



CHRISTOPHER BUCK

FOUR STEPS FOR FIGURING OUT

PROPHECY Sunday, February 5, 2023, “Bahá’í Explorations” —
hosted by the Clearwater Bahá’í Community, Florida

Dynamic Bahá'í Principles: Expressed as Actions

- ❖ Search for truth.
- ❖ See humankind as one.
- ❖ See religion as one.
- ❖ Religions should unify.
- ❖ Religion respects science.
- ❖ Women and men are equal.
- ❖ Abolish every prejudice.
- ❖ Promote world peace.
- ❖ Provide education for all.
- ❖ Economic problems require spiritual solutions.
- ❖ The Universal House of Justice is unique.
- ❖ The special Bahá'í "Covenant" protects Bahá'í unity.
- ❖ Adopt a universal auxiliary language.
- ❖ Work is worship.
- ❖ The Bahá'í Faith offers other "new principles."
- ❖ Source: Buck, [Bahá'í Faith: The Basics](#) (2021).

SERIES:

Figuring Out Prophecy

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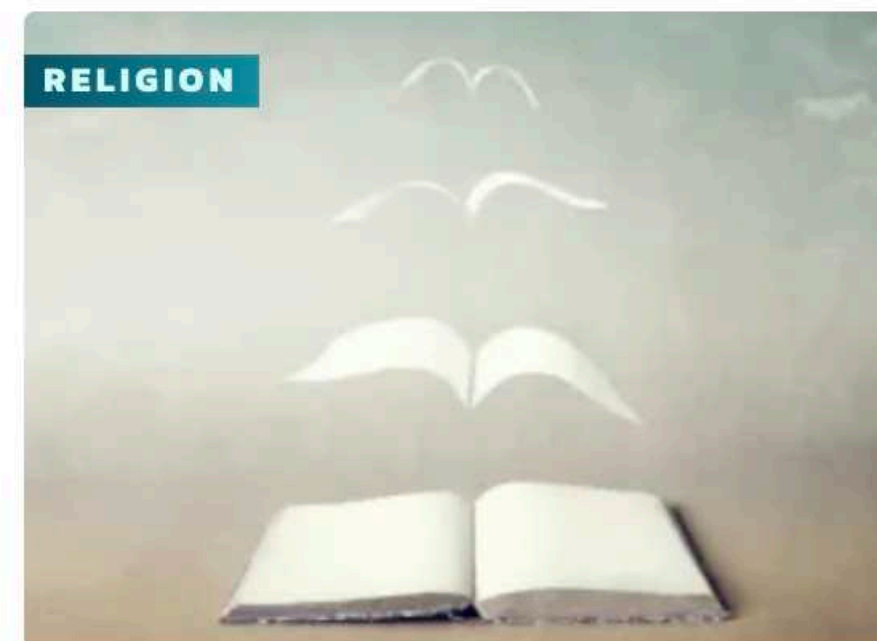
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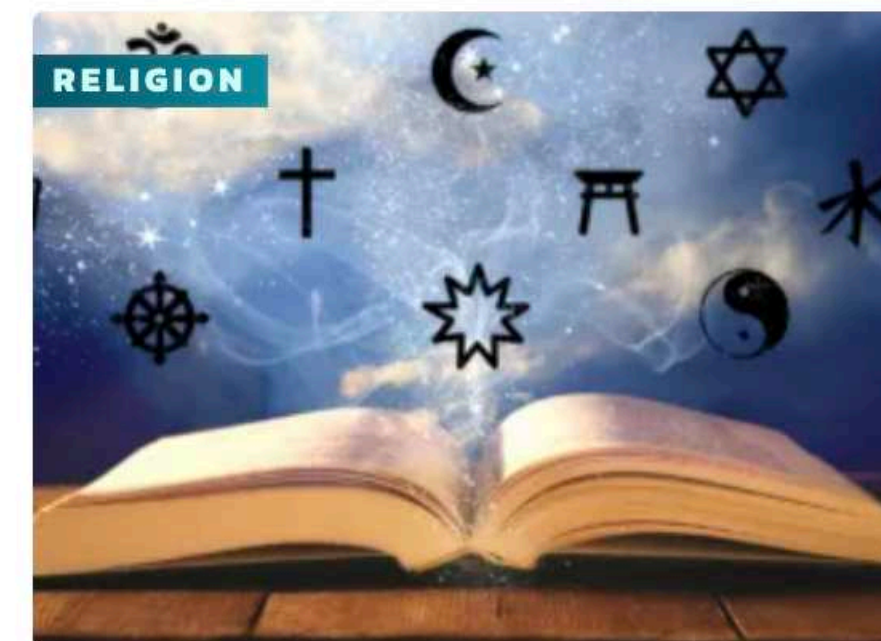
When a Holy Messenger Proclaims a New Message

CHRISTOPHER BUCK | OCT 16, 2022



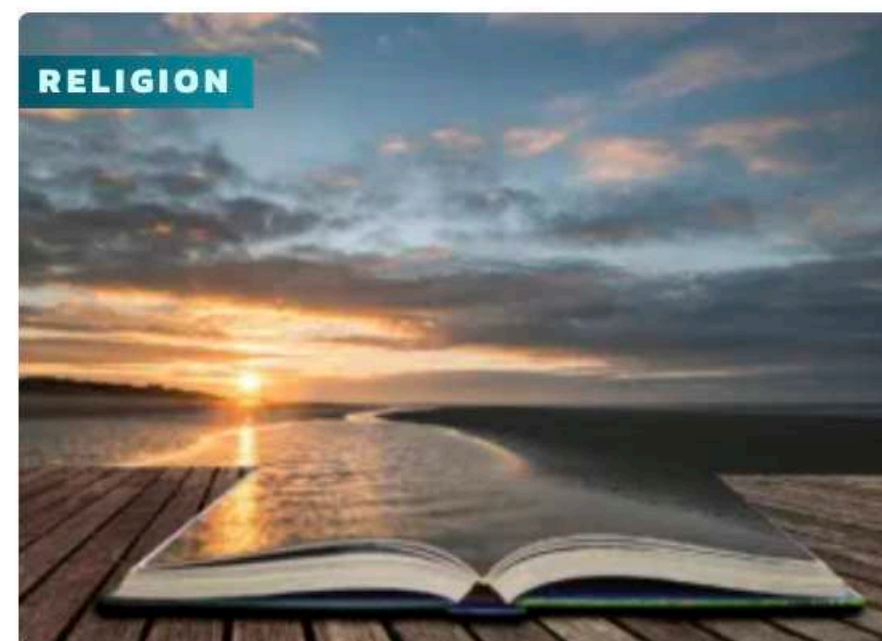
Exploring the Multiple Ways the Prophets Speak to Us

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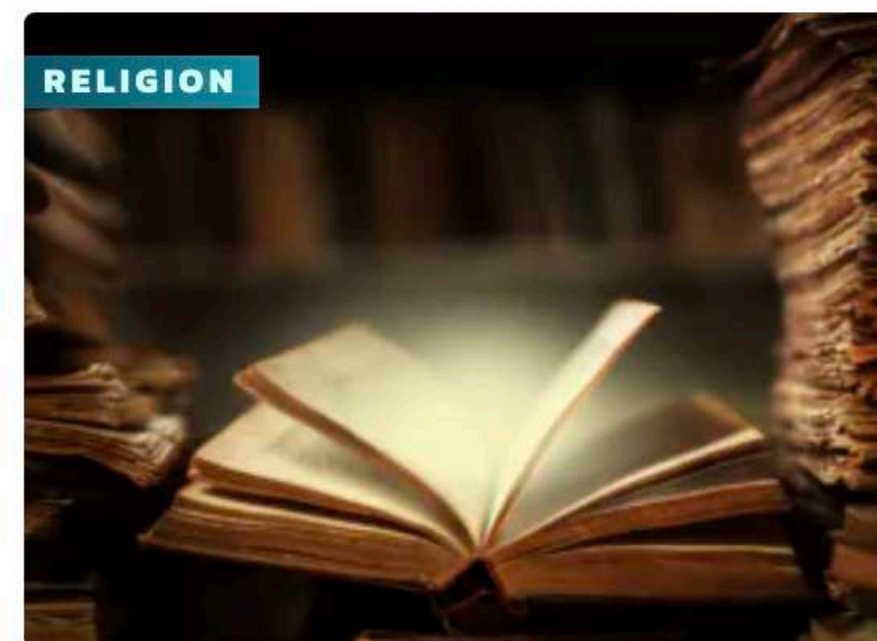


Multiple Messiahship: Baha'u'llah as the Return of the Prophets

CHRISTOPHER BUCK | AUG 22, 2022



Baha'u'llah's "Nine Modes" of Revelation: A Fathomless Ocean



Baha'u'llah's Nine Modes of Discourse – Including Prophecies



To Interpret Prophecies, Add the Word "Spiritual"

Three Methods for Interpreting Prophecy / 1

❖ FIRST METHOD

- ❖ (1) To Interpret Prophecies, Add the Word "Spiritual."

❖ SECOND METHOD

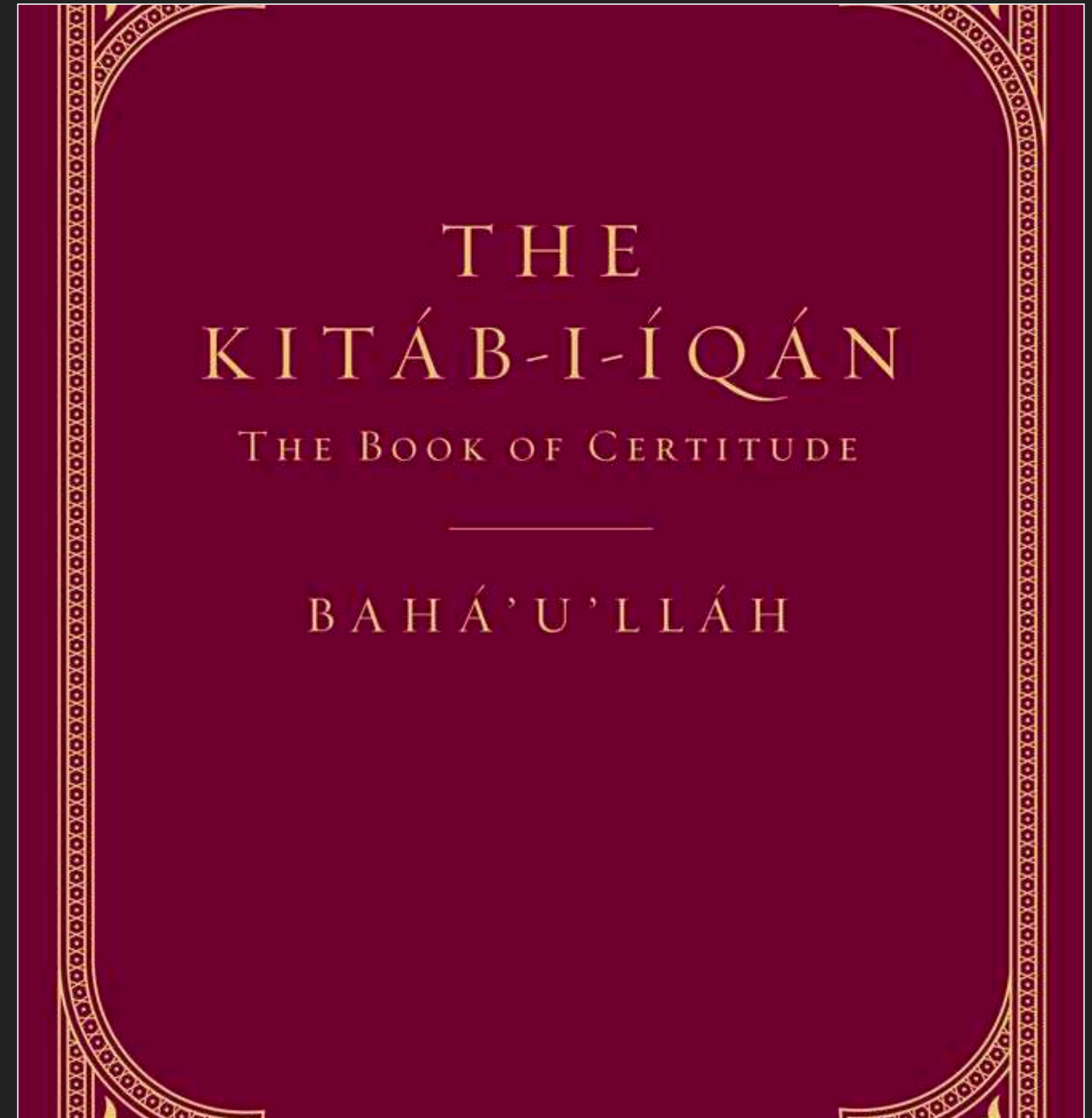
- ❖ 1. If impossible, then not literal.
- ❖ 2. If not literal, then figurative.
- ❖ 3. If figurative, then symbolic.
- ❖ 4. If symbolic, then spiritual and social.

❖ THIRD METHOD

- ❖ (1) historical-contemporary interpretation.
- ❖ (2) the history of interpretation.
- ❖ (3) Baha'i interpretation.

Three Methods for Interpreting Prophecy / 2

- ❖ The first method is a basic reorientation in reading well-known prophecies found in the scriptures of world religions.
- ❖ The second method applies interpretive processes that emerge as patterns in Bahá'u'lláh's exegesis.
- ❖ The third method invokes the Bahá'í principle of the "harmony of science and religion."



One Step: Example ([Link](#))

**To Interpret Prophecies, Add the Word
“Spiritual”**

One Step for Figuring Out Prophecy: One Example

- ❖ Series: "Figuring Out Prophecy" (74 articles) ([Link](#))
- ❖ 1. Part 69: To Interpret Prophecies, Add the Word "Spiritual" ([Link](#))
- ❖ Example: Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:
- ❖ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
- ❖ And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.
- ❖ ([Matthew 24:29–31, King James Version](#))

To Interpret Prophecies, Add the Word “Spiritual” / 1

- ❖ Immediately after the *[spiritual]* tribulation of those days shall the *[spiritual]* sun be darkened, and the *[spiritual]* moon shall not give her light, and the *[spiritual]* stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:
- ❖ And then shall appear the sign of the *[spiritual]* Son of man in *[spiritual]* heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the *[spiritual]* earth mourn, and they shall see the *[spiritual]* Son of man coming in the *[spiritual]* clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
- ❖ And he shall send his *[spiritual]* angels with a great *[spiritual]* sound of a *[spiritual]* trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.
- ❖ (Matthew 24:29–31)

To Interpret Prophecies, Add the Word “Spiritual” / 2

- ❖ Immediately after the tribulation [*the want of capacity to acquire spiritual knowledge and apprehend the Word of God*] of those days shall the sun [*of the divine beauty*] be darkened, and the moon [*of knowledge*] shall not give her light, and the stars [*of divine wisdom*] shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:
- ❖ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man [*the divine Beauty = Jesus*] in heaven [*of the will of God*]: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven [*veils*] with power and great glory.
- ❖ And he shall send his angels [*holy beings ... endowed with the attributes of the spiritual*] with a great sound of a trumpet [*the trumpet-call of Muhammad's Revelation*], and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.
- ❖ (Matthew 24:29–31)
- ❖ See Bahá'u'lláh's *The Kitáb-i-Íqán: The Book of Certitude* (*passim*).

Four Steps for Figuring Out Prophecy: Five Examples

- ❖ 1. **Part 5:** 4 Steps for Understanding the Mysteries of Prophecy ([Link 1](#))
- ❖ 2. **Part 6:** Identifying Figurative Language to Interpret Prophecies ([Link 2](#))
- ❖ 3. **Part 7:** Decoding Prophetic Code: One Baha'i Example ([Link 3](#))
- ❖ 4. **Part 8:** Understanding the Prophecy of the Sun, Moon & Stars ([Link 4](#))
- ❖ 5. **Part 12:** The Seal of the Prophets: Meeting God on the Last Day ([Link 5](#))

Four Steps: Example 1 ([Link](#))

4 Steps for Understanding the Mysteries of Prophecy

4 Steps for Understanding the Mysteries of Prophecy / 1

- ❖ Whenever anyone encounters a passage of scripture, it requires a decision—is the passage literal or symbolical, metaphorical and figurative? ...
- ❖ This essay presents a series of steps, what scholars would call a hermeneutical approach or technique, for “Four Steps for Figuring Out Prophecy”:
 - ❖ 1. If impossible, then not literal.
 - ❖ 2. If not literal, then figurative.
 - ❖ 3. If figurative, then symbolic.
 - ❖ 4. If symbolic, then spiritual and social.
- ❖ These methods don't exhaust every prophetic possibility, but rather provide a useful interpretive tool.

4 Steps for Understanding the Mysteries of Prophecy / 2

- ❖ Let's try a prime example of the spiritual understanding of prophecy, by taking a look at Peter's sermon at Pentecost from Acts 2:14-21:
- ❖ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:
- ❖ And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams.
- ❖ And on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;
And they shall prophesy.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ And it shall come to pass
That whoever calls on the name of the Lord
Shall be saved.'

4 Steps for Understanding the Mysteries of Prophecy / 3

- ❖ Here, Peter quotes Joel 2:28–32, not as a prophecy to be fulfilled in the future—but as one fulfilled in the present on the Day of Pentecost, the event which represents the birth of the Christian church.
- ❖ No contemporary history has attested to the physical occurrence of these celestial events—i.e. that the sun turned dark and the moon became crimson, which events evidently did not outwardly occur, even though Peter said they did.
- ❖ This fact alone compels the conclusion that Peter understood Joel's prophecy as a spiritual event, not as a literal one.

4 Steps for Understanding the Mysteries of Prophecy / 4

Meditate then upon the utterance of one of the Prophets as He intimated to the souls of men, through veiled allusions and hidden symbols, the glad-tidings of the One Who was to come after Him, that thou mayest know of a certainty that their words are inscrutable to all save those who are endued with an understanding heart. He saith: "His eyes were as a flame of fire", and "brass-like were His feet", and "out of His mouth goeth a two-edged sword".⁵⁰ [cf. Rev. 1:14–16; 2:18; 19:15.] (Gems of Divine Mysteries), www.bahai.org/r/506769877

Bahá'u'lláh



S. IOANNES

*Corn. Vischer Inveniebat**Corn. Vischer Sculpebat
et Excudebat Harlemi 1670.*

How could these words be literally interpreted?

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 1: If impossible, then not literal: **Bahá'u'lláh's Impossibility Argument**

Were anyone to appear with all these signs, he would assuredly not be human. And how could any soul seek his company? Nay, should he appear in one city, even the inhabitants of the next would flee from him, nor would any soul dare approach him! Yet, shouldst thou reflect upon these statements, thou wouldst find them to be of such surpassing eloquence and clarity as to mark the loftiest heights of utterance and the epitome of wisdom. Methinks it is from them that the suns of eloquence have appeared and the stars of clarity have dawned forth and shone resplendent. (Gems of Divine Mysteries, Paragraph 72) www.bahai.org/r/506769877

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 1: Bahá'u'lláh's Impossibility Argument / 2

Behold, then, the foolish ones of bygone times and those who, in this day, await the advent of such a being! Nor would they ever bear allegiance unto him except that he appear in the aforementioned form. And as such a being will never appear, so too will they never believe. Such indeed is the measure of the understanding of these perverse and ungodly souls! How could those who fail to understand the most evident of the evident and the most manifest of the manifest ever apprehend the abstruse realities of the divine precepts and the essence of the mysteries of His everlasting wisdom? (Gems of Divine Mysteries, Par. 73) www.bahai.org/r/770964809

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 2: If not literal, then figurative: Bahá'u'lláh's Figuration Explanation

I shall now briefly explain the true meaning of this utterance, that thou mayest discover its hidden mysteries and be of them that perceive. Examine then and judge aright that which We shall reveal unto thee, that haply thou mayest be accounted in the sight of God amongst those who are fair-minded in these matters. Know then that He who uttered these words in the realms of glory meant to describe the attributes of the One Who is to come in such veiled and enigmatic terms as to elude the understanding of the people of error. (Gems of Divine Mysteries, Par. 74)
www.bahai.org/r/704821816 [Note: "veiled and enigmatic terms" = "figurative" discourse.]

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 3: If figurative, then symbolic: **Bahá'u'lláh's Symbolic Interpretation / 1**

Now, when He saith: "His eyes were as a flame of fire", He alludeth but to the keenness of sight and acuteness of vision of the Promised One, Who with His eyes burneth away every veil and covering, maketh known the eternal mysteries in the contingent world, and distinguisheth the faces that are obscured with the dust of hell from those that shine with the light of paradise.⁵¹ Were His eyes not made of the blazing fire of God, how could He consume every veil and burn away all that the people possess? How could He behold the signs of God in the Kingdom of His names and in the world of creation? How could He see all things with the all-perceiving eye of God? (Gems of Divine Mysteries, Par. 75) www.bahai.org/r/793479181

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 3: If figurative, then symbolic: Bahá'u'lláh's Symbolic Interpretation / 2

Thus have we conferred upon Him a penetrating vision in this day. Would that ye believe in the verses of God! For, indeed, what fire is fiercer than this flame that shineth in the Sinai of His eyes, whereby He consumeth all that hath veiled the peoples of the world? Immeasurably exalted shall God remain above all that hath been revealed in His unerring Tablets concerning the mysteries of the beginning and the end until that day when the Crier will cry out, the day whereon we shall all return unto Him. (Gems of Divine Mysteries, Par. 75) www.bahai.org/r/793479181

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 3: If figurative, then symbolic: Bahá'u'lláh's Symbolic Interpretation / 3

As to the words "brass-like were His feet", by this is meant His constancy upon hearing the call of God that commandeth Him: "Be thou steadfast as thou hast been bidden."⁵² He shall so persevere in the Cause of God, and evince such firmness in the path of His might, that even if all the powers of earth and heaven were to deny Him, He would not waver in the proclamation of His Cause, nor flee from His command in the promulgation of His Laws. Nay rather, He will stand as firm as the highest mountains and the loftiest peaks. He will remain immovable in His obedience to God and steadfast in revealing His Cause and proclaiming His Word. (Gems of Divine Mysteries, Par. 76)
www.bahai.org/r/500653235

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 3: If figurative, then symbolic: **Bahá'u'lláh's Symbolic Interpretation / 4**

No obstacle will hinder Him, nor will the censure of the froward deter Him or the repudiation of the infidels cause Him to waver. All the hatred, the rejection, the iniquity, and the unbelief that He witnesseth serve but to strengthen His love for God, to augment the yearning of His heart, to heighten the exultation of His soul, and to fill His breast with passionate devotion. Hast thou ever seen in this world brass stronger, or blade sharper, or mountain more unyielding than this? He shall verily stand upon His feet to confront all the inhabitants of the earth, and will fear no one, notwithstanding that which, as thou well knowest, the people are wont to commit. Glory be to God, Who hath established Him and called Him forth! (Gems of Divine Mysteries, Par. 76) www.bahai.org/r/500653235

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 3: If figurative, then symbolic: Bahá'u'lláh's Symbolic Interpretation / 5

And further He saith: "Out of his mouth goeth a two-edged sword." Know thou that since the sword is an instrument that divideth and cleaveth asunder, and since there proceedeth from the mouth of the Prophets and the Chosen Ones of God that which separateth the believer from the infidel and the lover from the beloved, this term hath been so employed, and apart from this dividing and separating no other meaning is intended. Thus, when He Who is the Primal Point and the eternal Sun desireth, by the leave of God, to gather together all creation, to raise them up from the graves of their own selves, and to divide them one from another, He shall pronounce but one verse from Him, and this verse will distinguish truth from error from this day unto the Day of Resurrection. (Gems of Divine Mysteries, Par. 77) www.bahai.org/r/114932955

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 3: If figurative, then symbolic: Bahá'u'lláh's Symbolic Interpretation / 6

What sword is sharper than this heavenly sword, what blade more trenchant than this incorruptible steel that severeth every tie and separateth thereby the believer from the infidel, father from son, brother from sister, and lover from beloved?⁵³ For whoso believeth in that which hath been revealed unto him is a true believer and whoso turneth away is an infidel, and such an irrevocable separation occurreth between them that they will cease to consort and associate with each other in this world. And so it is between father and son, for should the son believe and the father deny, they will be severed and forever dissociated from each other. Nay rather, thou witnesseth how the son slayeth the father and the father the son. Consider in the same light all that We have explained and related unto thee. (Gems of Divine Mysteries, Par. 77) www.bahai.org/r/114932955

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 4: If symbolic, then spiritual and social: Bahá'u'lláh's Spiritual Application

Wert thou to behold all things with the eye of discernment, thou wouldst indeed see that this divine sword doth cleave asunder generations. Would that ye could understand it! All this is by virtue of the word of separation that is manifested on the Day of Judgement and Separation, were the people to take heed in the days of their Lord. Nay, couldst thou but sharpen thy sight and refine thy heart, thou wouldst witness that all the material swords which in every day and age have slain the infidels and waged war against the impious proceed from this divine and invisible sword. Open then thine eyes, that thou mayest behold all that We have revealed to thee and attain unto that which none other hath attained. (Gems of Divine Mysteries, Par. 78) www.bahai.org/r/194627773

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 4: Bahá'u'lláh's Spiritual Application / 2

Yea, inasmuch as these people have failed to acquire true knowledge from its source and wellspring, and from the ocean of fresh and soft-flowing waters that stream, by the leave of God, through hearts that are pure and stainless, they have been veiled from that which God hath intended by those words and allusions and have remained confined within the prison of their own selves. (Gems of Divine Mysteries, Par. 79)

www.bahai.org/r/537880164

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 4: Bahá'u'lláh's Spiritual Application / 3

We render thanks unto God for that which He hath bestowed upon us of His grace. He it is Who hath caused us to be assured of the truth of His Faith—a Faith which the combined forces of earth and heaven are powerless to resist. He it is Who hath enabled us to acknowledge Him in the day of His presence, to testify unto Him Whom God shall make manifest in the latter Resurrection, and to be among them that have believed in Him ere His appearance, that His favour may be made complete unto us and unto all mankind. (Gems of Divine Mysteries, Par. 80) www.bahai.org/r/707569608

Bahá'u'lláh

Four Steps: Example 2 ([Link](#))

Identifying Figurative Language to Interpret Prophecies

Identifying Figurative Language to Interpret Prophecies / 1

- ❖ Understanding prophecy requires a good grasp of figures of speech.
- ❖ The figurative, symbolic language used in prophecy employs five basic figures of speech (there are many), which we'll review below, and then see how they appear in biblical prophecy, and how the Baha'i teachings interpret them.
- ❖ These five figures are:
 - ❖ 1. Simile (a resemblance).
 - ❖ 2. Metaphor (a representation).
 - ❖ 3. Parable (a fable or an extended simile).
 - ❖ 4. Allegory (an extended metaphor or story).
 - ❖ 5. Symbol (a material thing that stands for a spiritual truth).

Identifying Figurative Language to Interpret Prophecies / 2

- ❖ Let's review the four steps to "Four Steps for Figuring Out Prophecy:"
 - ❖ Step 1: Exclude literal meaning.
 - ❖ Step 2: Identify figures of speech.
 - ❖ Step 3: Ascertain qualities represented.
 - ❖ Step 4: Apply to spiritual events.
 - ❖ Using this approach, here's how Baha'u'llah has interpreted Revelations 19:11–15:
- ❖ Step 1: "How could these words be literally interpreted?"
 - ❖ Step 2: "Meditate then upon the... veiled allusions and hidden symbols; ... discover its hidden mysteries."
 - ❖ Step 3: "Describe the attributes of the One Who is to come."
 - ❖ Step 4. Recognize "the Promised One" – Baha'u'llah.

Four Steps: Example 3 ([Link](#))

Decoding Prophetic Code: One Baha'i Example

Decoding Prophetic Code: One Baha'i Example / 1

- ❖ In Parts 1 and 2, we offered this simple method for "Four Steps for Figuring Out Prophecy":
- ❖ **Step 1: If impossible, then not literal.**
Why is the literal reading not possible here?
(Appeal to absurdity.)
- ❖ **Step 2: If not literal, then figurative.**
What is the comparison or analogy expressed here?
(Show what's being compared.)
- ❖ **Step 3: If figurative, then symbolic.**
What qualities does this symbol represent?
(List key attributes suggested by this symbol.)
- ❖ **Step 4: If symbolic, then spiritual and social.**
Who (or what) represents those qualities?
(Apply to historical person(s) and/or event(s).)

Bahá'u'lláh's Presents a Prophecy for Interpretation

And now, comprehend the meaning of this verse:

"The whole earth shall on the Resurrection Day be but His handful, and in His right hand shall the heavens be folded together. Praise be to Him! and high be He uplifted above the partners they join with him!"³²

³² Qur'án 39:67. (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 51) www.bahai.org/r/376614958

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 1: If impossible, then not literal: **Bahá'u'lláh's Impossibility Argument**

And now, be fair in thy judgment. Were this verse to have the meaning which men suppose it to have, of what profit, one may ask, could it be to man? Moreover, it is evident and manifest that no such hand as could be seen by human eye could accomplish such deeds, or could possibly be ascribed to the exalted Essence of the one true God. Nay, to acknowledge such a thing is naught but sheer blasphemy, an utter perversion of the truth. And should it be supposed that by this verse are meant the Manifestations of God, Who will be called upon, on the Day of Judgment, to perform such deeds, this too seemeth far from the truth, and is surely of no profit. (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 51) www.bahai.org/r/376614958

Bahá'u'lláh



Moreover, it is evident and manifest that no such hand as could be seen by human eye could accomplish such deeds . . .

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 2: If not literal, then figurative: Bahá'u'lláh's Figuration Explanation

Know verily that the purpose underlying all these symbolic terms and abstruse allusions, which emanate from the Revealers of God's holy Cause, hath been to test and prove the peoples of the world; that thereby the earth of the pure and illuminated hearts may be known from the perishable and barren soil. From time immemorial such hath been the way of God amidst His creatures, and to this testify the records of the sacred books. (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 53) www.bahai.org/r/031334544

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 3: If figurative, then symbolic: Bahá'u'lláh's Symbolic Interpretation / 1

On the contrary, by the term "earth" is meant the earth of understanding and knowledge, and by "heavens" the heavens of divine Revelation. Reflect thou, how, in one hand, He hath, by His mighty grasp, turned the earth of knowledge and understanding, previously unfolded, into a mere handful, and, on the other, spread out a new and highly exalted earth in the hearts of men, thus causing the freshest and loveliest blossoms, and the mightiest and loftiest trees to spring forth from the illumined bosom of man. (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 51) www.bahai.org/r/376614958

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 4: If symbolic, then spiritual and social: **Bahá'u'lláh's Spiritual Application**

In like manner, reflect how the elevated heavens of the Dispensations of the past have, in the right hand of power, been folded together, how the heavens of divine Revelation have been raised by the command of God, and been adorned by the sun, the moon, and stars of His wondrous commandments. Such are the mysteries of the Word of God, which have been unveiled and made manifest, that haply thou mayest apprehend the morning light of divine guidance, mayest quench, by the power of reliance and renunciation, the lamp of idle fancy, of vain imaginings, of hesitation, and doubt, and mayest kindle, in the inmost chamber of thine heart, the newborn light of divine knowledge and certitude. (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 52) www.bahai.org/r/416370668

Bahá'u'lláh

Four Steps: Example 4 ([Link](#))

Understanding the Prophecy of the Sun, Moon & Stars

Understanding the Prophecy of the Sun, Moon & Stars / 1

- ❖ Step 1: If impossible, then not literal.
- ❖ *Why is the literal reading not possible here?*
- ❖ (Appeal to absurdity.)
- ❖ Step 2: If not literal, then figurative.
- ❖ *What is the comparison or analogy expressed here?*
- ❖ (Show what's being compared.)
- ❖ Step 3: If figurative, then symbolic.
- ❖ *What qualities does this symbol represent?*
- ❖ (List key attributes suggested by this symbol.)
- ❖ Step 4: If symbolic, then spiritual and social.
- ❖ *Who (or what) represents those qualities?*
- ❖ (Apply to historical person(s) and/or event(s).)

Bahá'u'lláh's Presents a Prophecy for Interpretation

These are the melodies, sung by Jesus, Son of Mary, in accents of majestic power in the Ridván of the Gospel, revealing those signs that must needs herald the advent of the Manifestation after Him. In the first Gospel according to Matthew it is recorded: And when they asked Jesus concerning the signs of His coming, He said unto them: "Immediately after the oppression¹⁹ of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the earth shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet."²⁰ (²⁰ Matthew 24:29-31) (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 24) www.bahai.org/r/663902635

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 1: If impossible, then not literal: Bahá'u'lláh's Impossibility Argument / 1

Inasmuch as the Christian divines have failed to apprehend the meaning of these words, and did not recognize their object and purpose, and have clung to the literal interpretation of the words of Jesus, they therefore became deprived of the streaming grace of the Muḥammadan Revelation and its showering bounties. The ignorant among the Christian community, following the example of the leaders of their faith, were likewise prevented from beholding the beauty of the King of glory, inasmuch as those signs which were to accompany the dawn of the sun of the Muḥammadan Dispensation did not actually come to pass. (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 25)
www.bahai.org/r/492012484

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 1: If impossible, then not literal: Bahá'u'lláh's Impossibility Argument / 2

Thus, ages have passed and centuries rolled away, and that most pure Spirit hath repaired unto the retreats of its ancient sovereignty. Once more hath the eternal Spirit breathed into the mystic trumpet, and caused the dead to speed out of their sepulchers of heedlessness and error unto the realm of guidance and grace. And yet, that expectant community still crieth out: When shall these things be? When shall the promised One, the object of our expectation, be made manifest, that we may arise for the triumph of His Cause, that we may sacrifice our substance for His sake, that we may offer up our lives in His path? (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 25) www.bahai.org/r/492012484

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 1: If impossible, then not literal: Bahá'u'lláh's Impossibility Argument / 3

As the adherents of Jesus have never understood the hidden meaning of these words, and as the signs which they and the leaders of their Faith have expected have failed to appear, they therefore refused to acknowledge, even until now, the truth of those Manifestations of Holiness that have since the days of Jesus been made manifest. They have thus deprived themselves of the outpourings of God's holy grace, and of the wonders of His divine utterance. Such is their low estate in this, the Day of Resurrection! (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 88) www.bahai.org/r/919271780

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 1: If impossible, then not literal: Bahá'u'lláh's Impossibility Argument / 4

Judge fairly: Were the prophecies recorded in the Gospel to be literally fulfilled; were Jesus, Son of Mary, accompanied by angels, to descend from the visible heaven upon the clouds; who would dare to disbelieve, who would dare to reject the truth, and wax disdainful? Nay, such consternation would immediately seize all the dwellers of the earth that no soul would feel able to utter a word, much less to reject or accept the truth. (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 88) www.bahai.org/r/919271780

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 2: If not literal, then figurative: Bahá'u'lláh's Figuration Explanation

It is evident and manifest unto every discerning observer that even as the light of the star fadeth before the effulgent splendor of the sun, so doth the luminary of earthly knowledge, of wisdom, and understanding vanish into nothingness when brought face to face with the resplendent glories of the Sun of Truth, the Daystar of divine enlightenment. That the term "sun" hath been applied to the leaders of religion is due to their lofty position, their fame, and renown. Such are the universally recognized divines of every age, who speak with authority, and whose fame is securely established. If they be in the likeness of the Sun of Truth, they will surely be accounted as the most exalted of all luminaries; otherwise, they are to be recognized as the focal centers of hellish fire. (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 36) www.bahai.org/r/461291652 a

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 3: If figurative, then symbolic: Bahá'u'lláh's Symbolic Interpretation

This is the purpose underlying the symbolic words of the Manifestations of God. Consequently, the application of the terms "sun" and "moon" to the things already mentioned hath been demonstrated and justified by the text of the sacred verses and the recorded traditions. Hence, it is clear and manifest that by the words "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven" is intended the waywardness of the divines, and the annulment of laws firmly established by divine Revelation, all of which, in symbolic language, have been foreshadowed by the Manifestation of God. (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 41)
www.bahai.org/r/112835646

Bahá'u'lláh

Step 4: If symbolic, then spiritual and social: Bahá'u'lláh's Spiritual Application

Great God! When the stream of utterance reached this stage, We beheld, and lo! the sweet savors of God were being wafted from the dayspring of Revelation, and the morning breeze was blowing out of the Sheba of the Eternal. ... Upon the anemones of the garden of love It bestoweth the mysteries of truth, and within the breasts of lovers It entrusteth the symbols of the innermost subtleties. At this hour, so liberal is the outpouring of Its grace that the holy Spirit itself is envious! ... It hath quickened the dead with the breath of life, and caused them to speed out of the sepulchers of their mortal bodies. (The Kitáb-i-Íqán, Par. 64) www.bahai.org/r/628931238

Bahá'u'lláh

Four Steps: Example 5 ([Link](#))

The Seal of the Prophets: Meeting God on the Last Day

The Seal of the Prophets on the Last Day / 1

- ❖ Probably most every Muslim (there are an estimated 2 billion Muslims in the world today) would agree that the Prophet Muhammad is the "Seal of the Prophets."
- ❖ This comes from a very important verse in the Qur'an: 33:40. Many regard this verse as the single most important verse in the Qur'an, doctrinally speaking.
- ❖ With the possible exception of the Ahmadiyya (a new religious movement primarily centered in Pakistan), this means that Muslims consider Muhammad the last prophet. Period. Case closed. End of discussion.
- ❖ Baha'is agree. **Baha'u'llah, in fact, honors Muhammad in the following way, which goes somewhat above and beyond Qur'an 33:40:**
- ❖ Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! I beseech Thee by Thy Chosen Ones, and by the Bearers of Thy Trust, **and by Him Whom Thou hast ordained to be the Seal of Thy Prophets and of Thy Messengers**, to let Thy remembrance be my companion, and Thy love my aim, and Thy face my goal, and Thy name my lamp, and Thy wish my desire, and Thy pleasure my delight.
– Baha'u'llah, *Baha'i Prayers*, p. 74.

The Seal of the Prophets on the Last Day / 2

- ❖ Even though prophets prophesy, their prophecies are not always clear, and often require interpretation.
- ❖ The first choice in interpreting any prophecy means asking this fundamental question: "Is this prophecy literal or figurative?"
- ❖ So let's take the very first prophecy after Qur'an 33:40. This occurs just four verses later at Qur'an 33:44:
- ❖ **On the day when they will be brought into the presence of their Lord, their greeting to each other will be, "Peace be with you." God has prepared an honorable reward for them.** – Qur'an 33:44, translated by Muhammad Sarwar.
- ❖ Here's another translation of the very same verse:
 - ❖ **Their greeting, on the day when they shall meet Him, will be 'Peace!' And He has prepared for them a generous wage.** – Qur'an 33:44, translated by A.J. Arberry.
 - ❖ Arberry's translation ("meet Him") is literal.
 - ❖ Sardar's translation ("brought into the presence of their Lord") is figurative.
 - ❖ This is more in line with the Baha'i understanding.

The Seal of the Prophets on the Last Day / 3

- ❖ Now let's use our four-step key to understanding prophecy:
- ❖ **Step 1: If impossible, then not literal.** Why is the literal reading not possible here? Here's why: Because it is impossible to meet God directly, face-to-face.
- ❖ The Qur'an itself says so: "No mortal eyes can see Him, but He can see all eyes. He is All-kind and All-aware." – Q. 6:103, translated by Muhammad Sarwar.
- ❖ **Step 2: If not literal, then figurative.** What is the comparison or analogy expressed here? What compares to "meeting God"?
- ❖ Let's agree on this: To "meet God" is literal. That's impossible. What is possible is to be "brought into the presence of their Lord," as Sarwar translates.

The Seal of the Prophets on the Last Day / 4

- ❖ **Step 3: If figurative, then symbolic. What qualities does this symbol represent?** What does "meet God" symbolize?
- ❖ Whatever "presence of their Lord" means, it is surely an event in which the will of God is clearly communicated and made known.
- ❖ If we cannot meet God directly, then the next best thing is meeting God's ambassador, God's messenger, or what Baha'is call the "Manifestation of God," who expresses "God" in nature, but not in essence.
- ❖ **Step 4: If symbolic, then spiritual and social.** Who (or what) represents those qualities?
- ❖ According to the Baha'i teachings, when God sends humanity a messenger, that messenger comes from the presence of God and therefore represents God.
- ❖ Whoever has the bounty and blessings of meeting the messenger of God, in a figurative and symbolic way of understanding, has succeeded in "meeting God" by being "brought into the presence of their Lord."
- ❖ Think of the "presence of God" as divine charisma, an aura of holiness, the nimbus of the sacred, the halo effect.

Three Steps for Figuring Out Prophecy: Five Examples

- ❖ 1. **Part 19:** Prophecy, Secret Codes, and the Harmony of Science and Religion ([Link A](#))
- ❖ 2. **Part 39:** Baha'u'llah and Isaiah's Triple Prophecy ([Link B](#))
- ❖ 3. **Part 51:** The Book of Revelation, Chapter 20: A Baha'i Interpretation ([Link C](#)) [Steps 1 & 3]
- ❖ 4. **Part 53:** Christ's New Name and the New Jerusalem ([Link D](#))
- ❖ 5. **Part 54:** Christ's New Name: The Glory of God ([Link E](#)) [Steps 2 & 3]

Shoghi Effendi ([Link](#))

“Scientific in its Method”

“The Revelation proclaimed by Bahá’u’lláh . . . is . . . scientific in its method”

- ❖ The very first sentence of Shoghi Effendi’s June 1933 letter to the High Commissioner for Palestine (Sir Arthur Grenfell Wauchope) is this:
- ❖ “The Revelation proclaimed by Bahá’u’lláh, His followers believe, is divine in origin, all-embracing in scope, broad in its outlook, **scientific in its method**, humanitarian in its principles and dynamic in the influence it exerts on the hearts and minds of men.”
- ❖ Here, “scientific in its method” probably refers to the well-known Bahá’í principle of the “**harmony of science and religion**,” which, when expressed as a “dynamic Bahá’í principle” (applied in action) can be rephrased as: “Religion respects science.”
- ❖ This principle reinforces the age-old ideal of the harmony of “**faith and reason.**”

Three Steps: Example A ([Link](#))

Prophecy, Secret Codes, and the Harmony of Science and Religion

Prophecy, Secret Codes, and the Harmony of Science and Religion / 1

- ❖ Throughout history, prophecies have typically been interpreted through the use of "**presentism**," which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as follows: "A bias towards the present or present-day attitudes, esp. in the interpretation of history."
- ❖ We can apply this mode of interpretation to prophecy as follows: "A bias towards the present or present-day attitudes, esp. in the interpretation of prophecy."
- ❖ **Presentism, generally speaking, interprets prophecies in terms of current or recent events.**
- ❖ So what do the Baha'i teachings have to offer in terms of understanding and interpreting prophecies?
- ❖ Here, it may be useful to invoke the important Baha'i principle of the "**harmony of science and religion**."
- ❖ What does science have to do with religion when it comes to religious texts? Well, it turns out that the "science" of the academic study of religion provides some very useful insights into the nature of prophecy.
- ❖ The study of religion, strictly speaking, is not a science in the widely understood use of the term. But an important German term for the academic study of religion is *Religionswissenschaft* ("science of religion").
- ❖ In brief, Baha'is may understand prophecies on at least three levels: (1) historical-contemporary interpretation; (2) the history of interpretation; and (3) Baha'i interpretation.
- ❖ All three may happily co-exist.

Prophecy, Secret Codes, and the Harmony of Science and Religion / 2

- ❖ An important German term for the academic study of religion is *Religionswissenschaft* ("science of religion"). In brief, Baha'is may understand prophecies on at least three levels: (1) **historical-contemporary interpretation**; (2) **the history of interpretation**; and (3) **Baha'i interpretation**. All three may happily co-exist.
- ❖ Example: In the Quran, the Sūra of Yā Sīn tells a story that is often referred to as the "Parable of the City." (See Quran 36:13–29.)
- ❖ Abdu'l-Baha interprets this parable historically, by referring to an episode in Antioch in early Christian history. (See: [Peter in Antioch—the Wisdom of the First Christians](#).)
- ❖ Baha'u'llah interprets the very same passage prophetically, where the three "envoys" are interpreted as the Bab, Quddus, and Baha'u'llah. (See: [The Cradle of Christianity—and Islam](#))
- ❖ Abdu'l-Baha's interpretation is historical in nature. It more or less is consistent with what scholars refer to as the "preterist" or "contemporary-historical" (German: *zeitgeschichtlich*) interpretation, which most scholars today consider to be the essential starting-point in understanding the Book of Revelation, or other apocalypses.
- ❖ Thus the principle of the harmony of science and religion allows for both "contemporary-historical" and "prophetic" interpretations of prophecy. The "contemporary-historical" method can, more or less, be considered a "scientific" approach, while the latter "prophetic" mode relates to prophetic truth-claims, which are a matter of faith.
- ❖ Generally speaking, the Baha'i teachings say that scriptural interpretation should conform to "science and reason:"

Three Steps: Example B ([Link](#))

Baha'u'llah and Isaiah's Triple Prophecy



This is the Father foretold by Isaiah, and the Comforter concerning Whom the Spirit had covenanted with you. Open your eyes, O concourse of bishops, that ye may behold your Lord seated upon the Throne of might and glory.

<https://reference.bahai.org/en/t/b/SLH/slh-5.html>
(cf. www.bahai.org/r/844484189)

Bahá'u'lláh

Baha'u'llah and Isaiah's Triple Prophecy / 1

- ❖ Isaiah 9:6 is one of the most famous prophecies of all time. Called the "Yuletide prophecy," **Christians universally acclaim it as heralding the advent of Jesus Christ.**
- ❖ **Baha'u'llah proclaimed his fulfillment of the same prophecy when He wrote: "This is the Father foretold by Isaiah."** – The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 63.
- ❖ **Jewish interpreters understand Isaiah 9:6 (9:5 in the Hebrew Bible) to refer to Hezekiah (or to God).**
- ❖ Of these three interpretations of Isaiah 9:6—Christian, Baha'i, and Jewish—which one is correct?
- ❖ How can three different, apparently contradictory interpretations of Isaiah 9:6 be true? How can they be harmonized? This answer may surprise you: All three!
- ❖ In brief, Baha'is may understand prophecies on at least three levels:
 - ❖ **(1) historical-contemporary interpretation;**
 - ❖ **(2) the history of interpretation; and**
 - ❖ **(3) Baha'i interpretation.**
- ❖ All three may happily co-exist.



O thou, my spiritual philosopher, . . . It is likewise my hope that in the future the East and the West may become conscious that thou wert a divine philosopher and a herald to the Kingdom.

— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablet to T.K. Cheyne.

Qtd. in Cheyne, The Reconciliation of Races and Religions.
Kindle Edition.

Thomas Kelly Cheyne (1841–1915)

Baha'u'llah and Isaiah's Triple Prophecy / 2

- ❖ Among his other publications on Isaiah and other Old Testament prophets, Professor Cheyne published two major commentaries on Isaiah: (1) *The Book of Isaiah Chronologically Arranged* (1870); and (2) *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, in two volumes (1884).
- ❖ In Cheyne's estimation, Isaiah was "the most gifted and powerful of those early prophets who are known to us by written records."
- ❖ Professor Cheyne translated Isaiah 9:6 as follows:
 - ❖ For a child is born unto us, a son is given unto us, and the government resteth upon his back, and his name is called, Wonder-Counsellor, God-Mighty-one, Everlasting-Father, Prince of Peace; increased is the government and to peace there is no end.
 - ❖ – Isaiah 9:6, translated by the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M.A., *The Prophecies of Isaiah: A New Translation with Commentary and Appendices*, pp. 60–62.

Baha'u'llah and Isaiah's Triple Prophecy / 3

- ❖ So how can all three interpretations be valid at one and the same time? Can they be believed all at once?
- ❖ Enter Thomas Kelly Cheyne, who "was the most eminent western academic to become a Baha'i during Abdu'l-Baha's ministry," according to Joanna Hawke, who wrote the biographical article on "Cheyne, Thomas Kelly (1841–1915), biblical scholar" published by the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).
- ❖ Professor Cheyne was alive to the fact that Isaiah 9:6 can be said to have been fulfilled successively in history.
- ❖ Thus the "Yuletide prophecy" may be considered a "triple prophecy" in successively, and expansively, referring to:
 - ❖ (1) Hezekiah;
 - ❖ (2) Jesus Christ; and
 - ❖ (3) Baha'u'llah.

Three Steps: Example C ([Link](#))

The Book of Revelation, Chapter 20: A Baha'i Interpretation

The Book of Revelation, Chapter 20: A Baha'i Interpretation / 1

- ❖ In the Book of Revelation, the "dragon" appears time and again, becoming central to the cosmic "combat myth" depicted throughout.
- ❖ The dragon is a powerful (and, in the Christian context, imperial) antagonist, who wages an eschatological war against the righteous and faithful servants of God. ...
- ❖ [I]t is important to bear in mind that the Book of Revelation was written to seven churches in Asia minor, and had a contemporary message for Christians at that time, who were experiencing relentless religious persecution by the Roman authorities.
- ❖ Revelation's basic message is that persecuted Christians, if they remain faithful and endure these trials and tribulations, will experience ultimate victory in the Day of Resurrection.

The Book of Revelation, Chapter 20: A Baha'i Interpretation / 2

- ❖ A Baha'i interpretation of the Book of Revelation, after acknowledging the existence of a previous, and immediate, historical-contemporary context, can then apply the prophetic patterns in the Book of Revelation to a present-day context.
- ❖ In this sense, the Book of Revelation is reenacted (and re-fulfilled) without doing violence to the original meaning of the text. For Baha'is, the Bab and Baha'u'llah represent a messianic duo who inaugurate a new religious dispensation.

The Book of Revelation, Chapter 20: A Baha'i Interpretation / 3

- ❖ David L. Barr (Professor of Religion, Wright State University) writes: "A common and helpful metaphor to guide interpretation of a text is to reflect on the three worlds implicit in every text. There is the world within the text, the world behind the text, and the world in front of the text."
- ❖ "[1] Of course the one most apparent to us is the world contained within the text—a world of ... Lambs and dragons, beautiful women and beasts, heavenly messengers and human observers. ... So there is a dragon in the text, but there were no dragons in the world of the audience."
- ❖ "[2] To understand the dragon in the text, we need to explore the world behind the text, the historical and social world that generated these images, characters, and actions." ...
- ❖ "[3] Now without question, this world in front of the text can distort our reading." ...

The Book of Revelation, Chapter 20: A Baha'i Interpretation / 4

- ❖ "We have a whole series of best-selling novels called the '*Left Behind*' series, imagining what will happen on earth after the 'Rapture'."
- ❖ "This apparently makes good sense to people even though *Revelation* makes no mention of any rapture, and in fact the notion was invented only in the nineteenth century."
- ❖ "But because it has become such a part of our world in front of the text, people see it in the text."
- ❖ "In the same way, most of my students are so immersed in readings like Hal Lindsay's *The Late Great Planet Earth* that they think that that is what the story says. But of course it is not."
- ❖ "While claiming to be a literal reading, *this modern interpretation engages in the most outlandish allegorization of the text*: the Beast is Russia (or China), the Ten Kings are the European Union, Babylon was, according to Lindsey, a code for a 'one world religion'."
- ❖ – David L. Barr, "Beyond Genre: The Expectations of Apocalypse," in *The Reality of Apocalypse: Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation*, pp. 71–73.

The Book of Revelation, Chapter 20: A Baha'i Interpretation / 5

- ❖ A Baha'i interpretation of the Book of Revelation, after acknowledging the existence of a previous, and immediate, historical-contemporary context, can then apply the prophetic patterns in the Book of Revelation to a present-day context.
- ❖ In this sense, the Book of Revelation is reenacted (and re-fulfilled) without doing violence to the original meaning of the text.
- ❖ For Baha'is, the Bab and Baha'u'llah represent a messianic duo who inaugurate a new religious dispensation.
- ❖ As in early Christianity, the early days of the Babi and Baha'i religions were marked by intense religious persecution as well. Some 20,000 followers of the Bab were martyred. Many early Baha'is sacrificed their lives in the face of relentless persecution. This time around, it was Persia, not Rome, which was the state-sponsor of these persecutions—aided and abetted by the Muslim clergy in Persia at that time. In that sense, Persia became the new Rome.

Three Steps: Example D ([Link](#))

Christ's New Name and the New Jerusalem

Christ's New Name and the New Jerusalem / 1

- ❖ The study of religion, strictly speaking, is not a science in the widely understood use of the term, but an important German term for the academic study of religion is *Religionswissenschaft*, or "science of religion." ...
- ❖ [W]e'll use a three-step methodology for figuring out this prophecy:
 - ❖ 1. how the original audience may have understood the original author's intent; followed by
 - 2. a sense of how the same prophetic text has been interpreted in subsequent centuries; and, finally
 - 3. how the very same text may be understood and applied to the present-day context, especially in regard to the Baha'i teachings.

Christ's New Name and the New Jerusalem / 2

- ❖ "Just as the Gospels were composed with a view to the Passion and Resurrection and progress carefully toward that goal, so also the Revelation of John was constructed with the heavenly Jerusalem in mind and unfolds inexorably toward this culmination."
- ❖ "The vision of the city of God [the New Jerusalem] is the longest and most elaborate vision of the book."
- ❖ "Every item was anticipated by the author, no detail is superfluous, each image is laden with meaning."
- ❖ – William W. Reader, "The Twelve Jewels of Revelation 21:19–20: Tradition History and Modern Interpretations," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, September, 1981, p. 433.

Christ's New Name and the New Jerusalem / 3

- ❖ "Symbolic language fills the Book of Revelation as it fills other apocalyptic literature. We may therefore presume that the description of the New Jerusalem in Rev 21:1–22:5 deals in symbolism. Our presumption is rewarded when we read of the city's coming down out of heaven, stretching out and up to unheard-of dimensions, having gates that each consist of a single pearl, with gold that can be seen through, and so on. Such language invites symbolic interpretation, whatever the nature, concrete or abstract, of the reality so described. But the New Jerusalem is a very large symbol." ...
- ❖ "And just as the city is God's tabernacle, he and the Lamb are the temple of the city (21:22). Ordinarily, God dwells in the temple and the temple is located in the city. Here, he and the Lamb are the temple, so that the city, since it is the cubically shaped Holy of holies, is located in the temple – a striking reversal which means that the saints will dwell in God and the Lamb just as God and the Lamb will dwell in them."
- ❖ – Robert H. Gundry, "**The New Jerusalem: People as Place, Not Place for People**," *Novum Testamentum*, July, 1987, pp. 254, 256.

Three Steps: Example E ([Link](#))

Christ's New Name: The Glory of God

Christ's New Name: The Glory of God / 1

- ❖ In the previous article in this series, relying on the primary Baha'i principle of the harmony of science and religion, I proposed a threefold approach to the interpretation of any given prophetic text, beginning with the "historical-contemporary" approach, which concerns what the original author intended, and what the audience understood at or around particular time that the Book of Revelation was written.
- ❖ The next step involves looking at the history of subsequent interpretations of the very same text.
- ❖ The third and final step invokes "presentism" to see if this same text has any meaningful application today, especially from a symbolic Baha'i point of view.
- ❖ Historically, many subsequent interpretations of the "New Jerusalem" abound. Here are a couple of examples of those interpretations, both included in my 2015 book *God & Apple Pie*.

Christ's New Name: The Glory of God / 2

- ❖ The first example comes from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, popularly known as the Mormons:
- ❖ The Book of Mormon describes America as "the land of promise" for a Jewish remnant, who would traverse "across the great deep into the promised land":
- ❖ And behold, this people [Jewish remnant = Nephites/Lamanites] will I establish in this land [America], unto the fulfilling of the covenant which I made with your father Jacob; and it shall be a New Jerusalem. And the powers of heaven shall be in the midst of this people; yea, even I [Jesus Christ] will be in the midst of you.
- ❖ America would also be home to "Gentiles" who "were white, and exceedingly fair and beautiful." Together, the Jews and Gentiles of America will work together to build the New Jerusalem:
- ❖ "And then shall they [Gentiles = Euro-Americans] shall assist my people [remnant of Jacob = Lamanites = Native Americans] that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem." – p. 166.

Christ's New Name: The Glory of God / 3

- ❖ In stark contrast, the Baha'i vision of the New Jerusalem looks exactly the opposite: cosmopolitan, egalitarian, universal, equalitarian, and utopian, characterized by the unity of races, religions and nations:
- ❖ ... in this age of splendours, teachings once limited to the few are made available to all, that the mercy of the Lord may embrace both east and west, that the oneness of the world of humanity may appear in its full beauty, and that the dazzling rays of reality may flood the realm of the mind with light.
- ❖ The descent of the New Jerusalem denoteth a heavenly Law, that Law which is the guarantor of human happiness and the effulgence of the world of God. – Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha*, p. 59.
- ❖ Baha'u'llah directly quoted Revelation 21:22–23 in this passage – which actually contains Baha'u'llah's title, "the Glory of God:"
- ❖ This day the City of God hath appeared and can be witnessed in perfect adornment. This is the City in which the God of all peoples hath appeared. Ponder these words of John, who announced the great and sacred City and said: "And I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light of it."
- ❖ – Baha'u'llah, provisional translation, quoted in "The Eschatology of Globalization: Baha'u'llah's Multiple-Messiahship Revisited," *Studies in Modern Religions, Religious Movements and the Babi-Baha'i Faiths*, p. 150.

THANKS FOR YOUR INTEREST!

QUESTIONS?