

3. Jesus Christ Fulfilled the Word of Prophecy

The previous two lessons have established that the foundation of God's household is the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, and that all prophecy and teaching not found in the New Testament is false. Of these apostles and prophets, Paul wrote in Eph 2:19-21:

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

From this foundation alone, the holy temple of God rises. Altering and changing the teaching of these apostles and prophets is such a disastrous sin that Paul pronounced eternal condemnation on those that do it in Gal 1:8: "8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" When these apostles and prophets died, prophecy ceased. Paul taught in 1 Cor 13:8: "8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away." Jude also taught that the faith was once for all delivered in Jude 3-4: "I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints."

All other prophecy and teaching not found in the New Testament is false and fulfills the prophecy of Christ in Matt 7:15-16:

15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?"

The nature of true prophecy and false prophecy created an inescapable conclusion: Jesus Christ fulfilled the word of prophecy of the Old and New Testaments. The revelation was completed in the New Testament.

The Meaning of the Prophecy of the Old Testament Hidden

The interpretation of prophecy comes only as the Holy Spirit moves men (2 Peter 1:21). Joseph asked Pharaoh in Gen 40:8: "Do not interpretations belong to God?" God has chosen the time and place to reveal his mystery, leaving the prophets of old with explanation to the prophecies that they were giving. Peter explains in 1 Peter 1:10-12:

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

According to Peter, the ones, who had preached the gospel to them by the Holy Spirit, were the ones who revealed the meaning of the prophecies. The prophets searched intently with the greatest care; but according to 1 Cor 2:7-10, not even the rulers knew God's secret wisdom:

7 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 However, as it is written:

"No eye has seen,
no ear has heard,
no mind has conceived
what God has prepared for those who love him" –
10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

The mystery is God's, but he has revealed his mystery to the apostles and prophets by his Spirit.

God, Job, and Moses Foretell the Coming of Jesus, the Christ

The oldest of the prophecies – those from Jehovah, Job, and Moses – foretold the coming of the Christ. After the fall of man, Jehovah pronounced a curse on the serpent, the devil, in Gen 3:15:

15 And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel."

The offspring of woman would crush the head of the serpent, foretelling the victory of Jesus. From this beginning, God's mystery unfolded in the law and the prophets, promising redemption at the fullness of time. During the patriarchal age, Job already understood the implications of a living redeemer, coming to the earth. Job 19:25 reads:

25 I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

Moses, many years later, but still so long ago, spoke of the redeemer and his coming in Deut 18:15: "15 The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him." Embedded in this prophecy is the first notice that the coming redeemer would be a prophet commanding the authority of God: "You must listen to him." God himself used these same words that Moses had used in Matt 17:5: "5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!'"

Philip, as he stood before his accusers, cited this same passage from Moses to prove the authority and divinity of Jesus in Acts 7:37-38:

37 "This is that Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.' 38 He was in the assembly in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us.

From the very beginning to the Revelation, the scriptures foretold the coming of the redeemer as one to whom all humankind must listen.

Jesus Christ Fulfilled the Law and the Prophets

Did Jesus Christ fulfill the law and the prophets? Since Jesus himself and the apostles and prophets affirmed this very proposition, one must accept or deny that they were telling the truth. Jesus contended vigorously that he was the fulfillment of the law and the prophets in

his Sermon on the Mount in Matt 5:17-18: "17 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." Of course, the Lord told the truth and persisted in telling this same truth up until he ascended into heaven. Just before his ascension, he told the apostles in Luke 24:44:

44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: **Everything** must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." [Emphasis added].

When the Lord said everything, he excluded nothing. He spoke without equivocation or doubt of any kind, leaving no doors open to some additional, unfulfilled prophecies that would create a different conclusion to the New Testament and the Revelation—no future kings, no earthly kingdoms, no new and different resolutions to the gospel story. Jesus was the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, as taught in Rev 22:13: "13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

The apostles and prophets understood him to be the fulfillment of **everything** in the law and the prophets. Peter in his second gospel sermon in Acts 3:18 affirmed this very fact: "18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer." Paul, during his first missionary journey, preached in Acts 13:32-35 that Jesus was the fulfillment of what God had prepared:

32 "We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

"You are my Son;
today I have become your Father.'

34 The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words:

"I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.'

35 So it is stated elsewhere:

"You will not let your Holy One see decay.'

What Jesus said about himself—that he was the fulfillment of everything—the apostles and prophets affirmed. People today cannot say they accept the Lord on one hand and deny that he fulfilled everything on the other hand. Jesus, the Christ fulfilled **everything** in the law and the prophets. Without the complete fulfillment of the law and the prophets, there is no gospel, no good news, and no redeemer, Christ the Lord.

Jesus Announced as the Christ

The angels from heaven and God himself announced the coming of Jesus the savior, making certain the word of the prophets from hundreds of years before. Prior to his birth, the angel of the Lord announced the coming of the savior to Joseph and Mary. To Joseph, he said in Matt 1:20-23:

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" — which means, "God with us."

The angel noted that all of this was in fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the virgin birth. Isa 7:14-15 had foretold, "14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." The angel gave the same statement of fulfillment of prophesy to Mary in Luke 1:30-33:

30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.
31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

These lessons will return to this passage later; but for now, they note that Jesus would be the son of the most high, he would sit on the throne of David, and he would reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom, we learn, will never end. Millennialists deny that Jesus fulfilled all of these prophecies in the New Testament, leaving the flood gate open to their false prophecies and teaching.

Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, also announced the coming of Jesus, the Christ, confirming all the prophecies all the way back to Job. In Luke 1:68-70, he said:

68 "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come and has redeemed his people.
69 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David
70 (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago).

The phrase—"He raised up a horn of salvation for us"—fulfills the prophecy of David in Ps 18:2:

2 The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.
He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

More emphatic, is Zachariah's own declaration: ". . . as he said through holy prophets of long ago."

In addition, the angels of heaven announced the Savior in Luke 2:8-14, Jesus as the fulfillment of God's purpose was the Savior, Christ the Lord:

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Jesus Lived as the Christ

From the beginning to the end of his life, Jesus lived as the Christ and as the King. God himself testified to Jesus as his son in Matt 3:16-17:

16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

John the Baptist recognized Jesus as the Lamb of God in John 1:29-31:

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

The revelation of Jesus to Israel as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, was the reason that John came baptizing.

Jesus himself announced that he was the only begotten of the father in John 3:16-17:

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

John recognized Jesus in John 3:31-36 as the one who spoke the words of God, having the Holy Spirit of God without limit:

31 "The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. 32 He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. 33 The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. 34 For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. 35 The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. 36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

John declared the truth of Christ that renders all millennial arguments void: he is (present tense) above all.

Jesus announced his fulfillment as the promised prophet and king who was greater than any of those of the Old or New Testaments. Matthew recorded the following narrative in Matt 16:13-16:

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

He was the Christ, the son of the living God.

God revealed to Peter that Jesus was the rock, the son of the living God, and upon that rock, Jesus would build his church in Matt 16:17-19.

17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build **my church**, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of **the kingdom of heaven**; whatever you bind on earth will be bound [Or have been] in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." [Emphasis added].

The Lord finished this passage by using *church* and *kingdom* synonymously. In the church were the keys of the kingdom and not even the gates of Hades could prevail against it. Christ and his church fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the kingdom.

Once again, on the Mount of Transfiguration Matt 17:1-5, God recognized Jesus as the Christ:

1 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

In 2 Peter 1:16-18, Peter recounted the transfiguration event and said that Christ received honor and glory and majesty, of which the apostles were eyewitnesses:

16 We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." 18 We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

Jesus Died as the Christ

Jesus who lived as the Christ, the son of God, died as the Christ, the son of God. According to his teaching in Matt 26:53-54, his death fulfilled the prophecies:

Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

The fact that he could have called, and did not do so, more than twelve legions of angels so that the scriptures might be fulfilled, illustrates that even in death he commanded all authority as the son of God. If he were ever going to fight to establish an earthly kingdom, that was the time. However, John recorded in John 18:36: "36 Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.'" These two passages show that an earthly kingdom was not any part of God's eternal purpose as revealed in the prophets and made certain in Christ.

When Jesus died, the temple and the entire earth testified to his divine nature as the son of God. Even those watching on knew the significance of what they were witnessing. Matthew told the story in Matt 27:50-54:

50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. 52 The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. 53 They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

When he appeared before Pilate, in John 18:37, for interrogation, Jesus claimed in the present tense to be king:

37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

At the very close of the New Testament and the Bible, for that matter, Jesus claimed sovereignty and divinity. Jesus said in Rev 22:12-13; 16-17:

12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. . . .

16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

The Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Root and Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star—all of these come by the Lord's own testimony. Who can doubt that Jesus was the complete and perfect fulfillment of God's eternal purpose? Any man prophesying anything different will be a false prophet. And of those prophets and teachers, the Bible concludes in Rev 22:18-19:

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. 19 And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Study Questions from the Scriptures

1. 1 Peter 1:10-12: How did the prophets speak of what was to come? Who was pointing their way? What spirit told those who preach the gospel what to say?
2. 1 Cor 2:7-10: When was God's secret wisdom hidden? What happened because the rulers of this age did not understand it?
3. Acts 26:22-23: What did the prophets and Moses say would happen?
4. Acts 7:37-38: What did Moses tell the Israelites? What did Moses receive to pass on to us?
5. Deut 18:15-16: Who will God raise up from among their brothers?
6. Gen 3:15: What will the offspring of women do to the serpent?
7. Job 19:25: Who did Job know lived? Where would he stand?
8. Matt 5:17-18: What did Christ come to do with the Law and the prophets?

9. Luke 24:44: What must be fulfilled? Where can one find these things?
10. Acts 3:18-19: What did God foretell through the prophets?
11. Acts 13:32-35: What is the good news? Who would never decay?
12. Matt 1:20-23: What did the angel of the Lord tell Joseph? What did the angel say Jesus would do? Whom did the prophets say would give birth to a son? What was his name?
13. Matt 1:20-23: What did the angel tell Joseph? Why was the child to be named Jesus?
14. Isa 7:14-15: What sign would be given by the Lord himself?
15. Luke 1:30-33: What would Jesus be called? Whose throne was he given? How long would he reign? How long will his kingdom last?
16. Luke 1:68-70: Why is God to be praised? What has he raised up for us? Through whom did God say this long ago?
17. Luke 2:8-14: What was the good news? Who had been born? Why the celebration?
18. Matt 3:16-17: What did Jesus do immediately after he was baptized? What did God say?
19. John 1:29-31: What did John the Baptist call Jesus? What was Jesus to take away?
20. John 3:16-18: Who did God give for the world? What do believers receive? Why did God send his son?
21. John 3:31-36: How does one certify that God is truthful? How much of the Spirit did God give his son? Who has eternal life?
22. Matt 16:13-19: Who did people say that Jesus was? Who did Peter say that Jesus was? What did Christ say that he would build? What would not overcome it? Who has the keys of the kingdom?
23. Matt 17:1-5: What did God say about Jesus? To whom are we to listen?
24. 2 Peter 1:16-18: Of what were the apostles eyewitnesses? Whose voice did they hear?
25. Matt 26:53-54: Why could God put legions of angels at Jesus' disposal? Why didn't he?
26. Matt 27:50-54: What happened immediately upon the death of Jesus? What did the centurions say?
27. Rev 22:12-17: Who is Jesus? What happens to those who wash their robes? Who is outside the city?