

# Unwise Methods of Presenting Prophecy

A Temcat Study 2015

I am here just going to try and explain a couple things that I find pressing on my mind in regard to some of the misleading methods of interpretation that have come in among the prophecy people on all sides of the fence so to speak. We have seen that since JP has taken an otherwise legitimate part of Bible prophecy to the extreme, using it to even override the words of the prophet and so on, that he has gone into strange paths with bitter fruit falling all around us.

I have also seen that there are some methods among the rest of us that when taken beyond their boundaries also result in questionable conclusions. I am impressed to sound a warning against them as a thought to be shared, not to you personally, but to all, from me at the coming meetings. Personally, I did not want to pass this on but I find myself troubled at heart and feeling it is my duty to do so. If that is so, I do not want to bear the accountability of not doing it.

The reason perhaps that I see these things is because of the work I do which consists of gathering up items, often that God has specifically provided to me or drawn my attention to, and preparing them to be used for clean nutritious sheep food. It seems perhaps that to do this the Lord has shared with me somewhat of a spirit of discernment, I do not know, but I know what I actually experience. I can be listening to some discourses and they seem good, then all at once the presenter will go into a side path and I find myself saying, "Oh no, brother, that is not correct, it is not accurate!" There are some brethren that this happens with a lot and others a little and others rarely. But it is rare I can take a presentation and use it verbatim without having to excise some things to leave it sound.

One of these unwise stands is this idea that when two words are used in a text in describing something, that the two words are always synonymous in meaning and can be used interchangeably. This has come to be a kind of 'rule' among us and is being taught as such to folk who have little background and reference points, such as those in Africa, as if it is an incontestable 'RULE' of exegesis and completely reliable. I just recently had a brother from Zimbabwe telling me how he was taught that from one of the presenters.

While at times this idea can be useful, and may be close to accurate, it is not hard and fast and in other cases can be very misleading! I know of course about the concepts of Hebrew poetry and their repetitions, but the use of these parallel words is still not that they are complete synonyms for each other, able to freely be used interchangeably.

Sometimes they are like the prophecies, sort of a repeat and enlarge thing. I have to say that this is resulting in some strange fires being lit among us. This whole idea needs to be treated with caution because while at times useful, it is not a solid rule for always.

If I say, I have a Black Horse; And my horse is big; And my horse is wild, he is untrainable. It is clear that big, black and wild are not the same word, but wild and untrainable do have some similarity but are not identical in meaning; and so it is in the Bible, but it is often not so obvious and people try to claim synonyms where none exist. I cannot give more examples at present but I am sure you can figure out what I mean.

Another that has caused some concern is the habit of taking unusual or extensive Greek and Hebrew lexicons that often will list MANY possible meanings to a word and then going through and selecting

something that seems to fit our *own* idea we are trying to promote and presenting that as *the* meaning—This is not the proper use of God’s Word. The SOP says the “Bible AS IT READS” is to be our foundation. When I go through a big list of possible meanings for a Hebrew or Greek word, and I pull out what appeals to me, then the result is my mind, not the mind of the Holy Spirit. The number one rule to understanding the meaning intended of a word has to be to see how the writer used it in other parts of his book.

It is the same result when people take a pile of translations and versions of Bibles and pull from one or another as it suits their own private concept—then it is their mind that is the source and not inspiration!!

We need to tread carefully as we present new or unusual meanings into verses that have been understood in their own ways by God’s people in the past. When we gallop through placing our own idea into everything, it is like Sister White says; it tastes of the dish (us) and not of what the Lord is saying to His people.

You also cannot take a possible meaning of a word that seems to fit in one case and then project that through the entire Bible as always meaning that and that only! There is a reason why some of these words have so many possible connotations in the lexicons and it is because they don’t all refer to the same thing, but depend on context!!

There is sometimes also errors that come in because of the presenter not having a proper understanding of the ENGLISH words. I have also dealt with some who will pull in some story or legend and present it in their discourses as fact—this is most unwise! Often these things are some old Roman tradition that on closer examination does not fit with the Bible and is clearly false.

It was interesting that some of the stories one speaker used to tell so often when speaking of Islam and the wild ass; it took me quite a while to get through to him that these stories were impossible because the wild ass is extinct and has been since the 1920s. When he finally got the point, he just became silent about it and tells them no more. (At least the last I heard him). He did not however inform his listeners of his error.

The Word needs not this fluff and foolishness and so on that we drag into our discourses to prove *our* ideas. We need to fear to put our own human reasoning into it and our own words into the Spirit of Prophecy and so on! If anything we are saying requires such shaky proof, than don’t say it! Leave it out because we have enough solid timber, we don’t need to use anything questionable or worm-eaten. A lot of this stuff happens because we can feel under pressure to somehow be able to say something that will cause our sleepy, itchy-ear audiences to sit up and declare that we have something sensational to stimulate them to excitement.

In the past I have heard some things like this and I would think, “Oh, Wow! Just wait until I show this to so and so, they will have to believe the Bible when they hear this!!” But it doesn’t work that way friends! It just doesn’t; and often later we realize this so-called wonderful light is not true and just so much trash. I found that in the past with these wonderful discoveries of Jonathan Gray and Ron Wyatt, perhaps some of what they say no doubt is true, but it is not the foundation we need to stand on, and most of it is just the moldy-old stories of Roman Catholicism with a slightly altered face.

I have said enough to at least point out my concerns; they have been a trouble to me many times as I have had to edit presentations or often times discard them because of unsound principles. I pray that we all will lay aside the spoof and fluff and unfounded claims and present *only* what we can show in plain and simple words from Bible and Spirit of Prophecy! That is what I am working towards in my online courses and schools and it has opened my eyes to much that I would never have seen otherwise.

I have to tell you something that hurts me a lot for souls, it is because of this playing funny games as it were with lexicons, legends, and word-swapping, that I have seen people who now really have no faith in the reliability of either the Spirit of Prophecy or even the Bible as they say that you can make either to say anything you want it to. Nothing you can share with these people arouses their faith in the Word anymore! What they claim is sadly true in some ways, but it is *not* true when we use only those methods of presentation that Heaven has endorsed as reliable.

Please notice the following counsel:

“The Lord is soon to work in greater power among us, but there is danger of allowing our impulses to carry us where the Lord would not want us to go. We must not make one step that we will have to retrace. We must move solemnly, prudently, and not make use of extravagant expressions or allow our feelings to become overwrought. We must think calmly and work without excitement; for there will be those who become easily wrought up, who will catch up unguarded expressions and make use of extreme utterances to create excitement, and thus counteract the very work that God would do. There is a class of people who are always ready to go off on some tangent, who want to catch up something strange and wonderful and new; but **God would have all move calmly, considerately, choosing our words in harmony with the solid truth for this time, which requires to be presented to the mind as free from that which is emotional as possible, while still bearing the intensity and solemnity that it is proper it should bear.** We must guard against creating extremes, guard against encouraging those who would either be in the fire or in the water.

“I beseech you to weed out of your teachings every extravagant expression, everything that unbalanced minds and those who are inexperienced will catch up, and from which they will make wild, immature movements. It is necessary for you to cultivate caution in every statement you make, lest you start some on a wrong track, and make confusion that will require much sorrowful labor to set in order, thus diverting the strength and work of the laborers into lines which God does not design shall be entered. **One fanatical streak exhibited among us will close many doors against the soundest principles of truth.**” Testimonies to Ministers 227, 228.

More good counsel in this next passage: I once spoke to one person about this problem and was rebuked and rejected, but at least I did my duty in warning him.

“Some ministers have fallen into the error that they cannot have liberty in speaking unless they raise their voices to a high pitch and talk loud and fast. **Such should understand that noise and loud, hurried speaking are not evidence of the presence of the power of God.** It is not the power of the voice that makes the lasting impression. Ministers should be Bible students, and should thoroughly furnish themselves with the reasons of our faith and hope, and then, with full control of the voice and feelings, they should present these in such a manner that the people can calmly weigh them and decide upon the evidences given. And as ministers feel the force of the arguments which they present in the form of solemn, testing truth, they will have zeal and earnestness according to knowledge. The Spirit of God will sanctify to their own souls the truths which they present to others, and they will be watered themselves while they water others.” 1 Testimony 645.

Also please notice the following because it is exactly what has happened with some of the brethren who spent time learning from Stephen Lewis; they copy him in manner and gesture and they also copy him in unwise use of Spirit of Prophecy and so on and the use of untrue stories to get an effect in the audience, and often even in demeanor and attitude!!

“Frequently a young man is sent out to labor with a more experienced minister; **and if he is defective in his manner of speaking, the young man is very apt to copy his defects.** Therefore, it is important that ministers who have been long in the field should reform, though it cost them much painstaking and the exercise of much patience, that their defects may not be reproduced in young and inexperienced laborers. **The young preacher should copy only the admirable traits of character possessed by the more experienced laborer, while at the same time he should see and avoid his errors.** When some attempt to speak calmly, without excitement and excessive gesticulation, they become embarrassed, and feel a lack of freedom, because they are restraining themselves from following their old habits. But let all such feelings, which are mere excitement, go to the four winds. That freedom of feeling that would result in your committing suicide is not sanctified.” RH, February 5, 1880.

In conclusion; I fear that unless we weed out from among us all of these unwise patterns, we are only going to have in our associations just another branch of error mixed with some truth to make it more easily swallowed by the unwary, we are going to be just as culpable as the other camp we are concerned about. If we are going to have the blessing of God, we will have to walk calmly and choose only solid inspiration as ground for our feet.

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