

# Fulfilled Prophecies

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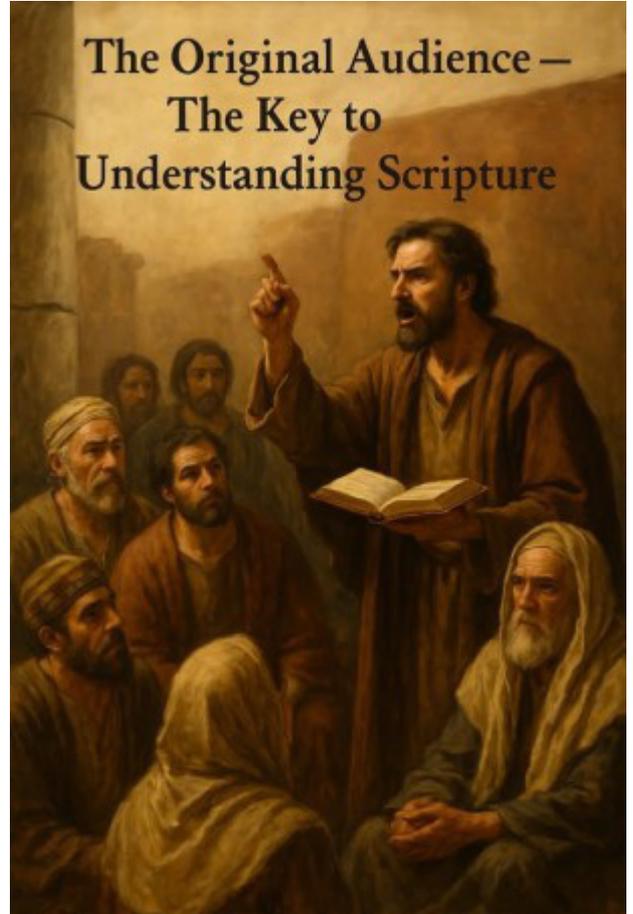
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## Audience - The Original Audience – The Key to Understanding Scripture



By Dan Maines

## The Original Audience – The Key to Understanding Scripture

Brothers and sisters in Christ, as a Preterist and student of fulfilled prophecy, I want to take a moment to highlight a foundational principle that must guide our interpretation of the Word of God: **Audience Relevance**. Without this lens, we risk distorting the truth and applying promises or judgments where they were never intended.

Let me walk you through this critical truth using Scripture and reason, step by step:

## **The Original Audience Matters**

Always ask yourself: "What did it mean to the first century disciples?" This is not just a helpful question, it is essential. It does not matter what you think a verse means today unless you first understand what it meant then.

Consider Jesus' words in **Matthew 24:34**: "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." Jesus was not speaking ambiguously. He addressed that generation, not ours. Audience relevance tells us Jesus was speaking directly to His listeners.

**Hebrews 1:1-2** says: "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..." Notice who us is. The author of Hebrews is saying they were in the last days. Not us. The original recipients were experiencing the climax of the ages.

## **Scripture Was Not Written To Us**

One of the biggest missteps in modern Christianity is treating the Bible like a direct letter to the 21st century. Let us be clear: the Bible is for us, but it was not written to us.

**Romans 15:4** reminds us: "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Paul confirms it was written for our benefit, but not to us.

When John wrote **Revelation**, he was writing to seven literal churches in Asia Minor (Revelation 1:4). They were real

churches dealing with real persecution. He was not cryptically writing to a distant generation 2,000 years later.

## **We Are Reading Someone Else's Mail**

When you open the New Testament, you are reading correspondence between apostles and early Christian communities. The issues, questions, and warnings were specific to their circumstances.

**1 Corinthians 1:2:** "To the church of God which is in Corinth..." Paul is not writing to a church in modern America. He is writing to Corinth, and everything he says must first be understood in that historical context.

**Philippians 1:1:** "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi..." Again, an audience in a specific city, at a specific time, under specific pressures.

## **"Here's What This Scripture Means To Me" – A Dangerous Statement**

In modern Christianity, people often say, "Here's what this Scripture means to me." But the only biblical truth at that point is: It does not matter what it means to you, unless you understand what it meant to them.

**2 Peter 1:20-21** warns us: "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture becomes a matter of someone's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will..." Meaning is not personal. It is rooted in what God meant, and what it meant to the people to whom it was written.

## **Time Statements Were Not Elastic**

Scripture is full of time indicators: "the time is near", "this generation", "about to", "at hand". These phrases were meant

for the original audience.

**Revelation 1:1:** "The Revelation of Jesus Christ... to show His bond-servants the things which must soon take place." If that didn't mean soon for them, then the text is meaningless.

**James 5:8-9:** "You too be patient, strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain... behold, the Judge is standing right at the door." That urgency was for them, not for us 2,000 years later.

## Conclusion

We must rightly divide the Word of truth, and that begins by respecting who it was written to and why. The truth is, there is not one book in the Bible that was written to someone living today.

That may be a shocking statement, but it is honest. The Bible was written to others, but for us. It reveals God's character, redemptive plan, and the fulfillment of His promises.

So next time you hear, "Here's what this verse means to me", remember: What matters is what it meant to them. That's where Bible truth is found. Only after understanding that, can we apply it faithfully to our own lives today.

Amen.

The image represents a generic first-century preacher or apostle delivering a message to the original audience, symbolizing how scripture was addressed to real people in a real time. The goal was to visually reinforce the theme of "The Original Audience – The Key to Understanding Scripture,"

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