Ark, they took out of it the book of the Law, and the golden pot of Manna, and *Aaron's* Rod. And this and other losses in the desolation of *Israel*, by the conquering *Philistines*, might give occasion to *Samuel*, after some respite from those enemies, to recollect the scattered writings of *Moses* and *Joshua*, and the records of the Patriarchs and Judges, and compose them in the form now extant.

The book of *Ruth* is a history of things done in the days of the *Judges*, and may be looked upon as an addition to the book of the *Judges*, written by the same author, and at the same time. For it was written after the birth of *David*, *Ruth* iv. 17, 22. and not long after, because the history of *Boaz* and *Ruth*, the great grandfather and great grandmother of *David*, and that of their contemporaries, could not well be remembered above two or three generations. And since this book derives the genealogy of *David* from *Boaz* and *Ruth*, and omits *David's* elder brothers and his sons; it was written in honour of *David*, after he was anointed King by *Samuel*, and before he had children in *Hebron*, and by consequence in the reign of *Saul*. It proceeds not to the history of *David*, and therefore seems to have been written presently after he was anointed. They judge well therefore who ascribe to *Samuel* the books of *Joshua*, *Judges*, and *Ruth*.

Samuel is also reputed the author of the first book of *Samuel*, till the time of his death. The two books of *Samuel* cite no authors, and therefore seem to be originals. They begin with his genealogy, birth and education, and might be written partly in his lifetime by himself or his disciples the Prophets at *Naioth* in *Ramah*, 1 *Sam.* xix. 18, 19, 20. and partly after his death by the same disciples.

The books of the *Kings* cite other authors, as the book of the Acts of *Solomon*, the book of the *Chronicles* of the Kings of *Israel*, and the book of the *Chronicles* of the Kings of *Judah*. The books of the *Chronicles* cite the book of *Samuel* the Seer, the book of *Nathan* the Prophet, and the book of *Gad* the Seer, for the Acts of *David*; the book of *Nathan* the Prophet, the Prophecy of *Ahijah* the *Shilonite*, and the visions of *Iddo* the Seer, for the Acts of *Solomon*; the book of *Shemajah* the Prophet, and the book of *Iddo* the Seer concerning genealogies, for the Acts of *Rehoboam* and *Abijah*; the book of the Kings of *Judah* and *Israel* for the Acts of *Asa*, *Joash*, *Amaziah*, *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, *Hezekiah*, *Manasseh*, and *Josiah*; the book of *Hanani* the Seer, for the Acts of *Jehosaphat*; and the visions of *Isaiah* for the Acts of *Uzziah* and *Hezekiah*. These books were therefore collected out of the historical writings of the antient Seers and Prophets. And because the books of the *Kings* and *Chronicles* quote one another, they were written at one and the same time. And this time was after the return from the *Babylonian* captivity, because they bring down the history of *Judah*, and the genealogies of the Kings of *Judah*, and of the High Priests, to that captivity. The book of *Ezra* was originally a part of the book of the *Chronicles*, and has been divided from it. For it begins with the two last verses of the books of *Chronicles*, and the first book of *Esdras* begins with the two last chapters thereof. *Ezra* was therefore the compiler of the books of *Kings* and *Chronicles*, and brought down the history to his own time. He was a ready Scribe in the Law of God; and for assisting him in this work *Nehemias* founded a library, and gathered together the Acts of the Kings and the Prophets, and of David, and the Epistles of the Kings, concerning the holy gifts, 2 Maccab. ii. 13. By the Acts of *David* I understand here the two books of *Samuel*, or at least the second book. Out of the Acts of the *Kings*, written from time to time by the Prophets, he compos'd the books of the Kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, the *Chronicles* of the Kings

of *Judah*, and the *Chronicles* of the Kings of *Israel*. And in doing this he joined those Acts together, in due order of time, copying the very words of the authors, as is manifest from hence, that the books of the *Kings* and *Chronicles* frequently agree with one another in words for many sentences together. Where they agree in sense, there they agree in words also.

So the Prophecies of *Isaiah*, written at several times, he has collected into one body. And the like he did for those of *Jeremiah*, and the rest of the Prophets, down to the days of the second Temple. The book of *Jonah* is the history of *Jonah* written by another hand. The book of *Daniel* is a collection of papers written at several times. The six last chapters contain Prophecies written at several times by *Daniel* himself: the six first are a collection of historical papers written by others. The fourth chapter is a decree of *Nebuchadnezzar*. The first chapter was written after *Daniel's* death: for the author saith, that *Daniel* continued to the first year of *Cyrus*; that is, to his first year over the *Persians* and *Medes*, and third year over *Babylon*. And, for the same reason, the fifth and sixth chapters were also written after his death. For they end with these words: *So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian*. Yet these words might be added by the collector of the papers, whom I take to be *Ezra*.

The Psalms composed by *Moses*, *David*, and others, seem to have been also collected by *Ezra* into one volume. I reckon him the collector, because in this collection I meet with Psalms as late as the *Babylonian* captivity, but with none later.

After these things *Antiochus Epiphanes* spoiled the Temple, commanded the *Jews* to forsake the Law upon pain of death, and caused the sacred books to be burnt wherever they could be found: and in these troubles the book of the

Chronicles of the Kings of *Israel* was entirely lost. But upon recovering from this oppression, *Judas Maccabæus* gathered together all those writings that were to be met with, 2 *Maccab.* ii. 14. and in reducing them into order, part of the Prophecies of *Isaiah*, or some other Prophet, have been added to the end of the Prophecies of *Zechariah*; and the book of *Ezra* has been separated from the book of *Chronicles*, and set together in two different orders; in one order in the book of *Ezra*, received into the Canon, and in another order in the first book of *Esdras*.

After the *Roman* captivity, the *Jews* for preserving their traditions, put them in writing in their *Talmud*, and for preserving their scriptures, agreed upon an Edition, and pointed it, and counted the letters of every sort in every book: and by preserving only this Edition, the antienter various lections, except what can be discovered by means of the *Septuagint* Version, are now lost; and such marginal notes, or other corruptions, as by the errors of the transcribers, before this Edition was made, had crept into the text, are now scarce to be corrected.

The *Jews* before the *Roman* captivity, distinguished the sacred books into the Law, the Prophets, and the *Hagiographa*, or holy writings; and read only the Law and the Prophets in their Synagogues. And Christ and his Apostles laid the stress of religion upon the Law and the Prophets, *Matt.* vii. 12. xxii. 4. *Luke* xvi. 16, 29, 31. xxiv. 44. *Acts* xxiv. 14. xxvi. 22. *Rom.* iii. 21. By the *Hagiographa* they meant the historical books called *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Ruth*, *Samuel*, *Kings*, *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *Esther*, the book of *Job*, the *Psalms*, the books of *Solomon*, and the *Lamentations*. The Samaritans read only the *Pentateuch*: and when *Jehosaphat* sent men to teach in the cities, they had with them only the book of the Law; for the Prophecies now extant were not then written. And upon the return from

the *Babylonian* captivity, *Ezra* read only the book of the Law to the people, from morning to noon on the first day of the seventh month; and from day to day in the feast of Tabernacles: for he had not yet collected the writings of the Prophets into the volume now extant; but instituted the reading of them after the collection was made. By reading the Law and the Prophets in the Synagogues, those books have been kept freer from corruption than the *Hagiographa*.

In the infancy of the nation of *Israel*, when God had given them a Law, and made a covenant with them to be their God if they would keep his commandments, he sent Prophets to reclaim them, as often as they revolted to the worship of other Gods: and upon their returning to him, they sometimes renewed the covenant which they had broken. These Prophets he continued to send, till the days of *Ezra*: but after their Prophecies were read in the Synagogues, those Prophecies were thought sufficient. For if the people would not hear *Moses* and the old Prophets, they would hear no new ones, no not *tho they should rise from the dead*. At length when a new truth was to be preached to the *Gentiles*, namely, *that Jesus was the Christ*, God sent new Prophets and Teachers: but after their writings were also received and read in the Synagogues of the Christians, Prophecy ceased a second time. We have *Moses*, the Prophets, and Apostles, and the words of Christ himself; and if we will not hear them, we shall be more inexcusable than the *Jews*. 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. For God has so ordered the Prophecies, that in the latter days *the wise may understand, but the wicked shall*

do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, Dan. xii. 9, 10. The authority of Emperors, Kings, and Princes, is human. The authority of Councils, Synods, Bishops, and Presbyters, is human. The authority of the Prophets is divine, and comprehends the sum of religion, reckoning *Moses* and the Apostles among the Prophets; and *if an Angel from Heaven preach any other gospel*, than what they have delivered, *let him be accursed*. Their writings contain the covenant between God and his people, with instructions for keeping this covenant; instances of God's judgments upon them that break it: and predictions of things to come. While the people of God keep the covenant, they continue to be his people: when they break it they cease to be his people or church, and become *the Synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not*. And no power on earth is authorized to alter this covenant.

The predictions of things to come relate to the state of the Church in all ages: and amongst the old Prophets, *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.

Notes to Chap. I.

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- [1] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 5, 6, 7.
- [2] 2 Chron. xxxiv.
- [3] 2 Chron. xii. 2, 3, 4, 8, 9. & xv. 3, 5, 6.
- [4] 2 Chron. xiv. 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12.
- [5] 2 Chron. xv. 3, 12, 13, 16, 18.
- [6] 2 Kings xvii. 27, 28, 32, 33.
- [7] 2 Kings xvii. 34, 41.

CHAP. II.

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Of the Prophetic Language.

For understanding the Prophecies, we are, in the first place, to acquaint our-selves 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 heaven 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 honour: rising out of the earth, or waters, and falling into them, for the rising up to 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 heaven and earth, for 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 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; 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; darkning, smiting, or setting of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, for the ceasing of a kingdom, or for the desolation thereof, proportional to the darkness; darkning the Sun, turning the Moon into blood, and falling of the Stars, for the same; new Moons, for the return of a dispersed people into a body politic or ecclesiastic.

Fire and meteors refer to both heaven and earth, and signify as follows; burning any thing 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 motion 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; and the defect of rain, for spiritual barrenness.

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 great affliction of the people by war and persecution; turning things into blood, 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; 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 cities; dens and rocks of mountains, for the temples of cities; the hiding of men in 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, and fishes, for those of the waters politic; birds and insects, for those of the politic heaven and earth; a forest for a kingdom; and a wilderness for a desolate and thin people.