

Dispensationalism — Non-Symbolic Numbers

For instance none of these are symbolic numbers:

Genesis 20:16 NASB

To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, it is your vindication before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared."

Exodus 32:28 NASB

So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

Numbers 31:4 NASB

A thousand from each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to the war."

Joshua 7:3 NASB

They returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up; only about two or three thousand men need go up to Ai; do not make all the people toil up there, for they are few."

Judges 3:29 NASB

They struck down at that time about ten thousand Moabites, all robust and valiant men; and no one escaped.

1 Samuel 4:2 NASB

The Philistines drew up in battle array to meet Israel. When the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield.

1 Kings 3:4 NASB

The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place; Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

Ezekiel 47:3 NASB

When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water reaching the ankles.

Matthew 14:21 NASB

There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children.

Revelation 5:11 NASB

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

Revelation 7:4-8 NASB

And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: [5] from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, [6] from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, [7] from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, [8] from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.

Revelation 11:13 NASB

And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Revelation 12:6 NASB

Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Revelation 14:3 NASB

And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

Revelation 20:3-6 NASB

and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. [4] Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. [5] The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. [6] Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

I consistently read the context and try my best through the Spirit and my hermeneutic to harmonize totascriptura. I believe symbolism does exist but when evaluating numbers in passages their normal literal grammatical understanding should be evaluated first. In Rev 20 I see nothing contextually, and/or exegetically to suddenly shift to assuming symbolism.

“All these [prophetic] texts are to my mind plain prophecies of Christ’s second coming and kingdom. All are yet without their accomplishment, and all shall yet be literally and exactly fulfilled. I say “literally and exactly fulfilled,” and I say so advisedly. From the first day that I began to read the Bible with my heart, I have never been able to see these texts, and hundreds like them, in any other light. It always seemed to me that as we take literally the text foretelling that the walls of Babylon shall be cast down, so we ought to take literally the text foretelling that the walls of Zion shall be built up—that as according to prophecy the Jews were literally scattered, so according to prophecy the Jews will be literally gathered—and that as the least and minutest predictions were made good on the subject of our Lord’s coming to suffer, so the minutest predictions shall be made good which describe our Lord’s coming to reign.”

—— J.C. Ryle, *Wheat or Chaff?* (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1853), 85.