

Scriptural Principles for Interpreting Prophecy

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 2 Pet.1.20

Unlike Berkhof's work on Hermeneutics, John Wilmot's examination of the 'Inspired Principles of Prophetic Interpretation', does not set a foundation stone. He examines inherent inconsistencies and flaws in dispensational and millennial thinking, many of which we agree with. He lays down broad principles of scriptural teaching, with which we broadly concur. However where are the basic scriptural axioms and tests of true prophetic interpretation? Where scripture specifically authorises spiritualisation and allegorisation, he asserts that as a mandate for understanding those passages (ch.2, p.7-25 & ch.24, p.268-290), and all Bible lovers will affirm this, but by what *scriptural* basis is the distinction between a literal fulfilment or a spiritualised one in others clarified? On this, he is weak.

In effect, he is laying out a corpus of teachings, received from earlier teachers, itself prone to the same criticism. It is well to critique novelty and innovators, but by what plumbline shall we measure them?

The use of scripture in interpreting scripture is primary. The scripture mandates this, for what says the scripture? Hallowed traditions can easily lead to us neglecting God's will Mt.15.2-6. With false interpretative principles we can easily subvert His purpose, Isa.29.13 and God will humble us, if we do, v.14. If the Apostle describes a passage as bearing analogical application, as in Gal.4.24, we must bow to this in other parallel texts. If a singular precision and literality is drawn from what seems to us at first a more general, historical reference, like Matthew's use of Hosea 11.1, in 2.15, we must similarly identify and yield to the ruling precedent. We too must take great care of our own deceitfulness, Jer.42.20, embracing His will not our own.

For example, in the early general assertion that first the natural, then the spiritual is the Divine order, ch.3, p.17, in which he concludes that 'the farthest from the literal is the best' (p.25), he goes beyond what is wise. It is a docetic precept to claim Christ's nativity, death and resurrection was symbolic of something more spiritual, more glorious and without doubt brother Wilmot would heartily concur with their refutation, but Barth's teaching also fulfils his maxim. Nor is the prior always less spiritual, the first distinctive revelation of the Covenant of Grace was 430 years before Sinai, Gal.3.17, is it then more natural, less celestial for that? Has God then 'walked backward'? Forbid the thought! He has taken Paul's specific reference to the two Adams and using the obsolescence of the works covenant, applied it more generally to God's purposes. Yes, the temporary law covenant, at first unmediated, Ex.20.18-19, then faultily mediated by sinful Levi, Deut.9.20; 18.15-18; 32.51, is now enshrined and sanctified in the New, by grace alone, through faith alone, fulfilled, sealed and mediated by our glorious Messiah alone, it is in every respect more glorious. However does that mean that the literal aspects of the very focus of the Covenant with Abraham, namely the land, not his Seed, Gen.15.7-8, are then obsolete, being carnal? This is quite unwarranted by the text and is categorically refuted, as our brother himself indicates in Psalm 105.8-10 and 1 Chr.16.14-18, in addressing carnal notions of a literal millennium (p.289).

I wish to propose some basic axioms for interpreting difficult predictive and other prophetic passages.

1. First, what is declared plainly and explicitly in passages of a literal context, require strong proof to overturn. For example, we know the Temple is superseded, the Lord Jesus explicitly tells us so, Jn.2.19-21. This expected change was the basis of the charge laid falsely against Him, Stephen and Paul, that they would initiate this in their own persons, Mt.26.61;27.40; Acts 6.14;21.8;24.6. The Apostles identify the church as its supercession, 1 Cor.3.16-7;6.19; 2 Cor.6.16; Eph.2.21; 1 Pet.2.5; Rev.3.12. On this basis, we may well expect a reconstructed Temple, predicted in 2 Thess.2.4, Mt.24.15, Mk.13.14, Dan.12.11, itself not only to house the great Abomination, but to represent an abominable repudiation of the Covenant of Grace, as Isaiah describes in chapter 66.2-4. By the church of Christ only, the promise to David of an eternal House is honoured and fulfilled 2 Sam.7.11-12. I have argued [before](#) the Fig Tree miracle, a unique act of Messianic cursing, illustrates this supercession and the cursedness of undoing it, which itself will herald Messiah's return, Mk.11.14; 13.28.

2. **Second**, Divine promises of perpetuity will be fulfilled by something better, not something inferior. John 2.10-11 sets the precedent; the best wine is served after the good. Take for example the priesthood of Levi. It is promised the service of Aaron's and his sons' priesthood will 'be a statute for ever', Ex.27.21, their holy garments before the altar are 'a statute forever' Ex.28.40, their possession of the heave and wave offerings is 'for ever', Ex.29.28. The obligation of the Aaronic priests to wash hands and feet before ministry is 'a statute for ever', Ex.30.19, and the anointing of their priesthood 'shall surely be everlasting', Ex.40.15. Are all of these promises and warnings invalid with the disappearance of the Temple? Are the gifts and calling of God then subject to repentance, contrary to the Apostle's assertion, Rom.11.29? We must remember from Aaron, Eleazar and Phinehas's perspective the prospect of Gentiles substituting for their sons, in however exalted a role, may not seem so glorious a substantiation of God's goodness. Moreover, Jeremiah the Priest explicitly asserts that, the covenant made with the Levites, as well as with David, may not be broken more easily than the covenant of the day and night, Jer.33.21. He also is given to declare the Levites too will be more numerous than the sand of the sea and the hosts of heaven, Jer.33.22. Can this be spiritualised? Will Philemon provoke confidence that 'you will also do more than I say', Phil.21, but the Lord of Hosts apparently make do just with the uncircumcised? Of course not! Barnabas was a Levite, Acts 4.36, Matthew was likely a Levite, Mk.2.14, John seems to have been related to the High Priest's family, Jn.18.15,16, 'a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith' in Messiah, Acts 6.7, and this is just the down payment, Rom.11.15. Are the sevenfold sacrifices they often less fragrant, less sacred, less precious than those offered before, absolutely not, Phil.4.18 by their Great High Priest they endure and ascend to the Highest, Heb.13.15, Rom.12.1. Shall their wine then be marred, that Gentiles too join their joys, wash away the sins of their hands and feet and sanctify their offerings alongside, as Isaiah foresaw, Isa.66.20-21?

3. **Third**, explicit promises are kept, never qualified or evaded. The Messiah's triply asserted promise that this generation (Gk - γενεά genea) 'shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled', Mt.24.34, Mk.13.30, Lk.21.30, what does this mean? It is always conjoined with the assertion, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.' It does not mean a generation in the sense of the age of a man from being begotten to begetting, that is a short 25-30 years. He is referring to the family or stock of Jacob, this is the most simple meaning of the word, deriving from γένος genos. The destructions, chastisements and terrible judgements He had foretold would not quench the light of His father according to the flesh, nor His kinfolk. The time of Jacob's trouble is great, none is like it, but he will be saved from his sin out of it. In this, the Saviour is only reiterating an aspect of the promise to Jacob, given through Jeremiah, 'If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, [then] the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a people before Me for ever. Thus says the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the LORD.' Jer.31.36-7. The word here for people is Goy, from which we get Goyim, the peoples, usually the Gentiles, but here it is applied to the first recipients of the promise, Judah and Israel, v.31. It is of course set against the backdrop of Israel's persistent disobedience and rebellion. Blaise Pascal famously observed this phenomenon before Louis XIV and employed it as his sole, incontrovertible proof of Divine Providence. Sceptical Mark Twain wrote in 1898, 'Other people have sprung up, and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out and they sit in twilight now or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what always he was...All other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?'¹ The only answer is not intrinsic strength or skill, but this repeated Divine promise of kindness and purpose. The people of the Jews has not disappeared or vanished, according to the Saviour's edict.

4. **The fourth principle** requires a little introduction, and given its importance, we will concentrate on this. In the Authorised Version the Hebrew word גוי (Goy) is translated Nation. The derivation of the word, from back or loin, suggests its root is closer to genea (Gk – γενεά), see above. There is overlap, as well as a sharp distinction between a scattered people and a self-governing nation, even if under some degree of foreign subjugation, or even if, as in Kuwait's example in exile or the Free French under De Gaul, during an invasion and occupation. It is the recognition of the restoration of Israel's nationhood that defines Zionism. The key

interpretative principle here is that there is found frequently, though not universally, the operation of multiple time frames and references for fulfilment of the same promise and passage. For example, when Moses sings in Deut.32 of judgement to come, he is looking forward to the Judges, the Monarchy, both combined and separated, the Exile, the Return from Exile, the coming of Messiah, the rejection and acceptance of the Messiah, judgement to follow, to which he has already explicitly referred (Deut.28.68, under Rome), of a final restoration, the means of that restoration (v.21) and with some indication of further final apostasy under Antichrist (v.27-8, Deut.13.1-5;18.20-22). To confine his prophecy to one of these time frames would diminish its wealth, breadth and significance. Similarly, Hendriksen helpfully describes the foothill, double or triple mountain approach to many OT passages². For example, Isa.11 portrays the humility, meekness and lowly origins of Messiah, with a passing reference to Nazareth in the Hebrew for 'branch'. It develops in describing His perception of the heart, His razor-sharp judgement, and His irresistible doctrine. Who can object justly to the description of His smiting the Earth with the rod of His mouth, or slaying the wicked with breath of His mouth as descriptive of the Last Judgement? Paul appears to use the allusion in 2 Thess.2.8 and David of Solomon's prefiguring of Christ in His glorious rule carries similar terminology Ps.72.4, as of course do Ps.110 and Ps.2 among others. Then there is a reference to a state of Paradise in v.6-9, which whilst depicting the diversity and harmlessness of regenerate church, who will object to its completion in the Heavenly state, when alone truly the Earth will be 'filled with the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea', v.9. So in one short prophecy we have at least three to four time frames, with overlap and interpenetration of all, Messiah's earthly ministry, His church's ministry after Ascension, His Judgement at His appearing and the Heavenly state. Many other examples could easily be supplied. It has a corollary, that in the lives of the patriarchs and their seed, the pilgrimage of God's people is filled with reiterations of striking parallels, which often climax in and focus on the Messiah. So Abraham's pre-emption of Exile and Restoration from Egypt during his own life, Joseph's of the Messiah's humiliation and triumphant vindication, are well known and simply illustrate this. This principle operates prospectively and retrospectively, for example with the jewel of Philemon's letter.

So, for an interpreter to insist on just one time frame, for a particular prophecy and force an interpretation on the basis of it aptly fitting that one time frame is asking for trouble. Brother Wilmot repeatedly seeks to do this. For example, p.177, 'the context of the original New Covenant passage, the Redeemer's birth at Bethlehem, exciting enemy action, is the supernatural focus point upon which the expectation is founded, and not His second coming'. He is of course referring to Rachel lamenting her lost ones at Ramah, the slaughter of the innocents by Herod, predicted by Jeremiah in 31.15-16, and cited by Matthew 2.18. But the comfort Jeremiah applies to the distraught in 31.18, refers to the resurrection, which is not imminent. His reference to a restoration from captivity in v.23 is even narrowly understood as of the first captivity a few decades away, the promise of Messiah's covenant decades after the centuries that must elapse before Herod's murders, and however one understands the inviolability of Jerusalem, promised in the last few verses, whether allegorically of the church, of Jerusalem's restoration, or of the eternal state, or perhaps in some sense of all three, this too represents a different time frame, as does the promise we have already examined from v.36-37 of God's faithfulness to His rebellious people, who are yet to repent. So we have perhaps six or even more time frames, hardly solid ground for his assertion that a singular time requires the exclusion of any reference to the Lord's return. Another example must serve only briefly in passing, Matthew alludes to the great light enjoyed in Galilee at Messiah's appearance, in Isaiah 9.1-2, in his prologue to the Lord's ministry Mt.4.15-16. The same passage exalts the Messiah's glorious Names, His preexistence, His Deity, His mysterious Person and His unending and unfolding Kingdom, stretching out from Eternity past into Eternity future. There is clear reference to many different time frames here. There is another too, in v.11, Isaiah draws attention to the immediate anxiety of his hearers to Rezin the Syrian King, confederate with Pekah of Israel, 2 Ki.15.37. Yet whilst addressing this, just as he has before in chapter 7, Isaiah in describing Rezin and Pekah's fall, also alludes to events far distant, the darkening of the land may have been a result of fumes and fire, but surely points to Calvary's night. Even more strikingly, Isaiah alludes to a warfare unlike others, in v.4-5, when a colossal invading army is humbled, and the bodies and weapons burnt, like Gideon's triumph, just before introducing us to the revelation of the Messiah. This appears to have been unfulfilled then in his days, at Messiah's coming, in AD 70

or 130, until now. So again, we have a prophecy with at least five different time frames for fulfilment. His claim that 'pre-exilic prophecies are no longer outstanding' p.170 looks threadbare.

Brother Wilmot's argument against Zionism, the expectation of a promised Jewish return to nationhood, can be critiqued on many serious other grounds, than his rather selective approach to interpreting time frames. Many of his objections are targeted at dispensationalists, whose doctrines, many other Christian Zionists strongly oppose. Spurgeon described these as an 'absurdity' and 'stupidities'. We will not address them here, except to point out they that they are inapposite to the mainstream, historic Protestant Bible case for Zionism, which dates back well beyond the Puritans, as they themselves testify.³

His argument that the return of Israel, as a state, the unique resurrection of a dead language, the unprecedented ingathering of a viciously and ubiquitously persecuted people, the assimilation of huge numbers of bankrupt immigrants, with little overseas aid, its increasing preeminence in scientific, financial & agricultural achievements, its extraordinary military success in the face of repeated attempts at annihilation, do not necessarily themselves mandate a fulfilment of Biblical prophecy. It should certainly raise eyebrows. In all these aspects, it is become an exception to the rule of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 that should at the very least prompt curiosity. It is certainly true that its spiritual character now is depressingly similar in general to most decadent Western nations.

Brother Wilmot claims the New Testament never gives indication of 'the kingdom being restored to' Israel, after Pentecost. James' citation of Amos 9.11-12 suggests otherwise. The context in Amos is punishment for 'the sinful kingdom' v.8, and describes the rigorous pursuit of justice after every single Jewish rebel, whether in the hills, in the depths of the sea, in heaven, or in hell, v.1-3. Yet He promises, 'I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob' v.8 and 'I will sift the house of Israel among [or literally 'by'] all nations... yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.' v.9. Then the promise, 'In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close the breaches thereof; and I will raise his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess [inherit] the remnant of Edom and of all the nations, which are called by My Name.' James modifies the promise in Greek to, 'That the residue of men might seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles, upon whom My Name is called...' Acts 15.17a Here is an explicit reference to David's kingdom being restored, and to the breaches in His Tabernacle being repaired. What is the fabric of the Tabernacle, God's people, as we have seen. Our David sits on His throne, the Tabernacle is still being raised up. But what is this about Israel inheriting the Edom and all the Gentiles? Will not the 13 Apostles, all Jews, sit and judge all the nations, Matt.19.28, Lk.22.30, 1 Cor.5.5, 2 Cor.10.6; 13.2? Are not these 12 Apostles the very foundation stones of the Heavenly Jerusalem? Rev.21.14 Are not the 12 gates of access named after the Tribes of the 12 Children of Israel, for which they bear charge? Rev.21.12. Is it arbitrary then to speak of a restoration of His Kingdom in and through believing Israel, also suffering and serving on behalf of the Gentiles, Ezek.47.21-22, Deut.32.8? Brother Wilmot is unwise to confine this to past fruits of the cross, and deny their still future application to the Jews, to whom the promise was literally made, p.279 .

Our esteemed and learned brother, writes of Zechariah and Haggai, 'every such passage the New Testament relates in fulfilment to the first advent and not once the second' p.172. He is referring to the triumphal entry, the crucifixion and the fountain opened for sin. What then of Ps.118, so closely related to Zechariah 9.9, portraying in advance the triumphal entry, after which, the Saviour citing the psalm in Lk.13.35 says, 'Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, You shall not see Me henceforth, till you say, "Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord"'. Is this fulfilled in the first, or if a future restoration of the nation be denied, it can only be in Second?

He is also most hopeful to claim that Cyrus' restoration completely satisfies the description in Zech.8.7, both the East country and the West, or as Isaiah expands it, from all the four corners of the Earth Isa.11.11-12, back to Jerusalem. Cyrus was indeed a marvel both then and now, but even his marvellous generosity could not extend beyond his rule.

Brother Wilmot's concern about the literal use of the Mount of Olives in Zech.14 (p.173) is illustrative of another basic interpretative problem. How literally should specific, detailed passages be taken? All Bible lovers appreciate the symbolism of grand visions and dreams, and on the other hand the danger of allegorising strict, clear commands, or rendering them obsolete by 'contextualising' them. The spectrum of literal-symbolic perspective though ranges broadly on intermediate passages. Some of the problems of our Brother's position are evident. He makes the case that the Mount of Olives here is a symbol like the mountain of the prayer parable, Isaiah's mountains and valleys in ch.40, or the Headstone of Ps.118 or the smitten Rock, which gives water, (though he neglects that it was *indeed* a literal rock, used to symbolise Messiah's wounding). Zechariah's description is not confined to the naming, but its carefully described proximity to a besieged Jerusalem, her partial capture and its effects on the residents, all these lead to the splitting of the mountain, creating a valley, through which waters later flow, which is associated with the return of the King in warfare against His foes. The gruesome effect on the besiegers is detailed. The prophet plainly declares these are the events which herald the coming of the Lord God with all His saints, namely the Second Coming, v.5. This Mount is the literal place of the literal Ascension and the focal point of the literal Parousia (Acts.1.11-12). If this is not a detailed history of future events, at the Parousia, the symbols need to be explained carefully and exactly. It is possible to see a double fulfilment, one at a more imminent event, with some of the later described consequences (which include sinful stubbornness by Egypt) following in part, and another fulfilment subsequently at the Lord's bodily Return. This resembles the double fulfilment of exile and restoration envisaged by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Lord. Does history attest the double fulfilment of Daniel 9.24-7, p.176? Yes, but does that preclude yet further light and further richness? All vision and prophecy is now revealed, but is it yet sealed in full display? Everlasting righteousness has been secured, but has it yet been fully effected in our lives and churches? Do we not also still groan and sigh, as Daniel?

5. **Fifth**, an explicit, literal promise will be kept, *even if* greater and better things are symbolised by it. The wine that symbolised so much better favour and grace still flowed and was drunk at Cana. The Lord had indicated so to His mother and He would not betray His assurance. The Rechabites were a challenge and spur to Israel, an illustration of better things to come, but the promises made to them by Jeremiah are perpetual and binding, Jer.35.2-18. When God promised Solomon, not only wisdom, but also unprecedented glory, wealth and triumph over his enemies, 1 Ki.3.11-3, if that promise was entirely deferred to the Branch, 1000 years later, would he not have cause to appeal? Hezekiah would no doubt have raised his eyebrows, if at the promised hour of the turning back of the sundial, Isaiah informed him the promise was to be kept more fully when the sun and moon were eclipsed by a more glorious light in eternity, Isa.2 Ki.20.10-11... so would we. The promise of land inheritance to Jeremiah, though he himself would not enjoy it, would be kept literally and really to his kin, even though it was a token of promise to the whole nation after 70 years, Jer.32.6-16; 42-48, as our brother admits, p.176.

So how may we dare overturn the very foundation stone on which the Covenant of Grace is established, Gen.15.7-21, Gal.3.15-17? If it were otherwise, as Paul writes, even a human court, would find fault with the Divine Promise, Gal.3.15. However, on the contrary, the promise is established with the strongest asseveration, 'He has remembered His covenant for ever, the word [which] He commanded to a thousand generations. Which [covenant] He made with Abraham, and His oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, [and] to Israel [for] an everlasting covenant: Saying, "Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance."' Ps.105.8-11. This explicit assertion can only be overturned with injury to God's honour, even if a better substitute be found. This would seem like Ahab, promising Naboth a better vineyard, instead of the treasured inheritance of his forebears, seeded with their blood, tears and sweat! This cannot be.

Our brother discovers in Micah's Gospel promises, 6.4;7.15-20, a parallel to the Exodus, and we strongly agree, p.174-5. It illustrates the fourth principle above. The passing over of transgression, the subduing of the chariots of passion and self-will, and the casting of our fierce pursuers and accusers into the depth of the sea of God's amnesia are all Christ's triumph. These are indeed more marvellous works than Moses, as our brother exults. 'Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob and the mercy to Abraham which Thou has sworn unto our fathers from

the days of old' 7.20. He steps too far, however when he claims, 'the inspired spiritualisation of literal events the Abrahamic covenant is completely implemented, **not** in the repossession of the land of Canaan' p.175 (emphasis mine). This is not separate from the redemption, which is Christ Jesus, it too is obtained on His account. If Jews, even Christian Jews, are hounded to death by their persecutors, expelled from Gentile lands, removed from work, office and influence, forbidden to trade, merely because they are ethnic Jews, how shall they say with Zachariah, who did enjoy the possession of his plot, 'That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy [promised] to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; The oath which He swore to our father Abraham, That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life' Lk.1.71-5? It requires strong grace to serve the Lord without anxiety, in a death camp for your people.

The problem is the dichotomy the brother seeks to press, between a national return to the Land and a national return to the Lord, p.177. What the Lord joins together, we should not separate. Return to the land, as entry into the land, is a symbol of eternal rest (Heb.11.9-10; 4.8-9, remembering the author wrote during Israel's possession of the land), but it also remains a literal promise. He has intertwined the two, so that the restoration to the land, after the still future events of Gog and Magog, following a preceding exile, that can only now postdate the Messiah.

'And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against Me, therefore hid I My face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid My face from them.' Ezek.39.23-4

And a succeeding restoration, which clearly predates the great confederate assault:

'When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; Then shall they know that I [am] the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide My face any more from them' Ezek.39.27-9.

Our brother is right to assert, 'the truth is that Jews and Gentiles are in together' p.177, there is no middle wall of separation, Eph.2.14, Messiah is our Peace. Yet this does not require that all distinctions are void, the Gospel is sent out to the Gentiles, when rejected by the Jews, Acts 28.28; 22.21; 13.46-7. Yet Paul yearns specifically and earnestly, with the strongest triple affirmation and an anathema for his kinfolk, Rom.9.1-3. He does not universalise this request, even though he is the Apostle of the Gentiles. His prayer life is a pattern and he exhorts us to imitate him exactly, 1 Cor.4.16; 11.1; Php.3.17; 1 Thess.1.6, but for whom does he pray? Of course, for all saints, and for many sinners, but specifically, ardently and continually he entreats for **unsaved** Israel, Rom.10.1. So must we. Does the New Testament make no distinction at all between the unsaved? No, the Holy Spirit promises specific and great blessing for the Gentiles, through the restoration of unconverted Jews, Rom.11.12,15, and implores **us** to show mercy to those whose race has been the fountainhead of **our** mercy. It may not seem so to us, but the Messiah was promised 'It is a light thing that Thou should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles' Isa.49.6. This is the very promise Paul cited to the Jews at Antioch, Acts.13.47. Yet the order is reversed, the first are made last, that the last made be made first.

It is commonly asserted that salvation *must* precede restoration to the land, [Hendriksen argues this case at length](#), (section 6). However Ezekiel's reproof is emphatic, 'For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then⁴ will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.' Ezek.36.24-5. The following chapter must be completely allegorised to remove the same lesson, allegorisers would be wise to

read Spurgeon's and Ryle's strong denunciations of their work. The great restoration ***follows and does not precede***, Gog and Magog's invasion, Ezek.39-22-29, a prophecy as yet unfulfilled.

The union between return to the land and return to grace for the Jews is deliberate and predictive in Deut.30.1-5. The later fulfilment of Deut 28.68 in Roman times, during the second not the first exile, indicates the restoration from Babylonian captivity does not exhaust this specific promise.

What of the prophecy of the Moabites being restored from Babylonian captivity in Jeremiah 48.47, or the Ammonites in 49.6 or that of Elam in 49.39? Were these not literally fulfilled Or of Israel inheriting again the land of the tribe of Gad dispossessed by Ammon in 49.1-2? Is this not as yet unfulfilled, whether in Greek, Roman, Arab or Turkish dominion? Are we entitled to spiritualise this specific promise to Gad, whose tribe also served also served God day and night in Pauls' day (Acts 26.7)?

It is well to spiritualise, but if it robs a promise of intended comfort and application, is it not a loss?

This concludes the treatment of five specific scriptural principles of interpretation for prophetic passages to address our brother's work. However there are other important and pertinent interpretative principles, drawn from the Bible, which I hope to explore separately.

Other issues.

There are some other important areas to raise about Brother Wilmot's book.

His claim (p.167) that 'the humanitarian kindness of our country to the Jews has not changed' since the Balfour Declaration reveals an extraordinary ignorance of history. There was outrage among many Gentile Zionists, like Churchill, over the savage betrayals that succeeded the granting of Great Britain's mandate responsibility over Palestine, culminating in the bloodguilt of the infamous 1939 White Paper. This barred Jewish immigration above a paltry 15,000 per year maximum, as the Nazis, Poles, Lithuanians and Ukrainians were already beginning to slaughter them and wrested control over development in the land. This was completely contrary not only to explicit, public promise, but also violated the 1920 international Treaty of Sevres, and the 1919 Covenant of the League of Nations, since it was performed without consultation with the Mandatory Council or the League of Nations, much less the Zionist agencies to whom promises were smashed. This dreadful act of cowardice took place, despite the Nazis rise to power and the refusal of almost every nation in the world to grant asylum to the Jews. It was motivated by a fear of Arab defection to the Nazis in Iraq and Palestine, which took place despite it anyway.⁵

The extreme strong arm tactics used against Jews in East Jerusalem, immediately after WW II, earned it the title, 'Bevingrad'.⁶

The arming and training of Arab armies, the violation of our mandate in allowing Jordan's army access to Palestine prior to Israel's declaration of Independence, the commander of the Jordanian army being a former British army officer, Glubb Pasha, and the strictly enforced arms embargo against the Jewish Palmach all strongly reinforce Divine opprobrium against Great Britain.⁷

The unique recognition, in isolation from every other country at the UN in 1948 of Jordan's conquest of what had previously been Judaea and Samaria, now blandly labelled the West Bank, to effect a Juderein region in the heart of what had been David, Saul and Ephraim's territories, was a violation of the very UN Charter, for which Great Britain had no legal basis.⁸

Brother Wilmot, raises the question of origin of Ashkenazi Jews (p.179), whom he suggests are the 'Zionistic' Jews. He proposes they stem from the Khazars, an Asiatic tribe, which he claims converted to Judaism in the 11th century. The area is murky and complex. Suffice it to write, most Jews in Israel are not Ashkenazim, 61% are Mizrahi in part or whole⁹, as Brother Wilmot acknowledges was happening in his day (p.179), almost all of these are Zionists. Many if not the overwhelming majority of non-Ashkenazi Jews outside of Israel also are

Zionist (i.e. they believe that Israel is an internationally recognised Jewish state and that Israelis have a right to live there in peace). The relation between the Khazars and the Ashkenazim has been dramatically overplayed, especially by those with hateful agendas, denies European Jewish history, is not supported by genetic studies and railroads the more tentative position of the Khazar State¹⁰¹¹¹²

Brother Wilmot acknowledges that God has 'determined the times appointed and the bounds of their habitation' for each nation, citing Acts 17.26, even judged on earthly terms, Israel has unique claims to legitimacy, no other nation shares: archaeological and linguistic links stretching back well over 3000 years, a widely known, respected and shared cultural heritage, its primary capital the heart of three major faiths, an international mandate, secured by treaty, endorsed and confirmed both by the League of Nations and the United Nations General Assembly in a plenary vote. Yet no nation has faced such persistent and singular vilification in virtually every one of the UN's bodies, ranging from UNESCO to WHO, and of course particularly intensely in the two highly discreditable Human Rights bodies UNHRC and formerly UNHCR.¹³ If this isn't a reversal of the physical curses of Lev.26 and Deut.28, in earthly terms, it is difficult to see what criteria would satisfy the critic.

It is one thing to dismiss particular and special favour for Israel, it is quite another to single her out for different standards than we apply to ourselves or others, especially in the context of explicit and persistent genocidal intent by her neighbours. That feeds the root of an ancient but persistent malice, which God will judge. Brother Wilmot may not have incurred this flaw, but many who now take his position in the churches of all type in the UK certainly do.¹⁴

¹ Mark Twain, Harpers Magazine. March 1898.

² William Hendriksen, The Bible on the Life Hereafter.

³ Iain Murray, The Puritan Hope, Banner of Truth, pp. 100-103.

⁴ There is a 'waw conversive' in Hebrew, indicating a succeeding history.

⁵ <https://youtu.be/TA-ycr7kOMQ> A most useful & detailed introduction to Israel's background.

⁶ ibid

⁷ ibid

⁸ ibid

⁹ Clare Ducker, Jews, Arabs and Arab Jews: The politics of identity and reproduction in Israel. Int.Inst.of Social Studies. ISS working papers. General series no 421.

¹⁰ www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/khazars/

¹¹ www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/5804883/jewish/Who-Were-the-Khazars.htm

¹² www.tabletmag.com/sections/history/articles/history-detective-shapira-khazars Dan Shapira's article is the most painstaking.

¹³ www.UNwatch.org for detailed analysis and exposure of this extreme bias.

¹⁴ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Zionism#Critical_views_within_Christianity