

Highly Figurative Passages for Which the Application Has Been Given by an Inspired Writer

Joel 2:30 – 31, “I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.” Peter applied this passage to the events surrounding the beginning of the eternal kingdom, the church on the next Day of Pentecost after Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 2:16 – 21).

Isaiah 13:9 – 10, “Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine.” Isaiah specified that this applied to the destruction of Babylon (13:1) that would occur nearly two centuries after his time. Babylon was destroyed in 536 BC, never to be rebuilt.

Isaiah 14:12 – 15, “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations. For you have said in your heart, ‘I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ Yet, you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit.” Isaiah specified that this applied to the king of Babylon (14:4). Several of the stories in Daniel record similar arrogance on the part of Nebuchadnezzar.

Ezekiel 32:7 – 8, “When I put out your light, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give her light. All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, and bring darkness upon your land.” Ezekiel applied this description to a judgment upon the Pharaoh of Egypt (32:2), which came to pass when Babylon invaded Egypt (32:11).

Isaiah 21:9, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” Isaiah used this line to describe the fall of Babylon to the Medes and Elamites (21:1 – 2), which would happen about two centuries after Isaiah wrote this.

Micah 1:4, “The mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will split like wax before a fire, like waters poured down a steep place.” Micah applied this picture to Samaria and Jerusalem (1:1), which came to pass in the Assyrian invasion (5:5).

However, if a highly figurative passage is not explained by an inspired writer, we must assume (1) that the original audience would have been able to apply it correctly without further assistance, and (2) that interpretation by uninspired people is not necessary.