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Dedicated to the memory of my sister,
Vanessa Jane Crome (1985–2002),
and for my parents.

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Some parts of this book have appeared in less-developed forms elsewhere. Earlier elements of Chaps. 5 and 6 appeared in '"The Proper and Naturall Meaning of

the Prophets": The Hermeneutic Roots of Judeo-centric Eschatology', *Renaissance Studies* 24:5 (2010), pp. 725–741. I am grateful to Wiley-Blackwell and current editor Jennifer Richards for permission to reuse them here. Parts of the final section of Chap. 7 appeared as "Friendship and Enmity to God and Nation: The Complexities of Jewish-Gentile Relations in the Whitehall Conference of 1655" in *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, eds Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge (Berlin: de Gruyter Press, 2011), pp. 749–777. I would like to thank de Gruyter and the editors for their permission to reuse them in this book.

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Contents

Abbreviations

Brightman, *Daniel* – Thomas Brightman, *A Most Comfortable Exposition of the Last and Most Difficult Part of the Prophecie of Daniel* (Amsterdam, 1635).
Brightman, *Revelation* – Thomas Brightman, *The Revelation of St. John Illustrated with an Analysis & Scholions . . . The Fourth Edition, Corrected & Amended* (London, 1644).
Brightman, *Song* – Thomas Brightman, *A Commentary on the Canticles or the Song of Solomon* (London, 1644).
DNB – *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

A Note on Quotations

Original spelling and punctuation has been retained when quoting from early modern sources. The exception to this is when sources make use of “u” for the modern usage “v”, “v” for “u”, “vv” for “w” or “i” for “j” – in all such quotations I have modernised the use of these letters. Thus “seruant” becomes “servant”, “vpon” becomes “upon”, “vvorlde” becomes “worlde” and “Iewes” becomes “Jewes”. When listing titles of seventeenth-century works, however, I have left the spelling as the original. Any instance where emphasis was not in the original is highlighted in the footnotes. All scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version.

Chapter 1
Introduction

"The Puritans of the 17th century, who gave us democracy in its present form and the now famous Authorized Version of the Bible in 1611 were Christian Zionist by belief" proclaimed the website of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) in 2011.[1] While critics (and King James himself) might be taken aback by some of claims made in this sentence, its boldest assertion is in tracing Christian Zionism – the Christian support for a Jewish state in Palestine – back to seventeenth-century Protestant orthodoxy. This form of eschatology has usually been thought to have emerged in the nineteenth century, primarily through the writings of John Nelson Darby and his development of "dispensational" eschatology. Yet the ICEJ's desire to root Christian Zionism deeper in history is not an isolated claim. Speaking at a conference for Christian Zionist ministers in 2004, dispensational scholar Thomas Ice attacked those who "like to blame J.N. Darby and dispensationalism as the modern source of evangelical views [of Israel]", instead highlighting "that love for Israel was well entrenched by Bible-believing Christians long before 1830". Ice proceeded to name a succession of figures that could be labelled as Christian Zionist in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: Francis Kett, Henry Finch, Joseph Mede – but above all, Thomas Brightman (1562–1607).[2] A former fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge and a near anonymous Church of England rector in life, Brightman's reputation as a prophetic expositor of some skill was only confirmed with the posthumous publication of three commentaries on the books of Revelation, Daniel and Song of Songs on the continent from 1609, and later in England. Brightman's commentaries had a number of unique features, from an imaginative re-reading of the millennium of Revelation 20 to a novel exegesis of Song of Songs as narrative history, but were marked by a particular focus of the

[1] Malcolm Hedding, 'Position Statements: The ICEJ's Core Beliefs', http://int.icej.org/about/position-statements, accessed online 15/10/2011.

[2] Thomas Ice, 'Lovers of Zion: A History of Christian Zionism', http://www.pre-trib.org/data/pdf/Ice-LoversofZionAHistory.pdf, accessed online 26/08/2010, p. 2.

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restoration of the Jews to Palestine as the culmination of God's apocalyptic plan on earth. It is perhaps unsurprising that Ice chose him as a central figure in what the contemporary Christian Zionist viewed as the historical emergence of his own belief.

This use of puritan writers to justify contemporary theological/political beliefs is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it highlights that the work of the early modern historian, at first glance far removed from the world of modern geo-political debate, in fact continues to influence and support contemporary beliefs and political positions. No historical work is ever written in an ahistorical vacuum. Perhaps more importantly, it highlights the emergence of a significant eschatological trend in the seventeenth century focused on the restoration of the Jews to Palestine. This "restorationism" was more than Hebraism or a generalised belief in an end time Jewish conversion, but a detailed focus on the importance of both the Jewish people and the Holy Land itself as both a political and sacred space. These eschatological themes have been increasingly noted by scholars of early modern England. Of course, recognition of the importance of the seventeenth-century interest in the Jews in the period is not entirely new. David S. Katz's magisterial examinations of *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603–1655* (1982) and the wider-ranging *The Jews in the History of England 1485–1850* (1994) both emphasised the importance of the Marrano community in London, the growth of interest in Hebraic studies and an increasing attention to Jewish conversion in early modern England. Approaching the subject from another angle, James Shapiro's 1996 study *Shakespeare and the Jews* stressed the ways in which the English used the Jews to help construct English national identity as an "other". By doing so, Shapiro argued, Englishmen were able to build up and redefine their own national identity. Achsah Guibbory has also recently focused upon English interests in the Jews, producing a useful volume examining the extent of English engagement with Jewish themes in the seventeenth century.[3] To these works can be added a number of impressive studies on Hebraism in England, looking at figures from the legal theorist John Selden[4] to John Milton,[5] and recent work on the rabbinic influence on English political writing.[6] As important as these books have been, the question of Jewish restorationist belief, as distinct from a more general philosemitism, has received little detailed study until the past decade, with the notable but dated exception of

[3] Achsah Guibbory, *Christian Identity, Jews, and Israel in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[4] Jason P. Rosenblatt, *Renaissance England's Chief Rabbi: John Selden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[5] Frank Mattern, *Milton and Christian Hebraism: Rabbinic Exegesis in Paradise Lost* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2009); Jeffrey S. Shoulson, *Milton and the Rabbis: Hebraism, Hellenism and Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

[6] Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA. and London: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Douglas Culver's *Albion and Ariel*.[7] The most important works in emphasising this theme have been a series of articles by Richard W. Cogley. Labelling the focus on Jewish restoration to Palestine "Judeo-centrism", he described the concept in detail in his 2003 "The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Restoration of Israel in the "Judeo-Centric" Strand of Puritan Millenarianism".[8] In 2005, he returned to the idea with the more specific "'The Most Vile and Barbarous Nation of all the World': Giles Fletcher the Elder's *The Tartars Or, Ten Tribes* (ca. 1610)", examining beliefs about the location of the ten "lost" tribes, who were exiled to Assyria in 722 BCE and subsequently vanished from the historical record.[9] Cogley's work is important in emphasising the way in which the belief in Jewish restoration was held by a wide range of figures in both Old and New England, and in probing into some of the eschatology's many contours. Recently, other scholars have begun to follow Cogley's footsteps in this area.[10] Yet the question of how and why Judeo-centrism emerged with such force in the early seventeenth century, and what exegetical methods were employed by those who held to it, has not been examined in depth. What was different about Judeo-centrist exegesis that led its proponents to move away from the more conservative and well established eschatological positions that were available to them? This book suggests that the key element in the emergence of Judeo-centrism was an appropriation and logical development of Reformation hermeneutical norms to reread Old Testament promises to the Jews. The over-riding "literal" hermeneutic of Protestantism was developed to a logical conclusion which led Judeo-centrists back to the importance of the future of ethnic Israel.

On the surface this is a deceptively simple claim. Yet it is a powerful one. From what initially appears a "simple" hermeneutic position, a number of assumptions taken from scripture – especially those related to the role of the Gentile church – had to be reassessed in creative and often surprising ways. It is the argument of

[7]While Culver's book is meticulously researched, he cites no secondary work published later than 1968, meaning that the work ignores the explosion of interest in puritan millennialism seen in the 1970s. Other discussions of the theme can be found in Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558–1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and Danielle Frison, "Millénarisme et Judaïsme dans l'Angleterre du XVIIe Siècle" in *Formes du Millénarisme en Europe à L'aube des Temps Modernes*, eds Jean-Raymond Fanlo and André Tournon (Paris : Honoré Champion, 2001), pp. 285–306.

[8]Richard W. Cogley, "The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Restoration of Israel in the "Judeo-Centric" Strand of Puritan Millenarianism", *Church History* 72:2 (June 2003), pp. 304–332.

[9]Richard W. Cogley, "'The Most Vile and Barbarous Nation of all the World': Giles Fletcher the Elder's *The Tartars Or, Ten Tribes* (ca. 1610)", *Renaissance Quarterly* 58:3 (Fall 2005), pp. 781–814. This study follows Cogley in using "Judeo-Centrism" to refer to an eschatology predicting a return of the Jews to Palestine and a Jewish empire there.

[10]See for example Andrew Crome, '"The Proper and Naturall Meaning of the Prophets": The Hermeneutic Roots of Judeo-centrism in Puritan Eschatology', *Renaissance Studies* 24:5 (Nov. 2010), pp. 725–741; Adam Shear, "William Whiston's Judeo-Christianity: Millenarianism and Christian Zionism in Early Enlightenment England" in *Philosemitism in History*, eds Jonathan Kemp and Adam Sutcliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 93–110.

this book that the central figure in this hermeneutical development was Thomas Brightman. His use of the literal sense served to undermine several key categories of puritan selfhood,[11] leading to Brightman's focus on a distinctly English Christian identity. This is to claim a great deal for the importance of the literal sense of scripture. Yet it remains true that in examinations of puritan eschatology the complexity of the hermeneutic positions assumed by authors have often been overlooked. Studies of the tradition therefore tend to presume the primacy of the literal sense without asking why it was important or how it was actually used in practice. Thus scholars have often argued that puritan eschatology was marked by "the literal interpretation of key prophetic Scriptures… [previously] interpreted in either an allegorical or symbolic manner"[12]; or "directed by the literal rather than the allegorical interpretation of divine prophecy".[13] To illustrate the difficulty of such apparently straightforward claims we can turn to Richard Hayter's 1675 commentary on Revelation. Describing the efforts of his predecessors, he noted that "other men expound the Prophecies of the *Revelation* mystically… making them symbols, types, and figures".[14] For, as Hayter correctly recognised, the "literal" sense of prophecy never meant a simplistic reading of the text as it was presented. For the majority of commentators to view the book of Revelation as predicting a series of events in direct chronological order was unusual; to claim that the "stars falling from the sky" in Revelation 8 referred to a literal fall of heaven (as Hayter believed) was almost unthinkable. Thus Hayter attacked those who "turn the literal sense into a mystical, and partly because they make a History of that which is yet a Prophecy, and seek for things future in ages past…they shall never find

[11] A note on the use of "puritan" in this study: The term is problematic. As Thomas Fuller noted in 1655: "I wish that the word *Puritan* were banished [from] common discourse, because so various in the acceptions thereof" (Thomas Fuller, *The Church-history of Britain from the birth of Jesus Christ until the year M.DC.XLVIII* (London, 1655), Book VIII, p. 76). This is well recognised in recent studies: William Lamont, for example, noted that "the term itself is hopeless" (William Lamont, *Puritanism and Historical Controversy* (London: U.C.L. Press, 1996), p. 7). However, as Crawford Gribben has argued, the term is useful to describe a broad group of the "Godly" defined no more rigidly than by their "desire for the further reformation of the Protestant churches within the three kingdoms" (Crawford Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium: Literature and Theology, 1550–1682* (Revised Edition) (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), pp. 7–8). I follow this broad definition here. This is similar to the position of Peter Lake, who describes puritanism as "a synthesis made up of strands… [that] taken together formed a distinctly Puritan synthesis or style" rather than a set of concrete positions agreed upon by each and every puritan (Peter Lake, "Defining Puritanism – again?" in *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith*, ed. Francis J. Bremer (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1993), p. 6). For a fuller discussion of this issue see John Coffey and Paul C.H. Lim, "Introduction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, eds John Coffey and Paul C.H. Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 1–7.

[12] Donald E. Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1995), p. 87.

[13] Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 17, also pp. 44, 45, 47.

[14] Richard Hayter, *The Meaning of the Revelation* (London, 1675), sig. A2^{ii}r.

them".[15] This confusion over the use of the "literal sense" in eschatology suggests that while we might presume an increasing shift towards "straightforward" literal readings of prophecy in puritan thought, the picture was in fact more complex. Indeed, puritan readings of Bible prophecy were inherently unsatisfactory for a self-proclaimed "literalist" such as Hayter. What then, did the literal sense mean when it was used by puritan commentators on Revelation? If, as in Hayter's complaint, puritan interpretations ignored the "plain" sense of the text, what readings did they employ in its place? In addressing the way in which Brightman and those who followed him made use of the literal sense in creative ways, this book seeks to answer these questions. Against suggestions that use of a "literal" hermeneutic was straight-forward when reading apocalyptic texts in the Bible, this book aims to both aid and complicate our understanding of the complex matrix of hermeneutical rules which formed the "literal sense" for seventeenth-century readers.

This is important, as historically the complexity of the literal sense has been overlooked. In recent years, however, an increased understanding of the importance of the history of biblical hermeneutics has developed[16] with a number of studies aiming to provide a background to the evolution of hermeneutical thought throughout church history.[17] These works emphasise that scriptural interpretation was in a constant state of flux. It should therefore never be assumed that there was an exegetical consensus that characterised certain historical periods.[18] Yet for all of this interest, the hermeneutical positions held by seventeenth-century English puritans, a group noted for their biblical emphasis,[19] have been curiously overlooked. While several works have noted variations within Reformation hermeneutics,[20] few have focused on the complexities presented by puritan readings of the Bible. Sadly, much

[15]Hayter, *Meaning*, p. 134.

[16]Pioneered by Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis, Volume 1: The Four Senses of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); *Volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) and Beryl Smalley, particularly *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964).

[17]For example: Donald McKim and Jack B. Rogers, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979); James Samuel Preus, *From Shadow to Promise*: *Old Testament Interpretation from Augustine to the Young Luther* (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969); Werner B. Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance* (London: SCM, 1997).

[18]For example, that medieval exegesis was based slavishly on the *quadriga*. For an example of this reading of exegetical history see Frederic W. Farrar, *History of Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961).

[19]See for example, Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane/The Penguin Press, 1993); John R. Knott, *The Sword of the Spirit: Puritan Responses to the Bible* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1980).

[20]For example, E.F. Klug, *From Luther to Chemnitz: On Scripture and the Word* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), Thomas Torrance, *The Hermeneutics of John Calvin* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1988) and *Articles on Calvin and Calvinism: Calvin and Hermeneutics*, ed. Richard Gamble (New York and London: Garland, 1992).

discussion has been marked by an overly simplistic interpretation of the puritan hermeneutic. Much as with readings of eschatology, the general puritan hermeneutic has often been characterised as overly dependent on a crude application of the "literal" sense of scripture. Puritan thought, it is claimed, was "a product of a literal-minded scripturalism"[21]; guilty of a "misplaced literalism"[22]; held by those for whom "The Bible said what it meant and meant what it said, and that was that".[23]

Such statements make three major assumptions. Firstly, they presume that readers had an inherent understanding of what the literal sense was. The need for interpretation was negated if the text simply "meant what it said". The fact that the majority of puritan controversies were rooted in arguments over exactly *what* the scripture said can therefore be conveniently ignored. Secondly, these views imply that puritans were guilty of a simplistic surface reading of scripture. Any perceived misinterpretation could thus be blamed on a misplaced Biblicism: "They idolised the record to such an extent as wholly to miss its extended meaning".[24] Finally, these views make the assumption that puritans (and their opponents) had reached a consensus on what the literal sense actually *was*. Protestant hermeneutic positions can be contrasted with Catholic exegesis as a battle between the literal and the allegorical methods, as if there were only two forms of exegesis with firmly drawn lines between them. To presume that such a clear-cut dichotomy existed is to grossly over simplify the nature of seventeenth-century hermeneutics.

Positively, recent work has begun to explore the complexities and nuances of the puritan use of the literal sense in much greater depth. Building on earlier studies such as John R. Knott's *Sword of the Spirit: Puritan Responses to the Bible* (1980)[25] and Christopher Hill's *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (1993), Thomas H. Luxon's *Literal Figures: Puritan Allegory and the Reformation Crisis in Representation* (1995) examined the numerous allegorical and typological readings of texts in the seventeenth century. Luxon was led to conclude that "at the heart of Puritan literalism lies a hard kernel of allegory".[26]

Within studies of puritan eschatology, Crawford Gribben's work has also emphasised a hermeneutical shift in reading the book of Revelation in the period 1580–1660. He found that a stable "Genevan" hermeneutic was undermined by

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[21]Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 2–3.

[22]Paul J. Korshin, *Typologies in England 1650–1820* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 42–43.

[23]Douglas Culver, *Albion and Ariel* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), p. 56. While Culver defines this approach later as an "*usus loquendi*, grammatical-syntactical hermeneutic" (p. 67 n36), he does not maintain this definition throughout his study.

[24]Farrar, *History*, p. 375.

[25]Knott, *Sword*, pp. 7, 48, 89, 94. Knott stressed that while puritan readings of the Bible were committed to a "literal" interpretation, they also featured a rich typological and figurative stream of thought.

[26]Thomas H. Luxon, *Literal Figures: Puritan Allegory and the Reformation Crisis in Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 108–165.

an increasing interiorisation of the text, with puritan thought drifting towards the conflation of "sign and thing signified" found in Quakerism.[27] Most recently, Jeffrey K. Jue argued for a "double-literal sense" within puritan readings of the Old Testament. In Jue's view, the "double-literal sense" was closer to analogy than typology. He argued that for New England settlers in particular, this provided a paradigm for reading both themselves and their texts.[28] Similarly, Lisa Gordis has claimed that in seventeenth-century New England, ministers and congregations struggled to come to terms with the hermeneutical openness of the text suggested by a "literal" and individual Spirit-led reading. She sees a shift towards a more structured form of interpretation *through* ministers, as controversies exposed the inadequacies and dangers of an uneducated "literal" reading.[29] Peter Harrison's *The Bible, Protestantism and the Rise of Natural Science* noted the use of a literal hermeneutic served to aid the scientific revolution and promote a more nuanced, rationalistic view of the world.[30] Marcus Walsh has similarly served to highlight the attempts of Protestant interpreters to position themselves as impartial interpreters of the text in contrast to the didactic judges of the Roman Catholic Church.[31]

Perhaps most importantly, Kevin Killeen has shown the ways in which the literal sense served to present a number of complex positions and form a vital part of the history of reading. His work has highlighted, in particular, a growing historicist drive in seventeenth-century thought; a desire to understand ancient works in their own historical contexts.[32] This book follows Killeen in emphasising the importance of an increasing sense of historicity among early modern commentators, and asking the question of how this historicity emerged specifically in commentaries on apocalyptic scripture. Where it diverges from his work is in both its focus, and the kind of historicity it chooses to emphasise. Where Killeen has traced a

[27]Crawford Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium: Literature and Theology, 1550–1682* (Revised Edition) (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), e.g. pp. 177–204, 214–229.

[28]Jeffrey K. Jue, *Heaven Upon Earth: Joseph Mede (1586–1638) and the Legacy of Millenarianism* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), pp. 195–211.

[29]Lisa M. Gordis, *Opening Scripture: Bible Reading and Interpretive Authority in Puritan New England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 13–226.

[30]Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism and the Rise of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); "Reinterpreting Nature in Early Modern Europe: Natural Philosophy, Biblical Exegesis and the Contemplative Life" in, *The Word and the World: Biblical Exegesis and Early Modern Science*, eds Kevin Killeen and Peter J. Forshaw (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), pp. 25–44. See, however, James Dougal Fleming's response in the same volume, which accuses Harrison of over-simplifying the idea of the literal sense (Fleming, "Making Sense of Science and the Literal: Modern Semantics and Early Modern Hermeneutics" in *Word and the World*, pp. 45–57).

[31]Marcus Walsh, 'Profession and Authority: The interpretation of the Bible in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *Literature and Theology* 9:4 (Dec. 1999), pp. 383–398.

[32]Kevin Killeen, *Biblical Scholarship, Science and Politics in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009); 'Chastising with Scorpions: Reading the Old Testament in early modern England', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 73:3 (2010), 491–506. See also the introduction in Killeen and Forshaw's *Word and the World*.

growing historicity in attempts to understand the cultural backgrounds to texts (often focused on seemingly insignificant cultural details or *curosia*) and the influence of hermeneutics on science, this book examines a growing historicist reading from a different angle – as an interest in understanding scripture in accordance with the meaning that it would have had for its original readers. Of course, these two approaches are inherently linked. But by considering how ancient readers had read the Bible, seventeenth-century exegetes had to ask particularly uncomfortable questions that did not necessarily arise in the context of historical scholarship and the examination of *curosia*. The interpretation of unfulfilled prophecies which seemingly predicted a restoration of the Jews to the holy land was one of these questions. As Richard Muller has noted, Old Testament promises of a restored Jewish kingdom emphasise "more pointedly than any other class of texts, the problem of literal meaning, future referent, and ultimate intended implication of a text".[33] Was a "spiritual" application to the Gentile church a valid reading within this new hermeneutical context? This book argues that for a number of Judeo-centric writers, the answer to this question was "no". The promises of a restoration of the Jews were to be literally fulfilled.

This obviously touches on a number of other areas, as puritans exhibited a range of attitudes towards Jews and Judaism. The Jews were a visual reminder of God's judgement, destroyed for their crime of deicide,[34] those who "refused & murdered the Lord of glory . . . [who] to this present houre, cease not to blaspheme & spit out their venim against Christ his church, his gospel and his servants".[35] At the same time, however, the righteous Jew in the Old Testament represented the ideal Christian, a fellow member of the universal church and of the one covenant people of God. Abraham, David and the prophets were not only types of Christ, but also types of the puritans themselves. As Thomas Luxon noted, the Jew became a remarkable figure that embodied the complexities of puritan typology and selfhood. The Jew was simultaneously the other and the self, always the type of which the puritan was the antitype.[36] This reading of the figure of "the Jew" obviously presented a challenge to literal readings of Old Testament prophecy. If the Jew was merely a type, it followed that any literal reading of Old Testament promises was flawed. The typological conception of the Jew demanded a figurative reading of the Old Testament. National Israel became a "perfite example of a Churche, and common wealth",[37] a type of the church (and the individual Christian) awaiting their antitype.

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[33]Richard A. Muller, "The Hermeneutic of Promise and Fulfilment in Calvin's Exegesis of the Old Testament Prophecies of the Kingdom" in *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. David Steinmetz (London: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 70.

[34]Nathanael Homes, *The New World, or, The New Reformed Church* (London, 1641), p. 31.

[35]Thomas Draxe, *The Worldes Resurrection, or The Generall Calling of the Jewes* (London, 1608), sig. 2v.

[36]Luxon, *Literal Figures,* pp. 54–62.

[37]Heinrich Bullinger, *A Hundred Sermons Upon the Apocalipse of Jesu Christ* (London, 1573), sig. 10v.

The tension between typological readings of the self and "literal" readings of the text was immediately highlighted and had to be confronted by puritan interpreters. This problem was magnified in the prophetic books of the Old Testament. Daniel and Ezekiel in particular provided clear – and unfulfilled – descriptions of a restored and glorified Jewish kingdom, which suggested either a strictly literal interpretation of a Jewish restoration, or an entirely mystical application to the church triumphant. By an application of an increasingly historicised literal sense – an approach I label as "consistent literalism" – it became possible to focus on the importance of the physical restoration of the Jews to Palestine and predict a millennial future based around a Jewish empire.

In emphasising the importance of an increasingly historicised reading of scripture in the seventeenth century, this book therefore suggests that Judeo-centrism was tied explicitly to the emergence of important hermeneutical trends in the period. This was not an "arbitrary" exegesis, but one build on solid historical methods. Such a claim can, of course, appear to be suggesting that the first signs of the emergence of higher criticism were evident in puritan England. This is not my intention; this book does not aim to present a Whiggish reading of exegetical history, in which puritans stumbled towards the light of a clear, enlightened, "modern" hermeneutic (if such a thing can even be said to exist). It does, however, aim to highlight once again the inherent complexity and sophistication of thought within puritan hermeneutics; an important task, as the old view of the period as naively Biblicist can still be seen in some contemporary scholarship.[38] It also aims to address an important gap in the literature of puritan millennialism by engaging the question of hermeneutics head on.

1.1 Returning to the Puritan Apocalypse

Interest in puritan apocalyptic has waxed and waned since the subject's own golden age in the 1970s. William Lamont's *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion 1603–1660* (1969) was the first work to argue that millenarian speculation was not unusual amongst puritans, and was instead the driving force in many of their

[38]Norman Vance, "More Light? Biblical Criticism and Enlightenment Attitudes", *Religion in the Age of Enlightenment* 2 (2010), pp. 131–152. Vance does make the crucial recognition that a "literalistic" exegesis which viewed the Old Testament as containing scientifically exact descriptions of events such as creation has rarely been the mainstream position in historical Christianity; it was certainly not affirmed by the majority of the Fathers, Scholastics or Enlightenment Christian thinkers. However, his contention that an over-emphasis on the Bible in the Reformation led to overly-simplistic hermeneutical positions is unfair – see the studies cited above for evidence of the complex nature of early modern hermeneutics.

beliefs. This was followed by John Wilson's *Pulpit in Parliament* (1969),[39] Peter Toon's edited collection *The Puritans, The Millennium, and the Future of Israel* (1970),[40] Christopher Hill's *Antichrist in the Seventeenth Century* (1971),[41] Bernard Capp's *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (1972),[42] Tai Liu's *Discord in Zion: The Puritan Divines and the Puritan Revolution 1640–1660* (1973)[43] and Bryan Ball's *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (1975).[44] A second wave of literature emerged at the end of the decade, with key works such as Richard Bauckham's *Tudor Apocalypse* (1978) and Paul Christianson's *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (1978), which traced a shift towards an emphasis on political action in apocalyptic commentaries into the 1640s. Katherine Firth's *Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530–1645* (1979), meanwhile, argued for the application of eschatology to history by puritans. All of these works examined broad traditions, rather than focusing on a single author. Arthur H. Williamson applied a similar approach to Scotland in his *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI* (1979). Few works on the subject appeared in the 1980s,[45] although Richard Popkin's important works helped to maintain interest in the subject throughout the 1990s.[46] In that decade millennialism was an important part of the debate

[39]John F. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English Civil Wars 1640–1648* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969). Wilson argued for a millennial theme running through the Long Parliament fast sermons.

[40]*The Puritans, The Millennium, and the Future of Israel*, ed. Peter Toon (Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 1970, rpt. 2002). A useful collection covering a range of themes including the restoration of the Jews, Quaker eschatology and objections to millenarian thought.

[41]Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). Hill traced the Antichrist theme used to demonise the pope and (later) parliament and protector.

[42]Bernard Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972). Studying those who believed that the "fifth monarchy" (i.e. Christ's earthly monarchy) of Daniel 2 would soon be set up on earth, often by violent means instituted by his people.

[43]Tai Liu, *Discord in Zion: The Puritan Divines and the Puritan Revolution 1640–1660* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973). Liu traced the use of eschatology in the Civil Wars.

[44]Bryan W. Ball, *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975). An excellent overview and analysis of eschatology in the period as a whole.

[45]David Brady examined views on the "number of the beast" in *The Contribution of British Writers between 1560 and 1830 to the Interpretation of Revelation 13:16–18* (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1983). C.A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich edited a thoughtful collection of papers in *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature*, eds C.A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1984). George Kroeze's 1985 doctoral thesis, "The Variety of Millennial Hopes in the English Reformation 1560–1660", trod little new ground and drew broadly on Firth, Bauckham and Christianson.

[46]Richard Popkin produced a number of key works. These include *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought 1650–1800*, ed Richard Popkin (Leiden: Brill, 1988), which included a fine essay by Christopher Hill on Jewish conversion in Andrew Marvell. See also *Menasseh ben Israel and His World* eds Yosef Kaplan, Henry Méchoulan, Richard H. Popkin

on how New England settlers viewed themselves and their purpose in America.[47] The most important recent studies of the subject has been Crawford Gribben's *Puritan Millennium* (2001, revised edition 2008) and Jeffrey K. Jue's *Heaven upon Earth: Joseph Mede and the Legacy of Millenarianism* (2006). Together, their works have shown the most nuanced treatment of hermeneutics of any studies of the puritan apocalyptic. Where Gribben's study remains the most sophisticated examination of a range of puritan authors within the millennial tradition,[48] Jue's work on Mede represents a compelling attempt to move the field forward. Jue aimed to complicate readings of seventeenth-century eschatology, arguing for a broad "moderate" millenarianism with Mede at its centre. Jue also provided a brief but extremely useful overview of puritan millenarianism in the 2008 *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*.[49]

Although most studies of puritan millenarianism have touched upon the literal sense within prophetic hermeneutics, their research has focused primarily on radical readings.[50] However, as Jue and Gribben have shown, even the "heresy" of millenarianism[51] could be accepted by conservative thinkers such as Mede and

(Leiden: Brill, 1989); *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews* eds Richard H. Popkin and Gordon Weiner (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994); and the four volumes of *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture*, published in the same series as this book in 2001.

[47]Most clearly seen in Theodore D. Bozeman's magisterial *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). Bozeman attacked Perry Miller's "Errand in the wilderness" thesis which saw millenarianism as the driving force behind puritan emigration, emphasising instead the puritan desire to return to an Edenic idyll. Avihu Zakai attempted to rebut Bozeman in his *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), which also emphasised an increasing focus on linking readings of Revelation to particular historical events. Other works of interest include Rodney Petersen's study of the interpretation of the "two witnesses" in Revelation (*Preaching in the Last Days: The Theme of 'Two Witnesses' in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)).

[48]See also Gribben's wider ranging *Evangelical Millennialism in the Transatlantic World, 1500–2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[49]Jue, "Puritan Millenarianism in Old and New England" in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, eds Coffey and Lim, pp. 259–276. There is little focus on the development of millenarianism prior to Mede.

[50]Knott focuses his prophetic reading on Gerrard Winstanley, though he does mention the prophetic readings of Richard Baxter in passing (*Sword*, pp. 75, 85–105). Luxon concentrates his prophetic readings on radicals like Thomas Tany (*Literal Figures*, pp. 108–109). Gordis does not discuss eschatological concerns.

[51]The terms "millennial/ist" and "millenarian/ist" have been the victim of loose definition in several studies. These misuses have been catalogued by both Gribben (*Puritan Millennium*, pp. 8–11) and Kenneth Gibson ("Eschatology, Apocalypse and Millenarianism in Seventeenth Century Protestant Thought" (Unpublished PhD thesis, Nottingham Trent University, 1999), pp. 8–17). While some have equated millenarianism with a belief in the imminent end of the world (e.g. J.T. Cliffe, *The Puritan Gentry* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 208), millenarian belief instead revolved around a period of future, earthly blessing. Additionally, a distinction is sometimes made between a pacifistic "millennial" belief and an activist, potentially radical "millenarian" position. This is not a helpful distinction, as it can often descend into needless terminological hair-splitting.

James Ussher. To ignore these writings in favour of those at the fringes of the puritan tradition represents an unfortunate oversight. This is noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, it highlights the continued misconception that puritan millenarian belief was limited to either a small number of sectaries, or that it inevitably led to radical behaviour. While it is accepted that millenarian beliefs were in no way unorthodox, the idea that they led towards radicalism still persists.[52] This assumption leads to a second oversight. It suggests that the study of puritan prophetic hermeneutics has little value and application to the understanding of mainstream readings of the Bible in the seventeenth century. However, the recognition that eschatological concerns often proved to be the driving force behind core beliefs and actions suggests that the strategies employed in their interpretation should prove central to puritan hermeneutics as a whole. Biblical prophecy was highly symbolic and demanded an immediate appreciation of the difficulties of a "literal" interpretation. It challenged the interpreter to define clearly the difference between symbolism, allegory and typology. It is an area we should expect to see puritan interpreters wrestling with and defining the literal sense of scripture. Far from being viewed as the domain of radicals, there should be a greater appreciation of the creative interpretive energy expended by mainstream biblical commentators on the prophetic passages.

By recognising that eschatological hermeneutics were a broadly orthodox concern, it is possible to appraise the puritan use of the literal sense in prophecy, and to form a greater understanding of its nuances by examining its application in the most challenging scriptural contexts. This enables a greater appreciation of the depth and complexity of the puritan millenarian tradition. While Gribben and Jue have added welcome nuance to the debate, there remains an over-simplistic reading of the "literal" sense in a number of recent studies.[53] Such interpretations are often based on a desire to read contemporary Evangelical positions into seventeenth-century

In this study "millennial/ism" and "millenarian/ism" will be used interchangeably to describe a position which held to any form of future, earthly blessing *based upon* Rev. 20 (see Jue, "Puritan Millenarianism", pp. 260–261). Millenarianism can be further defined by using contemporary theological terms. Three major millennial positions are recognised. "Pre-millennialism" refers to the belief that Christ will return and physically inaugurate the millennium at its start. "Post-millennialism" refers to a belief that the earth will move into a millennial state through a series of great conversions, with Christ returning at the period's end. "Amillennialism" is the belief that there will be no specific millennial period in the future, but rather a "spiritual" reign of the Saints through Christ. While these theological terms are anachronistic when used in a seventeenth-century context, they nonetheless prove a useful basis from which to define more detailed millenarian positions.

[52] See for example, Liu, *Discord in Zion*.

[53] To the statements quoted above we can add Dan Cohn-Sherbok's claim that puritan millenarianism developed from "a millenarian concept which interpreted the Bible literally". Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Politics of Apocalypse*: *The History and Influence of Christian Zionism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), p. 3.