

Robert Vannoy, Foundations of Biblical Prophecy, Lecture 14

Guidelines for the interpretation of prophecy

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1. Make a careful grammatical historical contextual analysis of the passage

We have been discussing “Guidelines for the interpretation of prophecy.” 1. under that is, “Make a careful grammatical historical contextual analysis of the passage.” That’s not something that is exclusive to the prophetic discourses nor to the exegetical task. I think that’s the basic fundamental task of the interpreter. You first have to understand the meaning of words, the language used, studying usage of words elsewhere, and then the relationship that the words have with each other. At that point you get into grammatical constructions. But beyond that, you should look to the historical background of the prophet and the people to whom the prophet spoke. We should look at the context of what proceeds as well as the context of what follows and the flow of thought in the book in which the prophecy is a part. I think it works out like ripples in a pond. You look at the whole canon of Scripture, where you look at the narrow near context and then you work your way out into the larger context up to the whole entire context of the Bible. Any parallel passages should be consulted if there are such. So that’s pretty basic stuff that you’re all familiar with. “Make a careful grammatical, historical, contextual, analysis of the passage.”

2. State explicitly to whom or what the passage refers.

2. “State explicitly to whom or what the passage refers.” We might ask questions such as, “Is the message about the hearer or reader to whom it is addressed, or does it proclaim to them about someone else?” By asking that question we can determine whether a passage is basically predictive or didactic. If it’s didactic and the prophet is simply teaching those to whom he speaks, some important truth that is addressed to them that may have application to us. Is he saying something to them or is it about someone else? If that’s the case it may be predictive or infused in some way with predictive

elements. We need to sort that out. Is the passage predictive? If it is predictive are there any conditions attached? That may be important in the way in which one looks for its fulfillment. There may be a condition that's not stated but you must ask that question. If it is predictive, is it fulfilled or unfulfilled? There I think you answer that question initially by looking elsewhere in Scripture for fulfillment. You have quite a few prophecies in the Old Testament that are fulfilled already in the Old Testament period. You have other prophecies in the Old Testament that you find fulfilled in the New Testament period. Of course, you have prophecies that are fulfilled in the time in which we are living, in the time of the church, or you may have prophecies that are not yet fulfilled but look forward to the time of the Day of the Lord. So, you need to sort that out. If it is predictive, is it fulfilled or unfulfilled?

3. Pay attention to fulfillment citations

That brings us to 3., "Pay attention to fulfillment citations." What I mean by that is there are certain phrases that occur in the New Testament that may be pointers or helpers to saying that this is a prophecy that specifically finds its fulfillment. What I have in mind there are phrases such as "that it might be fulfilled." You have undoubtedly come across that fulfillment citation. When you see that, I think normally if you look at all the usages, it's quite specific with the fulfillment in view. There is a prophecy that here finds its fulfillment. However, a qualification; in some cases that phrase may be taken as noting the relationship of illustration or similarity in words or ideas where an Old Testament statement in itself was not predictive.

a. Matthew 1:22 – Isa. 7:14

I think that becomes clear if you look at some examples. If you look at Matthew 1:22, there you get the statement, "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord said through the prophet, 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will be called Emmanuel, which means God with us.'" This is the statement from Isaiah 7:14, that's applied here to Mary who conceived by means of the Holy Spirit and she is the virgin

who conceived and gave birth to a son. Here you find the fulfillment of the prediction of Isaiah 7:14. That's quite specific.

b. Matthew 8:17 – Isa. 53:4

In Matthew 8:17, you read after Jesus healed some people, “This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah, ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.’” Isaiah 53:4. It finds fulfillment, being the climax passage of that series of passages on the Servant of the Lord.

c. Matthew 12:17 – Isa. 42:1-4

Matthew 12:17, reads, “This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah, ‘Here is my servant whom I have chosen in whom I delight. I will put my spirit on him and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice on the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not snuff out till he leads justice to victory, and in his name the nations will put their hope.’” That is a quotation of another of those servant passages like earlier, from Isaiah 42:1-4.

d. Matthew 21:4 – Zech 9:9

In Matthew 21:4, “This took place to fulfill the what was spoken of through the prophet” and the quotation is from Zechariah 9:9, “Say to the daughter of Zion, see your King comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” So normally you'll find that it is quite a specific indicator that this is the fulfillment of a previously given prediction.

e. James 2:21-23 – Gen. 15:6

However, sometimes it's more like a relationship or illustration of similar words or ideas of an Old Testament statement that was not a predictive statement. Look at James 2:21-23 where you get that phrase, “Was not our ancestor Abraham considered

righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the Scripture was fulfilled that says,” and here it quotes Genesis 15:6; “‘Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ and he was called God’s friend.’” If you go to Genesis 15:6, this is after the Lord said to Abraham that Eliezer would not be his heir but the son of his own would be his heir and said, “Look up to the heavens to count the stars if indeed you can count them.” And then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Then verse 6 says, “Abraham believed the Lord and he credited it to him as righteousness.” It’s hard to predict that statement but there’s simply an assertion of Abraham’s faith and what the significance of that was.

So when you come to the use of “*fulfill*” in James 2:23, referencing that verse in Genesis 15:6, I think you’d have to say that this is more a formula of citation at this point, than it is indicating prophecy and fulfillment. There’s an article in your bibliography under this heading by R. Laird Harris. The article is on page 11 of your bibliography called, “Prophecy, Illustration, and Typology” in the *Interpretation of History*, a volume published honoring Dr. Allan MacRae, founder of this school, published in 1986. He uses that phrase I just used, “The formula of citation,” for references like this.

f. Matthew 2:17-18 – Jer 31:15

A similar one is Matthew 2:17-18, where you read, “Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: ‘A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted because they are no more’” and that’s Jeremiah 31:15. If you go back to Jeremiah 31:15, you read, “A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping; Rachel weeping for her children; and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more.” In the context, that is referring to weeping concerning the exiles of the Babylonian captivity.

g. Plerono Citation Formula

It’s not a predictive statement, but both James 2:21-23 and Matthew 2:17-18 in

referring to these two Old Testament texts that were not “predictive” texts, use this verb *plerono* to reference them. Does that mean they were wrongly cited as predictions? Or does it mean that Matthew’s method of interpretation was illegitimate? This is what Harris suggests, he suggests that the problem is caused by the translation of *plerow* as “fulfilled.” Certainly it has that meaning in many contexts. But what Harris argues is that it always means “fulfill” is not so certain and sometimes that it seems to be used as a formula of citation, rather than a formula of fulfilled prediction. That broader usage should be kept in mind, but then generally comes in some form *hina plerow* when is predictive prophecy, but you have to be careful.

h. Gegrapti Citation Formula

The second formula is *gegraptai*, “it has been written.” Again, it, too shows fulfillment often. However, sometimes it’s simply the reference. There’s fulfillment in Mark 1:2, “It is written in Isaiah the prophet” and then a quotation from Isaiah 40:3, “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; a voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him.’” So John came, so, there is a fulfillment in that verse. A reference in Matthew 4:4; “Jesus answered, ‘*It is written*: “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’” That is a quotation of Deuteronomy 8:3, which is not a predictive statement, but that is giving a citation.

i. Lego

Let’s go on to forms of *lego* (I say). When it stands by itself, it’s usually indicative of a historical reference, not prophecy and fulfillment. Look at Matthew 22:31, “But about the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what God *said* to you?” And then there’s the quotation of Exodus 3:6, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” It’s simply a reference to an Old Testament text. Act 7:48, “However, the Most High doesn’t live in houses made by men, as the prophet *says*.” Then the quotation is Isaiah 66:1, ““Heaven is my throne,

the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me?’ says the Lord.

‘Where will my resting place be?’” That is not a predictive statement. So this is all under 3., “Pay attention to fulfillment citation.” They certainly will help with pointers and identifying predictive passages, a point of fulfillment but you have to be careful of that.

4. Avoid the idea of double fulfillment or double reference

4, “Avoid the idea of double fulfillment or double reference.” I think that when you are looking for fulfillment of a prophecy, it is not good to adopt the idea of double reference or double sense as an underlying hermeneutical principle. In other words, we should not go around looking for double reference. You should not assume that the given prophecy may refer to two or more different events at the same time with the same words. If you do that it means that you are assuming the same words in the same context may have multiple meanings. I think that’s hermeneutically a dangerous thing, to say the same words and the same context have multiple meanings unless there is some kind of double entendre, but that’s not a general rule of hermeneutics. We don’t use language that way. Usually when a statement is made there is an intent of a specific meaning that is carried by that statement and that’s the meaning to be understood by the person who hears it. That concept I think applies to all biblical statements not just predictive, but it certainly applies to predictive forms as well. You look for the single sense or meaning of any given statement, you don’t look for multiple meaning or senses of biblical statements.

a. Dwight Pentecost - Double Reference

Look at page 28 in your citations under Dwight Pentecost who wrote a volume on eschatology called *Things to Come* in which he speaks of “the law of double reference.” From his view point, “Few laws are more important to observe in the interpretation of prophetic Scripture than the law of double reference. Two events, widely separated by the time of their fulfillment, may be brought together into the scope of one prophecy. This was done because the prophet had a message for his own day as well as for a future time.

By bringing two widely separated events into the scope of prophecy both purposes could be fulfilled.” Then he quotes another man here by the name of Horne, ““The same prophecies frequently have a double meaning, and refer to different events, the one near, the other remote; the one temporal, the other spiritual or perhaps eternal. The prophets thus having several events in view, their expressions may be partly applicable to one and partly to another. It is not always easy to make the transition. What has not been fulfilled in the first we must apply to the second and what has already been fulfilled may often be considered typical of what remains to be accomplished.””

Now how you work that out you need to look at specific passages but that’s the concept. If you go to Eric Sauer the next entry on p. 29. Sauer says, “Everything is historically conditioned and yet at the same time interpenetrated with eternity. All is at once human and divine, temporal and super-temporal.” And, speaking about the prophets, “They speak of the return from Babylon and simultaneously promise a gathering of Israel at the still future inaugurating a kingdom of peace (Isaiah 11:11-16).” We just spoke about Isaiah 11:11-16. You see what he is saying is that prophecy is talking about the return from exile. But at the same time and in the same words it is also talking of a kingdom of peace in the future—eschatological. It has double meaning, double reference, for the same words.

In the volume called *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* by Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, published by Word in 1993, they say, “We must add a second characteristic of prophecy: it may have two fulfillments, one near the prophet’s lifetime and one long past it.” When you look at a prophecy and you ask for its fulfillment, there is one in the more near future and one in the more distant future. All of them are referenced in the same statement. There are quite a few people out there who argue that this principle, or as Pentecost calls it, “the law of double reference” is a principle that should be utilized in the interpretation of prophetic statements—looking for multiple references.

b. Vannoy’s Response

What I’m suggesting is, I don’t think that’s valid. It gets back to this thing of how

language works. Do we use language to have the same words and the same context but say two different things? You go back in the history of interpretation, Luther and Calvin argue forcefully against it but, of course they're arguing against the background of allegorical interpretation where you have multiple meanings. They insisted that the first obligation of an interpreter is to arrive at the sense of the text intended by its author. Luther said, "Only the single, proper, original sense, the sense in which it is written, makes good theologians. The Holy Spirit is the simplest writer and speaker in heaven and on earth. Therefore his words can have no more than a singular and simple sense, which we call the written or literally spoken sense."

There's an interesting statement in the Westminster Confession of Faith chapter 1 section 9 about Scripture and its interpretation and I want to read you some brief statements, "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and false sense of any Scripture" and then there is a parenthetical statement which is what I wanted to get at, "(which is not manifold, but one), it may be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly." So you see the point that is being made here is that interpretations of some passages are more clear. You use the more clear to help with the less clear. But in the context of making that statement there is that parenthetical statement, "When there is a question of the true and false sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one) it may be searched and known by other places of which speak more clearly." I think it's an important hermeneutical principle.

c. John Bright's Many Levels of Meaning

Look at your citations page 25. This is taken from John Bright's book, *The Authority of the Old Testament*. He says, "It was generally believed that Scripture had various levels of meaning. Origen had a threefold sense corresponding to the supposed trichotomy of man's nature: body, soul and spirit. There was a literal or corporeal sense (that is, what the words in their plain meaning say), a moral or tropological sense, (that is, a sense figurative of the Christian soul, which thus gives edification and a guidance for

conduct), and a spiritual or mystical sense. Later, still a fourth sense was added.” This is what the reformers and Westminster Confession are responding to, the fourth sense, “the anagogic or eschatological sense. Thus, to give the classical example, the word ‘Jerusalem’ was understood in the middle ages as having four senses: literally it referred to that city of the name in Judah, tropologically, to the faithful Christian soul, allegorically (mystically), to the church of Christ, and analogically to the heavenly city of God which is our eternal home. It was possible, albeit not necessary, to understand the word in all four of these senses in a single text.”

So there you don’t have a double reference, you have a fourfold reference. “But the tendency was to care far less for the literal meaning than for the spiritual one, for the true meaning of the text is spiritual. Indeed, some Scriptures—so it was held—cannot be interpreted literally, for it tells of things that are immoral and thus unworthy of God (adultery, incest, murder, etc.), and much Scripture is too primitive or too trivial, if taken literally, to be a fit vehicle of divine revelation (lengthy genealogies, rules for animal sacrifice, the dimensions of a tabernacle, etc.) Such passages yield their true meaning only when interpreted spiritually.” When you allegorize you put spiritual meanings on these kinds of passages. “The result was a wholesale uncontrolled allegorizing of Scripture, specifically the Old Testament...But the spate of fanciful interpretations continued to flow unchecked from pulpit and lecturer’s desk alike. The meanings that could be got from Scripture were limited, one might justifiably feel, only by the interpreter’s ingenuity.” If you have a very clever person you can find all kinds of meaning in any statement. “Whatever their inconsistencies may have been (and they were on occasion inconsistent), both the great reformers [Luther and Calvin] rejected allegory in principle—repeatedly and in the strongest language. In the preceding chapter both Luther and Calvin were quoted in their insistence that it is the duty of the interpreter to arrive at the plain sense of the text intended by its author.”

d. Authorial Intent and Single Meaning

Now that has come to be referred to as “authorial intent” and has become a

controversial issue. How far do you go? Walter Kaiser has written a lot about it and he thinks the only interpretation that is legitimate is what the author intended. Now I'm in agreement with what he's trying to do there and certainly it's in order. I think what he doesn't take into account is in Scripture there's more than one author. In the sense there's a human author but there's also the Holy Spirit superintending what the human author wrote and said. I think it's possible that the human author could speak "better than he knew," so to speak. In other words, he could say things that he himself did not believe or comprehend and therefore wasn't his intent; yet it was superintended by the Holy Spirit who was addressing issues that transcended the prophet's whole understanding. So I put a qualification there, but that doesn't open the door to wholesale looking for multiple meanings in any statement of Scripture. Bright was saying, "It's the duty of the interpreter to arrive at the plain sense of the text intended by its author. Similar quotations, in which they expressed their contempt of the allegory, could be induced almost at will. Luther, whose vocabulary was by no means impoverished, is especially vivid. He declares that Origen's allegories 'are not worth so much dirt;' he calls allegory variously 'the scum on Scripture,' a 'harlot' to seduce us, 'a monkey game,' something that turns Scripture into 'a nose of wax' (i.e. that could be twisted into any shape desired), the means by which the Devil gets on his pitchfork. He declares (in expounding Psalm 22) that Scripture is the garment of Christ and that allegory rends it into 'rags and tatters.' 'How,' he cries, 'will you teach faith with certainty when you make the sense of Scripture uncertain?' Calvin is equally stern. More than once, he calls allegorical interpretations an invention of the devil to undermine the authority of Scripture. Elsewhere, he describes them as 'puerile,' 'farfetched,' and he declares that one would do better to confess ignorance than to indulge in such 'frivolous guesses.' The interpreter, he declares, must take the plain sense and that is uncertain he should adopt the interpretation that best suits the context."

1. Reformers and Single Sense

So, the reformers are pretty strong in their opinions on this question of multiple

senses or meanings in statements of Scripture that they reject. But the issue hasn't disappeared. Bernard Ramm and his book on interpretation says, "One of the most persistent hermeneutical sins is to put two interpretations on one passage of Scripture, breaking the force of the literal meaning and obscuring the Word of God." If we are to understand this, we're looking at page 27 under J. Barton Payne again from his *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*. In his introductory section he says, "Two modern movements have in particular been characterized by an appeal to the hermeneutic of double sense. On one hand stands liberalism, with its overall denial of an authentic prediction... On the other hand stands dispensationalism, with its presupposition that the church cannot be predicted with the Old Testament writings. Three basic reasons appear for maintaining the concept of one (New Testament) meaning as opposed to that of the so-called dual fulfillment. The first arises from the very nature of hermeneutics. John Owen, the 17th century Puritan, long ago laid down the dictum, 'If the Scripture has more than one meaning, it has no meaning at all;' and most of the more recent writers have agreed that dual fulfillment is incompatible with objective interpretation." In other words, what Owen is saying is that if the scriptures have more than one meaning, they have no meaning at all. That makes hermeneutics indeterminable. If you've got multiple senses, the meaning of the text becomes indeterminable.

Fairbairn says what Christ really means is one thing and if there are many things, hermeneutics would be indeterminable. "Fairbairn himself observes that such an approach causes uncertainty of application and makes the meaning too general for practical employment." That's his first reason for arguing that we should look for one sense, not multiple senses.

2. NT and Single Meaning

The second reason is the evidence from the New Testament. "As Lockhart described, the decisive attitude of Acts 2:29-31 toward Psalm 16, 'The apostle Peter argues that David could not refer to himself, for he died and saw corruption, but that he was a prophet, and foresaw that Jesus should be raised without corruption... It seems not

easy to mistake the apostle's meaning.' Terry thus concludes, 'The words of Scripture were intended to have one definite sense, and our first object should be to discover that sense and adhere rigidly to it... We reject as unsound and misleading the theory that such Messianic psalms... have a double sense, and refer first to David or some other ruler, and secondly to Christ.' In fact from reading the New Testament it is safe to say that one would never suspect the possibility of dual fulfillment."

3. OT and Single Meaning

"The third reason for single fulfillment is the evidence from Old Testament context. Fairbairn, for example, grants that his principle multiple sense not infrequently fails to work out in the concrete cases where its presence is attempted to be shown. Terry says flatly, 'The language of Psalm 2 is not applicable to David or Solomon, or any other earthly ruler... Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled with the birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:22), and no expositor has ever been able to prove a previous fulfillment.'"

a. Isaiah 7:14

Now Isaiah 7:14 is one of the texts where people often conclude that there's a double reference. The reference to a child born in the time of Ahaz and Isaiah, and at the same time a reference to Christ. But Payne here is arguing Isaiah 7:14 has a single reference. There's only one woman who the writer can refer to. There has been brought forth a child who was God with us. Now, admittedly, if you go back into the full context and discuss that in Isaiah 7:14, there's some problems with it. That is one of the more difficult passages. I don't want to take time to do it today, but we'll look at a couple examples of some other passages.

b. Deuteronomy 18

I think one really tough passage is Deuteronomy 18. We already looked at that. Now is that a reference to the prophetic movement or to Christ, or in some way to both? Of course, there is typological indirect reference which pertains to singleness of meaning

but yet includes Christ. But Deuteronomy 18, Isaiah 7:14, and the last verses of Malachi—those are tough ones. Some of the songs of messianic psalms are in reference to David or Solomon and in reference to Christ. But there are not a lot of them that are really difficult.

4. Terry – Single Sense

Look at page 28 in your citations, bottom of the page and over on page 29. Then I want to look at a couple examples of texts. This is from Milton Terry's *Biblical Hermeneutics*. It's fairly long and somewhat complex, but I think that he draws out the issues here. So I wanted to take time to read from it directly. He says, "The hermeneutical principles which we have now set forth necessarily exclude the doctrine that the prophecies of Scripture contain an occult or double sense. It has been alleged by some that as these oracles are heavenly and divine we should expect to find in them manifold meanings. They must needs differ from other books. Hence has arisen not only the doctrine of a double sense, but of a threefold and fourfold sense, and the rabbis went so far as to insist there are "mountains of sense in every word of Scripture."

We may readily admit that the scriptures are capable of manifold practical *applications*; otherwise they would not be so useful for doctrine, correction, and instruction in righteousness. But the moment we admit the principle that portions of Scripture contain an occult or double sense we introduce an element of uncertainty in the sacred volume, and unsettle all scientific interpretation. 'If the Scripture has more than one meaning,' says Dr. Owen, 'it has no meaning at all.' 'I hold,' says Ryle, 'that the words of Scripture were intended to have one definite sense, and that our first object should be to discover that sense, and adhere rigidly to it... To say that words *do* mean a thing merely because they *can* be tortured into meaning it is a most dishonorable and dangerous way of handling Scripture.'

'This scheme of interpretation,' says Stuart, 'forsakes and sets aside the common laws of language. The Bible excepted, in no book, treatise, epistle, discourse, or conversation, ever written, published, or addressed by any one man to his fellow beings

(unless in the way of sport, or with an intention to deceive), can a double sense be found. There are, indeed, charades, enigmas, phrases with a *double entente*, and the like, perhaps, in all languages; there have been abundance of heathen oracles which were susceptible of two interpretations but even among all these there never has been, and there never was a design that there should be, more than one sense or meaning in reality. Ambiguity of language may be, and has been, designedly resorted to in order to mislead the reader or hearer, or in order to conceal the ignorance of soothsayers, or to provide for their credit amid future exigencies; but this is quite foreign to the matter of a serious and *bona fide* double meaning of words. Nor can we for a moment, without violating the dignity and sacredness of the scriptures, suppose the inspired writers are to be compared to the authors of riddles, conundrums, enigmas, and ambiguous heathen oracles.’

5. Type and Anti-Type Approach

Some writers have confused this subject by connecting it with the doctrine of type and antitype.” Now notice what he does here. “As many persons and events of the Old Testament were types of greater ones to come, so the language respecting them is supposed to be capable of a double sense.” In other words, instead of type and antitype being institutions, persons, or events—concrete entities or realities as symbols that prefigure the truth that will symbolize those institutions, events, or persons—what some interpreters do is really speak of a typological language. That’s an important distinction. See what he’s saying here. “Some writers have confused this subject by connecting it with the doctrine of type and antitype. As many persons, events of the Old Testament were types of greater ones to come, so the language respecting them is supposed to be capable of a double sense.” So in other words, language is typological language. “The second Psalm has been supposed to refer both to David and Christ, and Isaiah 7:14-16 to a child born in the time the prophet and also the Messiah. In the Psalms 45 and 72, that’s supposed to have a double reference for Solomon and Christ, and the prophecy against Edom in Isaiah 34:5-10, to comprehend also the general judgment of the last day. But it should be seen that in the case of types the language of Scripture has no double sense.

The types themselves are such because they prefigure things to come and this fact must be kept distinct from the question of the sense of language use in any particular passage.”

6. Deuteronomy 18 as a Model

Do you get the point there? If you go back to that Deuteronomy 18 passage, what’s the language there talking about? You know what my conclusion was. The language is talking about the prophetic institution in Old Testament times because in the context both before and after it’s talking about that you shouldn’t go to heathen soothsayers. It’s saying that they’re given a test for distinguishing true and false prophets. How are we going to have God’s revelation with Moses gone? So the language is talking about the prophetic order. The prophetic order itself can be typological because these are human instruments speaking God’s word. Christ is both God and man bringing us God’s word. So typologically, the prophetic institution can point to Christ, but that’s not the language you see, that’s not typological language. It’s the prophetic institution.

7. Terry on Psalm 2 et al.

If you accept typological language, then you have really accepted this principle of spiritualization, and then you can do with Isaiah 11 what Young does. It’s not talking about exile, Jewish people coming back to their homeland, it’s not talking about physical realities, he thinks it’s talking about spiritual realities. It’s typological language. Terry doesn’t accept it, but there is such a legitimate thing as typological language. He says, “We have shown that the language in Psalm 2 is not applicable to David or Solomon or any other ruler. The same may be said of Psalms 45 and 72. Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled at the birth of Christ, and no expositor has ever been able to prove a previous fulfillment. The oracle against Edom, like that against Babylon, is clothed in the highly wrought of the apocalyptic prophecy, and gives no warrant to the theory of a double sense. The twenty-fourth of Matthew, so commonly relied on to support this theory, has been already shown to furnish no valid evidence of either an occult or a double sense... The first prophecy is a good example. The enmity between the seed of the woman and that of

the serpent has been exhibited in a thousand forms. The precious words of promise to God's people find more or less fulfillment in every individual experience. But these facts do not sustain the theory of a double sense. The sense in every case is direct and simple; the applications and the illustrations are many." That's the promise of Genesis 3:15, "The seed of the woman will crush the serpent. I put enmity between your seed and his seed." "The sense in every case is direct and simple; the applications and illustrations are many. Such facts give no authority for us to go into apocalyptic prophecies with the expectation of finding two or more meanings in each specific statement, and then to declare: This verse refers to an event long past... this had partial fulfillment in the ruin of Babylon, or Edom, but it awaits a grander fulfillment then in the future. The judgment of Babylon, or Nineveh, or Jerusalem, may indeed be a type," that is perfectly legitimate, "of every other similar judgment, and is a warning to all nations and ages; but this is very different from saying that the language in which that judgment was predicted was fulfilled only partially when Babylon, or Nineveh, or Jerusalem fell, and is yet awaiting its complete fulfillment." There's a distinction. Do you follow the line of argument there?

8. Illustration: Daniel 8

Let me give you one illustration. I wanted to give you two illustrations but we're not going to have time to do all that today, but one illustration from Daniel 8. Are any of you familiar with the old original Scofield Bible? If you read Daniel chapter 8—which I think is a chapter talking about the types—Daniel 8:9 reads, "Out of one of them came forth a little horn which waxed exceedingly great toward the south toward the east and toward the pleasant land." The note in the Scofield Bible there about that little horn says, "Here's a prophecy fulfilled in 175 B.C." So that's a reference to this little horn in verse 9. When you go further along in the chapter you notice in verse 15 it says "I, Daniel, had seen the vision, sought for the meaning, then behold there stood before me the appearance of a man." Then he explained the meaning. When you get to the meaning of this little horn, that's down in verses 24 and 25, it says "He will become strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation. He will destroy the mighty men

and the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper. He shall magnify himself when they feel secure, but he shall destroy many. He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes but he shall be broken without mending.” And the comment in these notes is that verses 24 and 25 go beyond Antiochus Epiphanes and evidently refer to the little horn of Daniel 7. And then the statement both Antiochus and the beast, but the beast preeminently is in view in verses 24 and 25. So in the interpretation of the little horn of Daniel chapter 8, which I think if you look at all the details is a reference to Antiochus, when you get to the interpretation to the little horn, the note here is saying verses 24 and 25 are speaking at the same time and in the same words both to Antiochus and to the antichrist—a double reference. Of verses 10-14, where in first section of the chapter you have more detail about that little horn, the notes say of 10-14, “Historically this was fulfilled in and by Antiochus, but in a more intense and final sense Antiochus adumbrates the awful blasphemy of the little horn of Daniel 7.” I don’t have a problem with that as I think Antiochus is a type of the anti-christ but the words here tell you about Antiochus. But the next statement in the notes is, “In Daniel 8:10-14 the actions of both little horns blend.” So you see in the detailed description of the little horn in 10-14 the words apply to Antiochus and at the same time and in the same words apply to the antichrist. “The words blend, both are in view.”

In the end of verse 19 it says, “At the time of the end shall be” and the note says, “Two ends are in view. One, historically. The end of a third of Grecian empire of Alexander out the divisions of which the little horn of verse 9 arose.” This is the end of that Grecian period. “But two, prophetically, the end of the times of the Gentiles. Both ends are in view.” The time of the end is the Grecian empire and the end of the time of the Gentiles—a double reference. So that’s one illustration of the way in which some interpreters use this principle of double reference to find meaning from prophetic statements.

9. Illustration: Malachi 4:5-6

I want to look in more detail at Malachi 4:5-6 and we’ll do that at the beginning of

our session next time. But Malachi 4:5-6 let's just look at it for a minute. It says, "See I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers or else I will come and strike the earth with a curse." The interesting thing here is you have New Testament references to this passage and some of the New Testament references apply this prophecy to John the Baptist. Then the question becomes, what do you do with this prophecy? Has it been fulfilled or is it yet to be fulfilled? Is it speaking of John the Baptist? Is it speaking of Elijah? Is it a double sense? What do you do with it? I want to look at it in more detail next time and give you some of the ways interpreters have dealt with it. It is one of the more difficult passages dealing with the double sense.

10. Vannoy's Conclusion on Double Sense

Now one clarifying statement and I'll finish. I'm not saying it is impossible to find double sense. I don't think you should bring rules of interpretation from outside and force them on Scripture to fit some formula of interpretation. It seems to me, if there are clear passages that lead you to this as the intended way the Scripture is to be interpreted, well, so be it. The Scripture has to be our guide. I'm not convinced that there are passages that force you to do that. So I'm saying you shouldn't come to the text looking for multiple senses. If you are forced to do that by Scripture itself, so be it, but you must demonstrate from Scripture that that is the way you must understand the statement, which bears a high burden of proof.

Transcribed by: Katie Wholley, Matt Gobson, William Mahoney, Sarah Owsinski, Grace Cunningham, Becca Brule and Stephen Davalos (ed.).

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Re-narrated by Ted Hildebrandt