

Applying the Touchstone and Lodestar of *Scripture* To The Morassy Foundation and Principles of *Preterism*

Chapter 2

Isolated Interpretation

A Selective, Isolated, *Pseudo-Literal*, *Eisegetical* Approach

ISOLATED INTERPRETATION

By "isolated" interpretation (as alluded to in the introduction), there is no intent to suggest that any prophetic passage of God's Word is non-essential or insignificant, but simply that the true interpretation of any prophetic passage cannot be gained in *isolation from the vast connected whole of God's prophetic truth* (including the *immediate* context as well)—the practice of which is nothing but *pseudo-literal* . . . in the *selective* instances, that is, where a literal approach is purportedly adopted. [Is not this isolated, selective, pseudo-literal methodology precisely the illusory *modus operandi* by which virtually any and all false doctrines are set forth, in seeking the apparent sanction of Scripture for themselves? (e.g., denial of the deity of Christ . . . denial of eternal security . . . denial of bodily resurrection . . . denial of eternal punishment . . . universalism . . . soul sleep . . . baptismal regeneration . . . open theism . . . second blessingism . . . etc., etc.—and, yes, 70ADism). Let not His own be guilty of even remotely emulating such tortured handling of the living, abiding, holy Word of God!]

"2 Peter 1:20 pronounces, as a thing we ought to know, that no prophecy of scripture is of its own interpretation. Far from being thus isolated, as it must have been if it emanated from the human mind or will, it forms part of the great scheme which, as the Father counselled it for the glory of His beloved Son, so the Spirit reveals in the prophetic word which centres in His coming kingdom."

"But further, we have it laid down as a known first principle, that no prophecy is of its own (i.e. isolated) solution (2 Peter 1:20). Local and temporal circumstances give occasion; but it forms part of a great whole, of which Christ the King is the centre. Taking it by itself is like severing a bough from a majestic tree, of which it is an integral part. All points to Him in that day. Hence the way in which both advents are connected habitually in the Old Testament, whilst the second is set forth prominently in the New . . . the meaning is that no prophecy of scripture becomes a matter of its own solution. It is by its nature such as to exclude isolated interpretation. It belongs to a vast system which has Christ and His kingdom for its object. For though the prophets were men, they 'spoke from God' under the power of the Holy Spirit. He Who used them to write is the only source of sound interpretation; and this views each prophecy of scripture as a component part of God's testimony to Christ, in and by Whom only His glory is secured and yet to be displayed."—William Kelly (*Isaiah*)

"Taken by itself, it [a prophecy of Scripture] is not its own interpreter, but must be viewed as part of a grand whole, whereof Christ's glory is the centre . . . The Holy Ghost leads us to connect facts with God's purposes in Christ, and thus to understand and expound prophecy, which taken by itself is never rightly known."—William Kelly (*The Christian Annotator*, 1856)

The *selective, isolated, pseudo-literal, eisegetical* approach of all brands of Preterism toward Matt.16:28, Matt. 24:34, Matt. 26:64 and Matt. 10:23 (and toward certain other "time" references mentioned previously), are used to *overthrow* the *genuinely* plain, normal, literal sense of *all other prophetic scriptures* (including, e.g., the myriad of

OT prophecies, and the NT Olivet Discourse and the book of the Revelation) bearing on the future of Israel, the promised kingdom, the coming of Christ, etc., etc. (Not to mention Preterism's disastrous jettisoning of the vital purifying doctrine of the Church's Blessed Hope!)

It is quite amazing to behold the temerity with which Preterists *insist* that everyone bow to a (supposed) "literal" interpretation of these few select texts. For a theory which depends upon, as a general *modus operandi*, a "mystical" approach to God's prophetic word, Preterists have absolutely no credibility or moral authority to *insist* on a supposed "literal" interpretation of any passage of scripture, let alone these few select texts. Imagine a group or system which mysticalizes the OT prophetic words of Jehovah-Jesus (as well as a good portion of the NT), while at the same time *insisting* on a (pseudo) literal interpretation of a few select NT prophetic words of Jehovah-Jesus!

Once we bow to God's revelation in regard to Israel's prophesied, promised, covenanted kingdom—*precisely as depicted in the OT*—then it becomes indisputably clear that our Lord Jesus Christ did not return to this earth, nor did He set up the kingdom, in 70AD (or at any other time in the first century or since). Therefore, any isolated, *pseudo*-literal interpretation of the above passages of scripture which entails "mysticalizing" the scripturally-established nature of the kingdom, which the Son of Man will inaugurate upon His return, is in grave error.

"Nor can you say that the coming the Lord bids us watch for is not a real and personal one, except by such a mode of interpretation as would throw all Scripture into confusion, and all ordinary language too. . . . Yet, brethren, how many of you give ear to the exhortation? You have suffered Satan to rob you both of the comfort and the admonition of your Lord and Saviour's words. And hence a multitude of errors, and of what He will judge as evil and dishonoring ways."

"You lower the authority of Scripture by attributing to it human exaggeration, and therefore falsehood. How could a man not led of your interpreters suppose that that coming spoken of in the terms of the twenty-fourth of Matthew was either death or **high-flown language for the simple destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans long ago? If it be so, why should there be any real coming of the Lord at all? Why should not all the passages about it mean something else than they so plainly say? No wonder it should be thought that prophecy can only be clearly interpreted by its fulfillment, if these are really its interpretations! But our inheritance, brethren, our 'exceeding great and precious promises,'—what about them? Are they not unfulfilled prophecy? What if in result all these should dwindle down proportionately, just as the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven has dwindled down into the sacking of a Jewish city?**

"Alas! infidelity thanks you for the lesson which it has not been slow to learn; but the simple and ignorant man, whom you have delivered blindfold into the hands of your interpreters, will scarcely thank you for the proof that the grand and blessed Word of his God is but, as to much of it, a more than half deception,—and *how much*, he cannot know."—F.W. Grant (*Leaves From The Book*, pp. 399-400)

It is often claimed by anti-dispensationalists that the Jews at Christ's first coming were wrong in expecting a literal earthly kingdom to be established by the Messiah. From whence did the Jews get this (supposedly mistaken) idea? From their God-breathed OT Scriptures!—by interpreting the unconditional, everlasting kingdom promises, covenants, prophecies according to their plain, normal, literal sense. The failure of the Jews was not in *believing* these prophetic scriptures, but in not believing *all* of their scriptures.

"Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to **believe all** that the prophets have spoken: **Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?**" (Luke 24:25-26).

"The Jews therefore did not stumble because they understood the scriptures in their plain literal import. On the contrary they shut their eyes and ears against all the prophecies which dwelt on Messiah's sufferings, and warned them of unbelief and every other sin. They were wholly insensible to His moral perfection and His testimony of God as light and love, which should have led them to repentance. They clutched at the gorgeous visions of power and glory, and overlooked that they are as full of holiness and righteousness and peace. They ignored the plainest predictions, as much as if they never were written, of their own hatred and loathing of the Messiah, as well as of His being wounded for their transgressions, and being bruised for their iniquities. They never pondered the words that Jehovah laid on Him the iniquity of us all; that the chastisement of our peace was on Him; that by His stripes we are healed."—William Kelly (*Isaiah*)

According to Preterist logic, and in flat contradiction (!) to the words of our Lord in Luke 24:25-26, it appears that the Jews were actually *not* supposed to "**believe all** that the prophets have spoken"!—at least not the unconditional, everlasting kingdom promises, covenants, and prophecies.

The fact of the matter is, no Jew in OT times could ever have read and understood these scriptures as referring to anything other than earthly Israel and the restoration of their earthly kingdom. Yet Preterists actually *blame* the Jews for interpreting these prophecies plainly, normally, literally . . . when they had absolutely no reason or basis to do otherwise! Incredible!

Too, prior to the “spiritualization” allegedly condoned or practiced in the NT (as Preterists are wont to claim concerning, e.g., Act 2 and Acts 15), how were the Jews supposed to know, in OT times, that their prophetic scriptures were not to be taken in their plain, normal, literal sense, but that they should be spiritualized (or “mysticalized” for the benefit of [that which is a *mystery*] the NT Church)??

How was Mary to understand the words of the angel Gabriel (which were based on her OT prophetic scriptures)? “And behold, *thou [the virgin] shalt conceive in the womb and bear a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for the ages, and of his kingdom there shall not be an end.*” (Luke 1:31-33) Did she know what today’s spiritualizers “know,” that she should understand the prophetic words concerning His virgin birth plainly, normally, literally; but that she should mysticalize away Israel’s everlasting earthly kingdom blessings under His rule?

Was Daniel, e.g., wrong in how he understood his OT prophetic scriptures? “In the first year of his reign, *I Daniel understood* by the books that *the number of the years*, whereof the word of Jehovah came to *Jeremiah the prophet [Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10]*, for the accomplishment of the desolations of Jerusalem, was *seventy years.*” (Dan. 9:2) If today’s spiritualizers had been alive in Daniel’s day, prior to the fulfillment of Jer. 25:11-12 and 29:10, surely they would have attempted to set Daniel straight by introducing him to their mysticalizing methods, and would have instructed him as to what the “seventy years” really signified! And then, perhaps, they would have likewise shared their confirmed wisdom with Daniel concerning their thoughts on how to really understand the chronology and fulfillment of the other 70 weeks of years (Dan. 9:24-27)—in much the same way that these spiritual alchemizers provide instruction today, e.g., concerning the *1,000 years* of Rev. 20 (repeated *six* times therein, including once in *verse 6*, which is an *explanation* of what the apostle John saw).

OT prophecies concerning the 1st Advent of Christ (in connection with His Person and Work) are clear and meaningful, and are to be interpreted literally (which includes, recognizes, and gives all due allowance to *genuine* figures of speech and symbols), are they not? Such is likewise true of prophecies and promises concerning the 2nd Advent of Christ, the kingdom, Israel, and the nations.

"But prophecy cannot be fulfilled as a whole till Christ be glorified in Israel and their land, the centre of earth's promised blessing, of which it speaks abundantly. Incredulity avails itself, not only of extravagant spiritualizing on the part of erring Christians, but of fulfilment not yet complete, to deny what has been really accomplished. Let us search and see how that part was accomplished, and thus learn what to expect for the future."

"None can deny the national and unparalleled religious ruin of Israel according to prophecy: *why should any stop there and entirely disbelieve their restoration*, not only as a nation, but to be the earthly centre of all the nations for the word of Jehovah in Zion?"

"The restoration of Israel is so plainly intimated *in the very scriptures* which declare their ruin and scattering."—William Kelly (*Isaiah*)

Now it is true that those promises of blessing under their Old/Mosaic Covenant were *conditional*—in that their fulfillment was entirely dependent upon obedience from the flesh (and thus failure was certain). But such is not the case with those promises of blessing under Israel's Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and New Covenants, which are all *unconditional*—in that their fulfillment is entirely dependent upon the sovereign grace of God—on the ground of the precious blood of Jehovah-Jesus—working for, in, and through the Jewish remnant (and thus guaranteed, everlasting success). For the ultimate and eternal fulfillment of the unconditional covenants will be effected through faith with respect to the redeemed—never apart from faith. This “condition” (if it is actually correct to call it a “condition”) of repentance/faith is everywhere made plain in the OT prophetic scriptures (which repentance/faith is itself worked in the heart by God Himself), as well as in the NT.

These prophetic blessings speak of Israel's everlasting existence and salvation as a nation and people before God; of their everlasting possession of their land and kingdom under Messiah's reign; etc., etc. This obviously has not yet been fulfilled—but most certainly will be. God's word and faithfulness depend upon it!

"For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me, saith Jehovah, so shall your seed and your name [Israel] remain." (Isa 66:22)

"I will sing of the loving-kindness of Jehovah for ever; with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness from generation to generation. For I said, Loving-kindness shall be built up for ever; in the very heavens wilt thou establish thy faithfulness. I have made a covenant with mine elect, I have sworn unto David my servant: Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne from generation to generation. Selah. . . . My loving-kindness will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him; And I will establish his seed for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his sons forsake my law, and walk not in mine ordinances; If they profane my statutes, and keep not my commandments: Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor belie my faithfulness; My covenant will I not profane, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness; I will not lie unto David: His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me; It shall be established for ever as the moon, and the witness in the sky is firm. Selah." (Psalm 89:1-4, 28-37)

"Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will perform *the good word* which I have spoken unto the house of Israel and unto the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause a Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell in safety. And this is the name wherewith she shall be called: Jehovah our Righteousness. . . . Thus saith Jehovah: If ye can break my covenant in respect of the day, and my covenant in respect of the night, so that there should not be day and night in their season, then shall also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites, the priests, my ministers. As the host of the heavens cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me. And the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, saying, Hast thou not seen what this people have spoken, saying, The two families that Jehovah had chosen, he hath even cast them off? And they despise my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. Thus saith Jehovah: If my covenant of day and night stand not, if I have not appointed the ordinances of the heavens and the earth, then will I also cast away the seed of Jacob, and of David my servant, so as not to take of his seed to be rulers over **the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:** for I will turn their captivity, and will have mercy on them." (Jer. 33:14-16, 20-26)

"And behold, *thou [the virgin] shalt conceive in the womb and bear a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus.* He shall be great, and shall be called Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give Him *the throne of David His father; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for the ages, and of his kingdom there shall not be an end.*" (Luke 1:31-33)

James M Ventilato
December 28, 2004
Updated: July 4, 2013