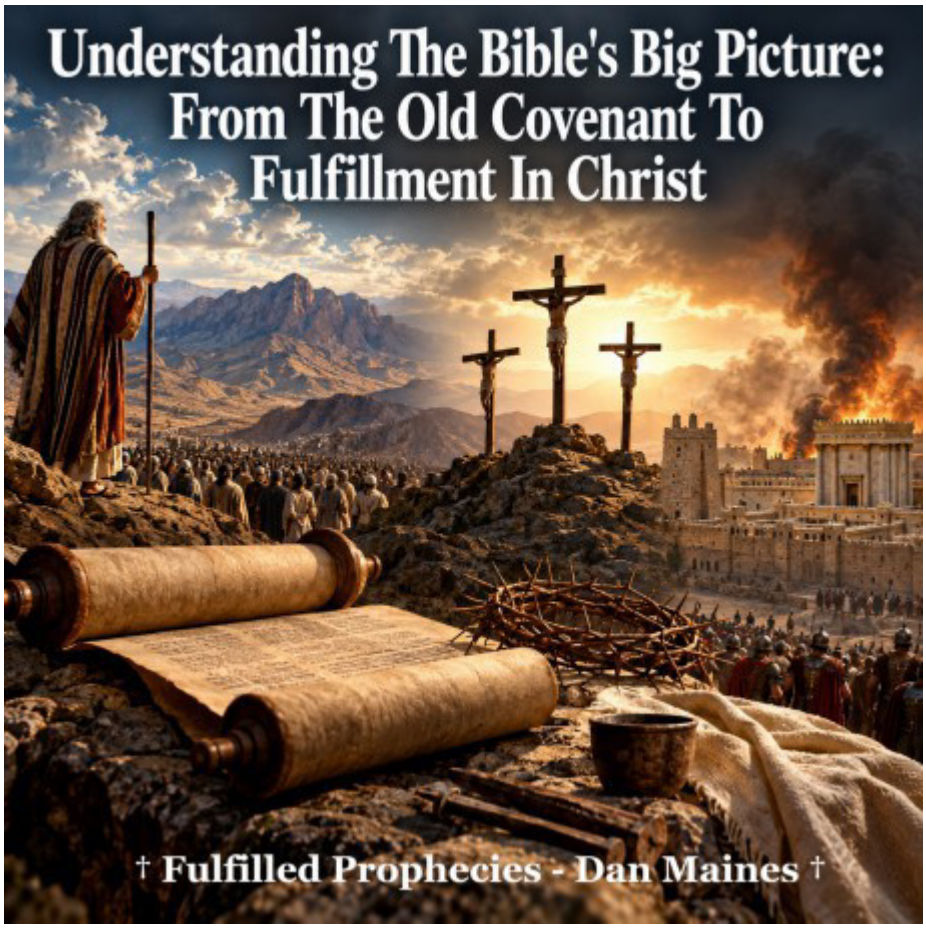
Fulfilled Prophecies

Understanding The Bible's Big Picture: From The Old Covenant To Fulfillment In Christ



By Dan Maines

Understanding The Bible's Big Picture: From The Old Covenant To Fulfillment In Christ

Introduction

† Many Christians have read portions of the Bible but have never been shown how the entire biblical story fits together. They know about Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, and Revelation, but they don't always understand how these people and events are connected.

† The Bible isn't a collection of unrelated stories. It's the unfolding account of God's plan of redemption, beginning with

the fall of mankind, continuing through His covenant promises to Israel, and reaching fulfillment in Jesus Christ (Luke 24:27; Ephesians 1:9-10).
† To understand the fulfilled perspective, we must first understand the Old Covenant, why God established it, whom it was given to, and why Jesus came to fulfill it (Exodus 19:5-6; Hebrews 8:6-13).
† The central question isn't what God might do thousands of years from now. It's what God promised, when He promised to accomplish it, and whether Jesus and His apostles told the truth about the time of fulfillment (Matthew 24:34; Revelation 1:1-3).
† This study presents the big picture in simple language so that even someone unfamiliar with Scripture can understand the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

The Beginning: Sin, Separation, And God's Promise

Genesis 3:15
And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.
† The biblical story begins with creation, mankind's disobedience, and the consequences of sin. Adam and Eve lost their place in Eden, but God didn't abandon His purpose for mankind (Genesis 3:6-24).
† God's promise concerning the woman's offspring points forward to Jesus Christ, who came to defeat the power of sin and death (Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8).
† From Genesis forward, Scripture develops the story of redemption. The answer to mankind's separation from God would come through Christ, not through an earthly government or a rebuilt temple (Romans 5:18-19; Ephesians 2:13-18).

God's Promise To Abraham: Blessing For All Nations

Genesis 12:3
And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses

you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.
† God called Abraham and promised that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. This promise was greater than one nation or one geographical territory (Galatians 3:8).
† Abraham's descendants became the nation of Israel, but the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise was Jesus Christ, the promised offspring through whom the nations receive blessing (Galatians 3:16).
† This is important because the Bible's destination isn't the permanent separation of Jews and Gentiles. God's purpose was to bring believers from all nations together in Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16; Galatians 3:26-29).

The Old Covenant: God's Agreement With Israel

Exodus 19:5-6
'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'
† After bringing Israel out of Egypt, God established a covenant with them at Mount Sinai. A covenant is a binding agreement that establishes a relationship with promises and responsibilities (Exodus 24:3-8).
† The Old Covenant included the Law of Moses, the priesthood, animal sacrifices, the tabernacle, and later the temple in Jerusalem (Leviticus 16:1-34; Hebrews 9:1-10).
† These institutions belonged to Israel's covenant relationship with God. They weren't originally given to every nation on earth as a permanent religious system (Deuteronomy 5:2-3; Psalm 147:19-20).
† The Law revealed sin and demonstrated mankind's need for redemption, but animal sacrifices couldn't permanently remove sin or provide the completed salvation that Christ would accomplish (Romans 3:20; Hebrews 10:1-4).

† Understanding this distinction is essential. The Old Covenant was real, holy, and purposeful, but it was never intended to replace the greater covenant that God would establish through His Son (Galatians 3:19-25; Hebrews 8:6-7).

The Prophets: Israel's Failure And God's Promise

Jeremiah 31:31
"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,
† Israel repeatedly broke God's covenant. The prophets warned of judgment, called the people to repentance, and announced that God would establish a New Covenant (Jeremiah 11:10; Ezekiel 36:25-27).
† Jeremiah didn't announce that God would repair the Old Covenant and continue it forever. He announced a new one, showing that the Mosaic covenant wasn't God's final arrangement (Jeremiah 31:32-34).
† The prophets also promised a coming Messiah, a righteous King, and a kingdom that would endure. These promises directed Israel's hope toward Jesus Christ (Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 7:13-14).
† The prophets must be read within Israel's covenant history. Their warnings about judgment and restoration weren't disconnected predictions about modern political events (Deuteronomy 28:15-68; Daniel 9:24-27).
† God's plan was moving toward a new relationship with His people, established through Christ rather than through the continuing sacrifices of the temple (Hebrews 9:11-15).

Jesus Christ: The Fulfillment Of The Law And Prophets

Matthew 5:17
Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.
† Jesus didn't come to begin an unrelated religion. He came as

Israel's promised Messiah to accomplish what the Law and Prophets had anticipated (Luke 24:44).
† His birth, ministry, death, and resurrection fulfilled the promises concerning the Messiah and established the foundation of the New Covenant (Acts 13:32-33; Hebrews 9:15).
† Jesus was the true sacrifice for sin, the greater High Priest, and the mediator of the better covenant. What the Old Covenant pictured through ceremonies and sacrifices became reality in Him (Hebrews 7:23-28; Hebrews 10:11-14).
† His sacrifice was completed at the cross. The removal of the Old Covenant temple system in AD 70 didn't add anything to His sacrifice, but publicly demonstrated that the former covenant order had reached its end (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 10:18).
† The fulfilled perspective recognizes Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's promises, not as someone who postponed those promises for another generation thousands of years later (2 Corinthians 1:20; Luke 21:22).

The Last Days: Whose Last Days Were They?

Hebrews 1:1-2
God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,
in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.
† Many Christians have been taught that the last days refer exclusively to events in our modern world. But the writer of Hebrews said that he and his original readers were already living in the last days (Acts 2:16-17).
† The New Testament identifies the first-century period as the closing age of the Old Covenant. Jesus appeared at the consummation of the ages to accomplish redemption (Hebrews 9:26).
† Peter applied Joel's prophecy concerning the last days to the

events taking place at Pentecost, not to a generation thousands of years later (Acts 2:14-21).
† The apostles were living during the transition from the Old Covenant order to the fully established New Covenant order. Their time statements must be understood in that historical setting (1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 8:13).
† When we read the words last days, we must ask whose age was ending. The fulfilled perspective understands these passages as referring to the final days of Israel's Old Covenant age, not the destruction of planet Earth (Matthew 24:3; Hebrews 8:13).

Jesus' Prophecy: Jerusalem And That Generation

Matthew 24:34
Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.
† Jesus warned His disciples that Jerusalem and its temple would face judgment. His prophecy began with the announcement that the magnificent temple buildings would be destroyed (Matthew 24:1-2).
† When the disciples asked when these things would happen, Jesus described events leading to that judgment and identified the generation in which they would occur (Matthew 24:3; Luke 21:32).
† The words this generation referred to the people living when Jesus spoke. He didn't tell His disciples to expect these events thousands of years after their deaths (Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:34).
† The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was the historical judgment that ended the temple-centered Old Covenant system. The fulfilled perspective understands Jesus' coming in judgment as a covenantal coming, consistent with Old Testament descriptions of divine judgment (Isaiah 19:1; Matthew 26:64).
† This doesn't mean Jesus physically returned to stand on the earth. Biblical cloud-coming language describes divine

authority, presence, and judgment (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 24:30).

The Destruction Of Jerusalem: The End Of An Age

Luke 21:20
But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.
† Jesus gave His disciples a recognizable warning. When they saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies, they were to understand that its destruction was approaching (Luke 21:21-22).
† In AD 70, Roman armies under Titus destroyed Jerusalem and its temple. The sacrificial system associated with that temple came to an end, just as Jesus had warned concerning its destruction (Matthew 24:1-2).
† Jesus described those events as days of vengeance in which what had been written would be fulfilled. This connects the judgment directly to Israel's covenant history (Luke 21:22).
† The destruction wasn't the end of the physical universe. It was the end of the Old Covenant religious order centered on Jerusalem, its temple, and its priesthood (Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 10:9).
† The physical earth continued, the nations continued, and God's kingdom continued. What ended was the former covenant arrangement that had pointed forward to Christ (Daniel 7:14; Hebrews 12:28).

The New Covenant: What Replaced The Old Covenant?

Hebrews 8:13
When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.
† The writer of Hebrews clearly identified the first covenant as obsolete. The New Covenant wasn't an addition to the Mosaic system, but a better covenant established through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 8:6).

† The Old Covenant had an earthly priesthood, repeated sacrifices, and an earthly sanctuary. The New Covenant has Jesus as the permanent High Priest and His completed sacrifice as the basis of redemption (Hebrews 7:24-27; Hebrews 9:11-12).
† Under the New Covenant, God's people aren't defined by physical descent from Abraham, circumcision, or membership in national Israel. They belong to Christ through faith (Galatians 3:26-29; Romans 2:28-29).
† The tearing of the temple veil at Jesus' death revealed the significance of His sacrifice, while the destruction of the temple in AD 70 marked the historical disappearance of the former system (Matthew 27:50-51; Hebrews 10:19-22).
† We don't need another temple, another animal sacrifice, or another Levitical priesthood. Jesus accomplished what those earlier institutions could only anticipate (Hebrews 10:10-18).

The Kingdom Of God: Are We Still Waiting?

Colossians 1:13
For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,
† Paul didn't tell believers that they would someday be transferred into Christ's kingdom. He said they had already been transferred into it (Colossians 1:12-14).
† Jesus announced that the kingdom of God had come near, and His ministry demonstrated its arrival. His resurrection and exaltation confirmed His authority as the reigning Messiah (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:32-36).
† The kingdom isn't dependent on a future political government in Jerusalem. Jesus declared that His kingdom wasn't of this world, and His reign is everlasting (John 18:36; Daniel 7:14).
† The New Covenant kingdom includes believers from every nation. Our citizenship and access to God are found in Christ rather than through an earthly temple or national boundary (Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 2:18-19).
† We aren't waiting for Jesus to begin reigning. We're called to

live faithfully under His present authority (1 Corinthians 15:25; Hebrews 12:28).

The New Jerusalem: Where Do Believers Belong?

Hebrews 12:22-23
But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,
to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,
† Notice that the writer didn't say believers would someday come to the heavenly Jerusalem. He said they had come to it (Galatians 4:26).
† The New Jerusalem represents God's New Covenant dwelling with His redeemed people. It's contrasted with the earthly Jerusalem associated with the former covenant (Galatians 4:24-26; Revelation 21:2-3).
† The New Covenant provides direct access to the Father through Jesus Christ. Believers don't need to travel to an earthly city to enter God's presence (Ephesians 2:18-22).
† The new heavens and new earth are understood in the fulfilled perspective as the new covenantal order established in Christ, not the physical destruction and replacement of the planet (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1-5).
† God's people now live under the completed work of Christ, with the privilege of approaching Him through faith (Hebrews 4:14-16; Hebrews 10:19-22).

The Book Of Revelation: Fulfillment, Not Endless Delay

Revelation 1:1
The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,
† Revelation begins by identifying its events as things that must

soon take place. Its opening also declares that the time is near (Revelation 1:3).
† The book uses symbolic language drawn from the Old Testament prophets. Its beasts, judgments, Babylon, and heavenly imagery must be understood through Scripture rather than modern newspaper headlines (Daniel 7:1-14; Ezekiel 16:1-63).
† The fulfilled perspective understands Revelation as addressing the first-century covenant crisis and the judgment that culminated in AD 70. This interpretation places its composition before Jerusalem's destruction (Revelation 11:1-2; Revelation 22:10).
† Revelation concludes by again declaring that its events were near. We shouldn't remove those time statements or redefine them to mean thousands of years (Revelation 22:6-10).
† The central message is the victory of Jesus Christ, the judgment of the old covenantal order, and the enduring reality of God's kingdom (Revelation 11:15; Revelation 21:1-4).

Historical References
† Flavius Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, described the Roman siege of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, the suffering of its inhabitants, and the collapse of the city in The Jewish War, Books 5-7.
† Tacitus, the Roman historian, also recorded the siege of Jerusalem during the reign of Vespasian and the involvement of Titus in Histories, Book 5. His surviving account is incomplete, but it provides independent Roman historical context.
† Eusebius, writing in the fourth century, preserved traditions concerning Christians leaving Jerusalem and settling in Pella before the city's destruction in Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5.
† These historical writers help establish the setting and reality of Jerusalem's destruction. They don't establish every detail of the fulfilled perspective, which must be examined through Scripture.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't have to live in fear that every war, earthquake, or political event signals the approaching end of the world. Jesus gave His first-century disciples specific warnings concerning the judgment of their generation (Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:20-22).
† We don't need to return to the Law of Moses, rebuild a temple, or restore animal sacrifices. Jesus is our High Priest, and His sacrifice is sufficient (Hebrews 7:25-27; Hebrews 10:12-18).
† We can understand the Bible more clearly when we recognize who was speaking, who was being addressed, which covenant was in effect, and when the promised events were expected to happen (1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 1:1-2).
† We aren't waiting to become citizens of Christ's kingdom. Through faith in Him, believers already belong to His kingdom and have access to the Father (Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 2:18-19).
† Fulfilled prophecy doesn't mean that our relationship with Jesus is finished. It means His promises are trustworthy, His sacrifice is complete, and His kingdom remains forever (Hebrews 13:8; Hebrews 12:28).
† Our responsibility today is to love God, love one another, grow in understanding, and share the good news of Jesus Christ (Matthew 22:37-40; Colossians 3:12-17).
† The entire biblical story points us to Christ. From God's promise in Eden to the New Jerusalem, the message is redemption, reconciliation, and life through Him (Luke 24:44; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

Q & A Appendix

Q: What is the main difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant?
A: The Old Covenant was established with Israel through Moses and included the Law, priesthood, and sacrifices. The New Covenant was established through Jesus Christ and His

completed sacrifice (Exodus 19:5-6; Hebrews 8:6-13).

Q: Does fulfilled prophecy mean everything in the Bible has ended?
A: No. It means God's prophetic promises concerning the completion of the Old Covenant age were fulfilled. Christ's kingdom, His salvation, and our relationship with Him continue (Daniel 7:14; Hebrews 12:28).

Q: Why is AD 70 important?
A: AD 70 marks the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, fulfilling Jesus' warning concerning that generation and marking the historical end of the temple-centered covenant order (Matthew 24:1-2, 34; Luke 21:20-22).

Q: Are Christians supposed to follow the Law of Moses today?
A: Christians live under the New Covenant through Christ, not under the Mosaic covenant. We're called to live by faith and love through the Spirit (Romans 7:4-6; Galatians 5:13-18).

Q: Is Jesus coming back to establish an earthly kingdom?
A: The fulfilled perspective understands His promised coming in judgment as fulfilled in the first century. Scripture teaches that Christ already reigns and that His kingdom will never end (Matthew 24:34; Acts 2:32-36; Daniel 7:14).

Q: What happened to the promises made to Abraham?
A: Those promises reached their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Everyone who belongs to Christ is Abraham's offspring and an heir according to the promise (Galatians 3:16, 26-29).

Q: Are we living in the New Jerusalem today?
A: Believers have come to the heavenly Jerusalem through Christ. It isn't an earthly city awaiting construction, but the heavenly city associated with God's redeemed people (Hebrews 12:22-23; Galatians 4:26).

Q: What should someone new to the fulfilled perspective study first?
A: Begin with Genesis 12, Exodus 19, Jeremiah 31, Matthew 24, Luke 21, Acts 2, Galatians 3, and Hebrews 8-12. These passages explain the covenant promises, the Messiah, the first-century judgment, and the New Covenant.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †
© Fulfilled Prophecies - Dan Maines.

Source Index
† Genesis 3:15; Genesis 12:3; Exodus 19:5-6; Jeremiah 31:31; Matthew 5:17; Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:20; Hebrews 1:1-2; Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 12:22-23; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:1.
† Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, Books 5-7; Tacitus, Histories, Book 5; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5.

Share on Facebook

Links

Facebook Link

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1349070089314462/posts/2158608105027319/

Fulfilled Prophecies https://www.facebook.com/groups/1349070089314462/

Dan Maines

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1349070089314462/user/100001027365819/

You may share this article freely without permission as long as you include credit to Dan Maines and/or a link to the Fulfilled Prophecies Group.