

William Millers 14 Rules of Interpretation

“We should know for ourselves what constitutes Christianity, what is truth, what is the faith that we have received, **what are the Bible rules** — the rules given us from the highest authority.”
{*The 1888 Materials*, 403}

“Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel's message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted. In the little book entitled "**Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology**," Father Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation..." {*RH*, November 25, 1884, par 23}

William Millers 14 Rules

1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible. Matthew 5:18
2. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study. 2 Timothy 3:15-17
3. Nothing revealed in the Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering. Deuteronomy 29:29; Matthew 10:26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10; Philippians 3:15; Isaiah 44:11; Matthew 21:22; John 14:13-14; 15:7; James 1:5-6; 1 John 5:13-15.
4. To understand doctrine, bring all the Scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence, and *if you can form your theory without a contradiction*, you cannot be in an error. Isaiah 28:7-29; 35:8; Proverbs 19:27; Luke 24:27, 44-45; Romans 16:26; James 5:19; 2 Pet. 1:19-20
5. **Scripture must be its own expositor**, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound it to me, and he should guess at its meaning or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, not the Bible. Psalms 19:7-11; 119:97-105; Matthew 23:8-10; 1 Corinthians 2:12-16; Ezekiel 34:18-19; Luke 11:52; Malachi 2:7-8
6. God has revealed things to come, by visions, in figures and parables, and in this way the **same things** are often times **revealed again and again, by different visions**, or in **different figures and parables**. If you wish to understand them, you must **combine them all in one**. Psalms 89:19; Hosea 12:10; Habakkuk 2:2; Acts 2:17; 1 Corinthians 10:6; Hebrews 9:9, 24; Psalms 78:2; Matthew 8:13, 34; Genesis 41:1-32; Daniel chapters 2, 7 and 8; Acts 10:9-16
7. Visions are always mentioned as such. 2 Corinthians 12:1

Rules 8-13 that especially apply to Daniel 11

8. Figures always have a figurative meaning, and are used much in prophecy to represent future things, times and events, such as: Mountains meaning governments, beasts meaning kingdoms, waters meaning people, lamps, meaning Word of God, day meaning year. Daniel 2:35, 44; 7:8, 17; Revelation 17:1, 15; Psalms 119:105; Ezekiel 4:6

9. Parables are used as comparison to illustrate subjects, and must be explained **in the same way as figures**, by the subject and Bible. Mark 4:13

10. Figures sometimes have **two or more different significations**; as day is used in a figurative sense to represent three different periods of time: **Indefinite, definite, a day for a year, day for a thousand years**. If you put on the right construction it will harmonize with the Bible and make good sense, otherwise it will not. Ecclesiastes 7:14; Ezekiel 4:6; 2 Peter 3:8

11. How to know when a word is used figuratively: *If it makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, then it must be understood literally; if not, figuratively.* Revelation 12:1-2; 17:3-7

12. To learn the **true meaning** of figures, trace your figurative word through your Bible, and *where you find it explained*, put it on your figure, and if it **makes good sense** you need look no further; if not, look again.

13. To know whether we have the **true historical event** for the fulfillment of a prophecy: If you find **every word of the prophecy** (after the figures are understood) is **literally fulfilled**, then you may know that your history is the true event. But **if one word lacks a fulfillment**, then you must look for another event, or wait its future development. For God takes care that history and prophecy doth agree, so that the true, believing children of God may never be ashamed. Psalms 21:5; Isaiah 14:17-19; 1 Peter 2:6; Revelation 17:17; Acts 3:18

14. The most important rule of all is that you must have faith. It must be a faith that requires a sacrifice, and, if tried, would give up the dearest object on earth, the world and all its desires, character, living, occupation, friends, home, comforts and worldly honors. If any of these should hinder our believing any part of God's word, it would show our faith to be vain. Nor can we ever believe so long as one of these motives lies lurking in our hearts. We must believe that God will never forfeit His word. And we can have confidence that He that takes notice of the sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our head, will guard the translation of His own word, and throw a barrier around it,

and prevent those who sincerely trust in God, and put implicit confidence in His word, from erring far from the truth, though they may not understand Hebrew or Greek.

Law and Testimony

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20

“I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Revelation 19:10

“When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience... When we as a people understand what this book [Revelation] means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival...” {Testimonies to Ministers, pg. 113-114}

Spirit of prophecy on:

‘Daniel and the Revelation’

“***Patriarchs and Prophets, Daniel and the Revelation, and The Great Controversy*** are needed now as never before. They should be widely circulated because the truths they emphasize will open many blind eyes.” {Colporteur Ministry, 123, 1905}

Ministers, Students, Everyone!

“Those who are preparing to enter the ministry, who desire to become successful students of the prophecies, will find ‘*Daniel and the Revelation*’ an invaluable help. They need to understand this book. It speaks of past, present, and future, laying out the path so plainly that none need err therein. Those who will diligently study this book will have no relish for the cheap sentiments presented by those who have a burning desire to get out something new and strange to present to the flock of God. The rebuke of God is upon all such teachers... *The great, essential questions* which God would have presented to the people are *found in ‘Daniel and the Revelation’*. There is found solid, eternal truth for this time. Everyone needs the light and information it contains... The truth for this time has been brought out in many books. Let those who have been dealing in cheap sentiments and foolish tests, cease this work and study ‘*Daniel and the Revelation*’... The interest in ‘*Daniel and the Revelation*’ is to continue *as long as probationary time shall last. God used the author of this book as a channel through which to communicate light to direct minds to the truth.* Shall we not appreciate this light, which points us to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, our King?... The students in our schools should carefully study ‘*Daniel and the Revelation*’, so that they shall not be left in darkness, and the day of Christ overtake them as a thief in the night. I speak of this book

because it is a means of educating those who need to understand the truth of the Word. *This book should be highly appreciated.*" {Volume 1, Manuscript Releases, pg. 61, 62, 63}

"As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures. Satan has led many to believe that the prophetic portions of the writings of Daniel and of John the revelator cannot be understood. But the promise is plain that special blessing will accompany the study of these prophecies." {Prophets and Kings, 547}

"I have been instructed that the Lord is not the author of the proposal to make many changes in books already published."
{Letter 70, 1910, pp. 2, to A. G. Daniels, August 11, 1910}

Matters of minor Importance

"In some of our important books that have been in print for years, and which have brought many to a knowledge of the truth, there may be found *matters of minor importance* that call for careful study and correction. Let such matters be considered by those regularly appointed to have the oversight of our publications. *Let not these brethren, nor our, canvassers nor our, ministers magnify these matters in such a way as to lessen the influence of these good soul-saving books.* Should we take up the work of discrediting our literature, we would place weapons in the hands of those who have departed from the faith and confuse the minds of those who have newly embraced the message. The less that is done unnecessarily to change our publications, the better it will be."

{Ms 11, 1910, Volume 1, Selected Messages, 165, 10MR 49.3}

"There must be *no long discussions*, presenting new theories in regard to the prophecies which God has already made plain."
{Evangelism, 199} {18MR 64,1896}



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