

Moreover, the basic difference between the amillennial and the premillennial viewpoints is essentially whether one is to interpret the kingdom prophecies figuratively or literally. . . .

. . . dispensationalists are more consistent in adhering to those principles of interpretation which have sheltered them from liberalism's errors and amillennial vagaries . . .

"The above rules for interpretation of prophecy are not exhaustive. Stress has been given to the law of fulfillment, that in the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy, the pattern of those which have been fulfilled should be followed. There is also the law of time relationship, that two events placed side by side in a prophecy will not necessarily be fulfilled simultaneously, or even in immediate succession. There is the law of double reference, that both an immediate and a future fulfillment of the same prediction may be found. There is the principle that the prophets often took in great periods of time in a single glance, called by Delitzsch 'the foreshortening of the prophet's horizon.' There is the principle that even when the language contains symbols, the language is not necessarily symbolic throughout.

These are, in the main, the principles which govern the right interpretation of prophecy. When coupled with the rules for the recognition and interpretation of Biblical figures, they should enable the careful interpreter to steer his course through the difficulties of predictive prophecy without sacrificing or compromising the basic tenet of literal interpretation."

-- Gerald B. Stanton, *Kept From the Hour* (Holborn, England: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1964), pp. 140-144, 304.

#### 11. Louis Berkhof

"The interpretation of Prophecy . . . . Prophecy may simply be defined as the proclamation of that which God revealed . . . . Two points call for special consideration: (1) The special characteristics of prophecy; and (2) Rules for the interpretation of prophecy.

1. Special Characteristics of Prophecy. . . .
  - a. Prophecy as a whole has an organic character.
  - b. Prophecy is closely connected with history.
  - c. Prophecy has its own peculiar perspective.
  - d. Prophecies are often conditional, i.e., their fulfillment is in many cases depended on the contingent actions of men. . . .
  - e. Though the prophets often express themselves symbolically, it is erroneous to regard their language as symbolical throughout. They did not, as some writers on prophecy supposed, construct a sort of symbolical alphabet to which they habitually resorted in the expression of their thoughts. Even P. Fairbairn falls into this error when he says that 'in the prophecies of the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation, nations are a common designation for worldly kingdom, stars for ruling powers, roaring and troubled seas for tumultuous nations, trees for the higher, as grass for the lower grades of society, running streams for the means of life and refreshment, etc.' (*On Prophecy*, p. 143). It is safer to take the position of Davidson: 'When Joel speaks of locusts, he means those