

# Prophecy: The Various Forms And Modes Of Expression



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## Introduction

As we begin this exploration of the concept of Biblical prophecy, let's keep in mind our proposition (discussed in the companion study entitled "The Basis Of Our Epistemology") – that one of the greatest evidences of the validity of the Bible as being God's Word comes from its routine use of prophecy. The Bible habitually anticipates history in advance. This quality – unique only to God, who exists outside of the dimension of time altogether – is one of the ways He authenticates His message to us. In fact, Scripture tells us that the evidence that prophecy provides is even more compelling than an eyewitness account.

"And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

-2 Peter 1:18-21

Peter, writing the above portion of Scripture, tells us that prophecy is stronger evidence than even eyewitness experience! He, being an eyewitness to Jesus, declared the "more sure word of prophecy" as being the strongest foundation for your faith imaginable.

One of the greatest authentications of the Bible is its multitude of

prophetic content. Not only does prophecy tell us that God exists, it also tells us that He's in control of all things. The future is not unknown to Him. Rather, it is God who actually controls the future.

Furthermore, because we have witnessed the accuracy of Biblical prophecy to date, we can also be confident in its predictions that have not yet come to pass; we know that they will come to pass, as have all of the previous predictions. In addition, we can trust every other thing that God says because He has accurately foretold the future. This gives us incredibly strong confidence that the One who inspired the Biblical text is reliable, and therefore the Bible as a whole is a reliable and trustworthy source for us. Prophecy is a strong evidence that gives testimony to the existence of God – the God of the Bible.

As we pointed out earlier, prophecy is a quality unique only to God as He dwells outside the boundaries of time itself.

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,  
Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:” -Isaiah 46:9-10

So, we can see from this passage that God actually expresses His uniqueness (He says “...there is none like me...”) by His ability to declare “the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done”...in other words, prophecy.

A substantial amount of Biblical content is prophetic, and includes all of human history – from beginning to end – detailed in advance. According to one reckoning by J. Barton Payne in the “Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy,” the Bible contains:

- 8,352 predictive verses of future events (27% of the entire Bible)
- 1,817 predictions, on
- 737 separate matters

-J. Barton Payne, “Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy: The Complete Guide to Scriptural Predictions and Their Fulfillment,” New York: Harper and Row, 1973, pp. 631-682.

The Bible is extensively prophetic; it cannot be thought of in the way many of the uninformed of today attempt to frame it – only as a quaint cataloguing of tribal history!

Prophecy is demonstrated in several forms. In its most commonly recognized style, prophecy involves the foretelling of events that will occur in the future. However, not all prophecies are delivered to us the same way. Some Biblical prophecies are given as utterances or writing, delivered in everything from a simple and straightforward predictive writing style, to exquisite poetry involving a variety of rhetorical devices. Others are given as symbolic visions, and others as prophetic types, shadows, or patterns that deliberately prefigure future fulfillment events.

It is important to recognize that the Hebrew perception of prophecy is that it not only involves prediction, but largely also the detailing of future events through anticipatory types, shadows, and patterns (Hebrews 8:5). What do we mean by a “type”? Put simply, when you go to build or establish

something in the natural world (such as a building or a car), you typically first create a “prototype” to act as a model that precedes the ultimate fulfillment of your planned construct. This word prototype is really what we mean by a “prophetic type.” A type is a copy, a pattern, or a model that anticipates an even greater future reality that will act as the ultimate fulfillment (called the “antitype”). We will further examine this concept in great detail ahead.

## Forms Of Prophecy

Let's now begin to dig deeper into this subject of prophecy. We will examine the two major forms of prophecy used in the Bible...

### 1. Predictive Prophecy:

Predictive prophecy involves the announcement of events before they occur. The Bible makes a habit of detailing everything from personal events to human history in advance. One example of predictive prophecy is demonstrated in Isaiah 23 (715 B.C.) and Ezekiel 26 (588 B.C.) concerning future events involving the city of Tyre (located on the Mediterranean coast of modern-day Lebanon).

Here is a list of only seven of these predictions, along with a brief detailing of what history records eventually happened:

- 1) The Prophecy: Nebuchadnezzar (the Chaldeans) will destroy the mainland city of Tyre (Isa. 23:13, Ez. 26:8).

What Happened: Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to mainland Tyre in 585 B.C., and overthrew it in 573 B.C., and the people of Tyre retreated to an island half a mile off the shore, and built up a city there.

- 2) The Prophecy: At the end of 70 years, Tyre will recover and return to business (Isa. 23:15-17).

What Happened: 70 years later, when the Persians overthrew Babylon, the island-Tyre recovered to prosper fairly well.

- 3) The Prophecy: Tyre would give some of her earnings to the Lord (Isa. 23:18).

What Happened: Cyrus, king of Persia, forced island-Tyre to contribute materials to rebuild God's Temple in Jerusalem.

- 4) The Prophecy: Many nations will come against Tyre (Ez. 26:3).

What Happened: The Assyrians and Egyptians attacked Tyre, and Alexander the Great (Greece) brought military forces from Sidon, Aradus, Byblus, Rhodes, Soli, Mallos, Lycia, Macedon and Cyprus.

- 5) The Prophecy: The rubble of the city will be thrown into the sea (Ez. 26:12).

What Happened: Alexander's forces took the stones and rubble of fallen mainland Tyre, and threw it into the sea, to build a causeway out to the island-city of Tyre.

- 6) The Prophecy: Tyre will be scraped flat like the top of a rock (Ez. 26:4).

What Happened: To smooth out the causeway, the loose topsoil and “dust” was scraped off and added to the causeway.

- 7) The Prophecy: Tyre will finally be destroyed and never be rebuilt and will be a place for the spreading of nets (Ez. 26:14 and 26:5).

What Happened: Alexander reduced island-Tyre to ruins in 332 B.C., destroying its walls and buildings and casting the stones into the sea. After Alexander’s conquest, although future inhabitants of the area tried to rebuild Tyre, it never regained its former glory, and went through long periods of being totally uninhabited as well as further invasions and destructions in later centuries.

Let’s note that the part of the prophecy saying that Tyre will never be rebuilt does not mean there would never be any structures built in the area ever again. That would be a very “modern-day” approach to understanding it. Instead, it means that after its defeat by Alexander, and then following him, wave after wave of later conquerors, Tyre would never regain the status it held in Ezekiel’s day. It would never be rebuilt to what it was before. Tyre would never again be a commercial superpower, a world trader, or a colonizer. And the inhabitants of Tyre would never again possess the riches and prosperity they had in their city’s heyday.

History bears out the fact that many nations continued to come against the island city, that it was re-destroyed on numerous further occasions, and that it became a place for fishing, fulfilling Ezekiel's prediction about the spreading of nets.

Furthermore, it is evident that the multiple periods of destruction and rebuilding of the city have long since buried the ancient Tyre that was referenced in the prophecy. The Columbia Encyclopedia, under its entry for Tyre, noted: "The principal ruins of the city today are those of buildings erected by the Crusaders. There are some Greco-Roman remains, but any left by the Phoenicians lie underneath the present town."

So, the only connection between the ancient Tyre from Ezekiel's day and the present-day city called Tyre is its location. The present buildings, streets, and other features are not "rebuilt" versions of the original city and the locality has never again become a regional power.

-<https://apologeticspress.org/tyre-in-prophecy-1790/> (Retrieved 10/10/21)

-Josh McDowell, "A Ready Defense," comp. Bill Wilson, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1992.

-Grant R. Jeffrey, "The Signature of God," rev. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2010, pp. 165-171.

So, predictive prophecy is simply the foretelling of future events. Sometimes predictive prophecy is very forward and plain (such as

the example above), and sometimes it involves the use of symbolism (such as much of Revelation) or poetry (such as portions of the Psalms).

## 2. Typological Prophecy (Types/Shadows/Patterns):

A second type of prophecy is typological prophecy, involving what are often referred to as anticipatory types, shadows, or patterns. You may understand a type in terms of the word “prototype.” A prototype is a model that’s used to illustrate or represent a future reality. Prototypes are used in the creation of things such as buildings, automobiles and computer programs. We find that likewise, God included the use of types in the Bible, anticipating future fulfillment events in history. Of course, this requires that He knew ahead of time what would take place – or as Isaiah 46:10 tells us, He knows the end from the beginning – since He exists outside of time itself.

Bible scholar Robertson McQuilkin included the following in his definition of Biblical typology...

“A type can be defined as a ‘prophetic symbol.’ A symbol is something used to represent something else; it is often a material object representing something immaterial... A type, by definition, points to the future. It is usually an Old Testament type prefiguring something about redemption in the New Testament...”

-Robertson McQuilkin, “Understanding And Applying The Bible,” revised ed., Moody Publishers, 1992.

There are types and antitypes. The type anticipates the future

antitype. Paul highlights this in his letter to the Corinthians:

“Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” -1 Corinthians 10:11

The word translated “examples” comes from “tuos” (Strong’s #5179b) the Greek word from which we get the English word type – an anticipatory pattern or symbol.

-Joseph H. Thayer, “Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T.,” repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015, p. 632.

Though this word is variously used in the New Testament, it is also used in our present context in Romans 5:14, where Paul declares that Adam “is a figure (tuos, or type) of him that was to come”, i.e., Christ.

There are also several other Greek words used in the New Testament to convey this concept, such as “skia” (Strong’s #4639), rendered “shadow” in Colossians 2:17. This word, according to Thayer’s Lexicon, can mean “an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object.”

-ibid., p. 578.

In other words, the shadow would be like the type and the object casting the shadow is the antitype. This is exactly how it is used in Colossians 2:17...

“Which are a shadow (skia) of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” -Colossians 2:17

There is also the term “hupodeigma” (Strong’s #G5262) translated “example,” and used in conjunction with “shadow” in Hebrews 8:5 (cf. Hebrews 9:23). This word also means a figure, an example, or a model.

-Ibid., pp. 642-643.

In Hebrews 8:5, we see three of these terms in the same verse, all conveying a similar concept:

“Who serve unto the example (hupodeigma) and shadow (skia) of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern (tupos) shewed to thee in the mount.” -Hebrews 8:5

Another Greek word, “parabole” (Strong’s #G3850 – compare to our English “parable”), is found in Hebrews 9:9, where certain elements of the tabernacle are described as “a figure for the present time” (cf. Hebrews 11:19). This word means a comparison, likeness, similitude, or a parable.

-Ibid., p. 479.

“Which was a figure (parabole) for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;”

-Hebrews 9:9

Finally, we should note the use of the word “antítupos” (Strong’s #G499 – compare to our English word “antitype”), rendered “figures” in Hebrews 9:24, and “like figure” in 1 Peter 3:21. This word, as used in the New Testament, denotes that which corresponds to the type. The antitype is the reality which fulfills the prophetic type – in other words, it is the ultimate fulfillment that the type anticipates and points toward.

-Ibid., p. 51.

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures (antítupos) of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:”

-Hebrews 9:24

“The like figure (antítupos) whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:” -1 Peter 3:21

So, we can see that this idea of typology is a well-established concept, and it is clear that the Bible interprets itself this way, and is in no way a creation of man’s imagination.

An understanding of prophetic types is essential to an understanding of the Bible. Many of the prominent characters in the Old Testament function in certain ways as types that anticipate the then-future Jesus Christ, who is the antitype. Jesus can be found on

basically every page of the Old Testament, if you know how to look for Him. He is there symbolically through the strategic use of types. The Word of God contains countless types and foreshadows which deliberately point to Christ. Jesus explained that all the Scriptures testify of Him.

“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.” –Hebrews 10:7

This claim is not an exaggeration. When we study all the wonderful types and foreshadows found in God’s Word, we discover that truly, the volume of the book is written of Jesus Christ. Looking for Jesus and finding Him in these types causes the Old Testament to come alive for the New Testament-believing Christian.

This theme of Old Testament prophecy and typology concerning Christ is also elucidated in Luke 24, where Jesus on the day of His resurrection, appeared to certain believers on the road to Emmaus...

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”  
–Luke 24:27

In other words, Jesus is claiming that laced all throughout the Old Testament, were deliberately placed typological anticipations of Him as the Christ, and the work of redemption He performed on the cross. You cannot understand Leviticus without Hebrews, or Daniel without Revelation, or the Passover and Isaiah 53 without the Gospel accounts of the Crucifixion.

Clearly, the majority of the Jews (including all of current Judaism) completely missed the point of not only much of what their ancestors experienced, but also what their established laws and holidays pointed toward. We can now take enjoyment in looking back at them and recognizing how they all pointed ahead towards Christ and the New Testament fulfillments.

But the prophetic types that exist in the Bible anticipate more than only Jesus. All of the major themes in the Bible are hidden throughout the Scriptures in the form of prophetic types, shadows, and patterns.

The value of the study of the types and antitypes is the proof they furnish of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Their study proves beyond question that the Scriptures had but one true Author – the Holy Spirit. Let's examine several kinds of types!

We can break this down into several categories:

- Individuals or Groups:

Almost every major character in the Old Testament is a type of Christ in the sense that certain key events in their lives were prophetic portraits of key things that would happen to Jesus. Take Joseph for example. He was rejected by his brethren. He was left for dead, but was "resurrected" from the pit into which he had been cast. He took a Gentile bride and then redeemed his brethren from their famine.

Likewise, Jesus was rejected by His brethren (the Jews), experienced death and resurrection, is now taking a Gentile bride (the church), and will soon return to save a remnant of His brethren from their spiritual famine (the Jews from their unbelief at the Second Coming).

There are also those in the Old Testament who are types of the church, the future “Gentile bride” of Christ. Many of the significant brides in the Old Testament fit this model in some very unique ways.

- Events and Institutions:

Typological prophecies are also exemplified by major events, institutions, ceremonies, and commandments established by God. Look at the eight Levitical Feasts, for example, which God instructed the Israelites to observe on very specific days of the year. Jesus was crucified as our “Passover Lamb” on the Feast of Passover. He became our “Unleavened Bread” as His body rested in the ground on the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He arose as our “Firstfruits” from the dead on the Feast of First Fruits. And the church was established on the Feast of Pentecost, believed to be the same day that the Law was given on Mt. Sinai over a thousand years earlier. These four major events were all precisely fulfilled on the actual Feast days that acted as types of them. The remaining yet-unfulfilled Fall Feasts (Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles, and the Eighth Day) must, in like manner, point to events that

are yet to occur (most likely, the Rapture, the Second Coming, the Millennial Kingdom, and the Eternal State). For further details on this, please consult the companion study entitled, “[Typology Of The Moedim: The Levitical Feasts As Prophetic Macrocodes](#)”. The astonishing prophetic subtleties that God established in these feasts demonstrate how each was deliberately and skillfully designed by Him in order to profile specific future events in His master plan.

Another example is the nation of Israel itself. The history of the Hebrew nation is the story of Jesus in prophetic type. The Children of Israel were born in Canaan, descended into Egypt, came through the Red Sea (the “Baptism of Moses” – 1. Cor. 10:1-2), they endured testing in the wilderness, and then entered the Promised Land.

Likewise, Jesus was born in Canaan, descended into Egypt, emerged publicly at His baptism, endured the wilderness temptations, and led the way to our Promised Land called Heaven.

Another important example, the institution of the ancient Jewish wedding ceremony, is an incredible type/shadow/pattern of the marriage between Christ (the Bridegroom) and the church (His pure, virgin bride). For further details on this, please consult the companion study entitled, “[The Romance Of Redemption: The Marriage Of Jesus Christ And The Church](#)”.

- Objects/Animals, et al.:

-Objects:

Even inanimate objects like those in the Tabernacle are prophetic types pointing to Jesus.

Consider the Ark of the Covenant. Everything about it was prophetically symbolic of the Messiah. It was made of wood, indicating the Messiah would be human. It was overlaid with gold, signifying the Messiah would also be divine. It contained a number of objects including the tablets of stone, a pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. The tablets signified that the Messiah would have the law of God in His heart. The manna meant the Messiah would be the Bread of Life. The rod with buds represented that the Messiah would arise from the dead.

The lid of the Ark was called the Mercy Seat. It had a golden angel at each end. The angels faced each other and their wings hovered over the lid. Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest sprinkled blood on the Mercy Seat and communed with the Shekinah glory of God that hovered above it. The Mercy Seat prophetically pointed to the fact that through the work of the Messiah, the mercy of God would cover the Law. The blood of the Atonement sacrifice foreshadowed the ultimate atoning sacrifice of the Messiah, and the fact that He would have to shed His own blood to atone for our sins.

Jesus fulfilled every prophetic type of the Ark. He was God in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16). He had the Law in His heart (Matthew 5:17). He shed His blood on the Cross and was resurrected in power, atoning for our sins and covering the Law with Grace (Romans 3:21-26).

Furthermore, consider this:

Mary saw the fulfillment of the Ark when she went to the tomb and discovered the body of Jesus missing. In John 20:11-12, it says she looked into the tomb and beheld two angels in white, sitting – one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. You must recognize the symbolism in action being demonstrated here! In effect, she saw a scene where the bloodied body of Jesus must have stained red the surface of where He had been laid in the tomb, with an angel at each end of it – reminiscent of the Mercy Seat that covered the Ark, whose surface was stained by the blood of the Atonement sacrifice that the High Priest sprinkled on it once a year, in between the two golden angels!

-Animals:

As far as animals, the Passover Lamb was a clear prophecy of the atoning death of the ultimate spotless and sinless Lamb, Jesus Christ. Jesus is also spoken of as being the “Lion of the tribe of Judah,” demonstrating that He exemplifies qualities of both the lamb and the lion. This theme of the Messiah being

described as both lamb and lion fits into the overall panorama of the plan of God in a very interesting way. At His First Coming, Christ exemplified the Lamb, but at His Second Coming He will exemplify the Lion. This is the answer to the problem the Jews have always had with trying to understand the apparently contradictory prophetic descriptions of the Messiah!

The entire Biblical drama records the extremes our Creator has resorted to in order to redeem mankind from our predicament of sin. Studying these things will prove to you very clearly that Jesus' death on the cross was not a last-minute response to a plan that didn't go well. Rather, you can see how it was always in His plan to go to the cross for you and I, even from the very beginning. You will find that nothing in God's Word is accidental or coincidental!

As you can see, prophetic types bring the Old Testament alive and give us deep insights into New Testament events and those still yet to come.

In studying the types, we find that some are obvious and some are more hidden or embedded in the text, awaiting discovery. The Bible actually calls to our attention some of the more obvious types. When it does, we often find two comparative words – “as” and “so” which are used to explain to us these types. The word “as” is often used for the type, and the word “so” is often used for the antitype. The first item is historic, while the second is prophetic.

Let's examine a few:

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

-1 Corinthians 15:22

“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” -Matthew 24:37

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:”

-John 3:14

“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” -Matthew 12:40

The above types with their antitypes stand out so prominently in Scripture that their meanings are clear to even the most superficial reader. The Bible explicitly tells us they are types. But there are also many types (some of which we have already mentioned earlier), whose antitypes are not as obvious, and may not be immediately noticed by the casual reader. It takes study and knowledge of the Bible to uncover them, like hidden treasures. However, it is important to point out that we do not build doctrinal understanding on types. We do the opposite. We first understand doctrine as explicitly taught in Scripture, and then notice the corresponding patterns present throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Furthermore, we must have balance when dealing with typology.

Typology can be either used or misused. Like a river, typology is both useful and productive when kept within its bounds – but when allowed to overflow its banks, it can become destructive. It should not become our major preoccupation to use our imaginations to find types in everything, nor should we allow our typology to morph into allegorism. Like with allegorism, a potential problem in the study of typology is that in situations where the Bible does not explicitly declare something to be a type, all of the power is in the imagination of the interpreter.

Bible scholar Donald Campbell explained that...

“Many who depreciate and minimize typology do so because of the firm conviction that it is an area that by its very nature is vague and uncertain. Some feel that typology admits of no definite or fixed rules that would give direction and restrain conjecture. To the contrary, it is to be seen that guiding principles can be established... The history of the interpretation of types is a record of action and reaction. Exaggeration and extravagance ruled the field of typology for many centuries. The early Church Fathers, with the exception of those in the Syrian School at Antioch, were largely devotees of the allegorical method for the interpretation of Scripture. This involved as a concomitant factor an extremism in typology.”

-Donald K. Campbell, “The Interpretation of Types” in “Bibliotheca Sacra,” 1955, Vol. 112, Issue 447, p. 250.

Bible scholar Bernard Ramm gives three general reasons which he felt justify typological interpretation...

1. The general relationship which the Old Testament sustains to the

New is the very basis for such a study. The strong prophetic element in the Old Testament establishes a real and vital nexus between the two Testaments. The fact of prophecy establishes the principle that the New is latent in the Old, and that the Old is patent in the New. The form of prophecy may be either verbally predictive or typically predictive. The former are those prophecies which in poetry or prose speak of the age to come (e.g., Psalm 22, Isaiah 53); the latter are those typical persons, things, or events which forecast the age to come. Thus, a type is a species of prophecy and should be included under prophetic studies.

2. Our Lord's own use of the Old Testament is His invitation to us to find Him in the Old Testament. In Luke 24:25-44, Christ teaches the disciples about Himself, beginning at Moses and following through all the Scriptures. Luke 24:44 mentions the divisions of the Jewish canon (Moses, Prophets, Psalms) thus making the reference as wide as the Old Testament canon. In John 5:39-44, Christ invites men to search the Scriptures, for they testify to Him inasmuch as Moses wrote of Him. Paul uses the sacrificial language of the Old Testament in speaking of the death of Christ (Eph. 5:2) thus showing that Christ is in the (sacrificial) offerings. Hebrews clearly teaches that the Tabernacle which was, is now realized in a present heavenly tabernacle of which Christ is the minister of the sanctuary (Hebrews 9:9-11, 23-24). Thus, Christ is to be found in the Tabernacle. And certainly, from Paul's reference in 1 Cor. 10:4, Christ was in the wilderness wanderings. It is the conviction of many scholars that the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament stems directly from the teachings and example of our Lord.

3. Even more specific is the vocabulary of the New Testament with reference to the nature of the Old. The following words are used in the New of the Old. Hypodeigma means a sign suggestive of anything, a representation, a figure, a copy, an example. Typos and typikos (from the verb, *typtō*, “to strike”) mean the mark of a blow, the figure formed by a blow, an impression, a form, a letter, a doctrine, an example, a pattern, a type. Skia (from *skēnē*, a tent) means a shade, a sketch, an outline, an adumbration. Parabolē means a placing by the side, hence a comparison, a likeness, a similitude. Eikon means an image, a figure, a likeness. Antitypon means a repelling blow, an echoing, a reflecting, a thing formed after a pattern, a counterpart, an antitype. Allegoreō means to tell a truth in terms of a narrative. These New Testament words referring to the nature of the Old Testament establish the typical character of the Old Testament. In addition to this is the weight of the entire book of Hebrews, for it is almost completely devoted to a study of the typical character of the Old Testament. The fact that the Old Testament prophecy includes the typical, the invitation of our Lord to find Him in all the Old Testament which includes the typical, and the vocabulary of the New Testament indicating the typical element of the Old, is adequate justification of the theological study of typology.

-Bernard Ramm, “Protestant Biblical Interpretation,” complete rev. ed., 1956 – Online. (<http://media.sabda.org/alkitab-2/PDF%20Books/00051%20Ramm%20Protestant%20Biblical%20Interpretation%201956.pdf> – Retrieved 11/2/21)

We can conclude that typology in Scripture serves to demonstrate the unbroken continuity in God’s plan of redemptive history between the Old and New Testaments, and this alone should encourage us in our faith in God’s Word of Truth and His

trustworthy character.

So, in summary, we notice a heavy usage of both predictive prophecy and typological prophecy in Scripture – both acting as incredible demonstrations that the true Author of the Biblical text is from outside of our time dimension. Only a Being like that could have the ability to see the end from the beginning, deliberately embedding prophetic qualities into His message system to us. This is one of the methods that God uses to authenticate His Word.

## Modes Of Prophetic Expression

Let's now break down some of the modes of prophetic expression God used by category, and understand some of the unique ways prophecy was sent forth in the Bible.

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,” –Hebrews 1:1 (ESV)

### 1. Writing Prophets:

Of course, the method that immediately comes to mind is the written form. The prophets who wrote their messages are the ones we know best – people like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the so-called “Minor Prophets” like Habakkuk and Zephaniah. In the New Testament, the writing prophets include Paul, Peter, and John.

But to lump all of these writing prophets together into one broad category is misleading, as there are a great variety of personalities and styles among them. As to personalities, the variety is astounding. The prophets range from uneducated farmers like Amos to sophisticated poets like Isaiah; from cowards like Jonah to men of great courage like Daniel; from the little-known like Joel to the famous like King David.

There is an equal variety in the styles of writing used. Some, like Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, and the New Testament prophets, primarily used a prose style (natural non-poetic speech). Others, like David, Isaiah, Joel, and Micah, expressed their ideas in poetic form. And

then there are the preachers whose books are mainly collections of sermons – prophets like Jeremiah, Amos, and Zechariah.

Most were given direct revelations – “Thus says the Lord.” Others received their insight through dreams and visions. Some, like Hosea and Jonah, mainly recorded their experiences.

## 2. Speaking Prophets:

Some of the most important prophets wrote nothing at all, at least nothing that has been preserved. We know about them because others wrote about their revelations, pronouncements, and exploits. Elijah and his successor, Elisha, fall into this category, as does Samuel.

So does the greatest prophet who ever lived – the Prophet foretold by Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). We are speaking, of course, about Jesus Christ (Matthew 21:11). The bulk of Jesus’ prophecies, like His Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21), were written by His disciples. Jesus, in this sense, was an oral prophet while on Earth.

Many of the speaking/oral prophets are not well known. Only a few are mentioned in the New Testament, like the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9) and Agabus, the prophet who counseled Paul (Acts 21:10).

The Old Testament however, is full of oral prophets. Aside from the ones mentioned above (Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha) there is Nathan,

who confronted David (2 Samuel 12); Micaiah, who saw the Lord sitting on His throne (1 Kings 22); Ahijah, who condemned Jeroboam (1 Kings 14); as well as many nameless prophets like the “man of God from Judah” who prophesied the birth of Josiah (1 Kings 13).

### 3. Acting Prophets:

Acting prophets are the prophets who were called upon by God to act out prophecies. These were writing prophets, who at times acted out their prophecies as directed by God. God would tell them from time to time to stop writing or speaking and start acting. God often used drama to get people’s attention.

For example, God told Isaiah to go barefoot and naked for three years (Isaiah 20:2). He used an unconventional method to get people’s attention. The message was graphic and clear: repent or be stripped naked like Isaiah.

Jeremiah was told to wear a yoke on his neck to emphasize God’s message that King Zedekiah should submit to Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 27).

Ezekiel was called on to act many times. On one occasion, the Lord told him to pack all his bags and carry them around Jerusalem in the sight of the people as a sign that if they did not repent, God would send them into exile (Ezekiel 12).

Another time, God told Ezekiel to lie down on the ground on his left side for 390 days, one day for each year of the iniquity of Israel.

When he finished that ordeal, God told him to turn over and lie on his right side for 40 days, for the 40 years of Judah's iniquity (Ezekiel 4:4-8).

The Lord even ordered Ezekiel to play in a sand pile! God told him to label a brick, "Jerusalem," and to build dirt ramps around the brick to illustrate the coming siege of the city (Ezekiel 4:1-3).

Ezekiel's hardest acting assignment came when the Lord revealed that his wife would soon die. The Lord ordered him not to mourn or weep for her. He was to continue with his activities as if nothing had happened. When the people came to him and asked why he was not mourning, the Lord told him to say that if they did not repent, they would be overcome by a conqueror so rapidly that they would not have time to mourn or weep.

Certainly, one of the most memorable of the acting prophets was Hosea. God told him to find a prostitute and marry her. Hosea obeyed, and God told him to preach the message of his action. The message was that Israel was like that prostitute when God selected them as His Chosen People. They were not selected for their wisdom or righteousness. They had no merit. They were selected by grace, in spite of their moral imperfections.

When Hosea returned home from his preaching tour, he discovered that his wife had succumbed to her old passions. She had left the dignity and honor of his home and had returned to the activities of a prostitute. Hosea's heart was broken but God told him to preach the message of her action. The message was, that like Hosea's wife,

Israel had been unfaithful to God, chasing after foreign gods. And like Hosea, God's heart was broken.

When Hosea returned home, God spoke to him again and asked him to do something incredible. God told him to swallow all his pride and go to the city square and bid for his wife when she offered herself for sale. He was instructed to pay all he had, if necessary, to redeem her from harlotry. She didn't deserve it. She had not repented. But Hosea obeyed. He paid the price, and she was redeemed. Thus, God used an acting prophet to act out a "type" of the future fulfillment of what He would do for us at the cross, when He paid the price of His Son to redeem Israel from her unfaithfulness.

So, we find that God has spoken through a number of different modes of prophetic expression – including writing prophets, speaking prophets, and acting prophets; and some of the prophets were used in several of these modes in order to convey God's messages to the people.

## Hidden Intervals/Gaps And Multiple References/Multiple Stage Fulfillments In Prophecy

In this section, we will begin to explore some of the overlooked and often poorly understood aspects of Biblical prophecy. When not understood properly, these areas often result in inaccurate interpretations of Bible prophecy. So, in order to properly understand Scripture, we need to spend some time digging into these concepts.

As we enter into this subject, an important thought to keep in mind when interpreting prophecy is that the God's perception of time is not always equivalent to our perception of time...

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

-2 Peter 3:8

### 1. Hidden Intervals and Gaps in Prophecy:

In our interpretation of Bible prophecy, a key point we need to be mindful of is the issue of hidden intervals or time gaps inconspicuously embedded into the text. These intervals or gaps occur even when no obvious indication is given in the text itself – and would never be recognized by the audience (and probably even the Biblical authors) of that immediate time period.

A prophecy of the Scripture may, in the course of a single line, or even in the space of a comma, jump from one fulfillment event to another, being hundreds or even thousands of years apart.

Typically, these intervals or gaps are unknown and unrecognizable until much later in history, when readers of that distant time period can look back on the original text and then finally understand there was a hidden interval or gap that was imperceptible until some later fulfillment had taken place. Nowhere is this truer than in the prophecies of the Messiah's Two Comings.

Scattered throughout the Scriptures are prophecies that contain references to both the First and Second Coming of the Lord in what appears to be a single thought. These hidden interval prophecies could only be identified as such after the First Coming had already taken place. That's because they were written in such a way that it was impossible to tell beforehand that the Lord's First Coming would only partially fulfill them. Often, the writers switch from the First Coming to the Second Coming in the middle of a sentence without so much as a punctuation mark to alert the reader (and they themselves likely had no idea either).

A classic example that Jesus Christ Himself interpreted for us can be found in Luke 4:16-19. This passage records that Jesus stood up in the synagogue when it was His turn to read, and opened to the book of the prophet Isaiah. He proceeded to read Isaiah 61:1-2, proclaiming His mission at His First Coming. He finishes with His mandate, "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

-Luke 4:16-21

What you may not realize without going back to Isaiah to read the original prophecy, is that Jesus stopped reading right in the middle of the sentence! The rest reads, “and the day of vengeance of our God...”

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;”

-Isaiah 61:1-2

Jesus stopped reading at the comma that preceded “and the day of vengeance of our God...” Why? Because we now understand that after that comma, the prophecy jumped from the time of Messiah’s First Coming to some several thousand years or more into the future – past the present time we are living in now – to the time of His Second Coming. The “day of vengeance” was not part of His mission during His First Coming, but it will be fulfilled at His Second Coming.

This is a good example of Christ’s dual missions, which we mentioned earlier – in His First Coming He came as a Lamb, Servant, Savior, Redeemer, Husband, and as an earth-born man who was really God. But in His Second Coming, He will come as Lion, King, Judge, and Punisher, coming down from heaven as the one true God who also had become a man. So, we can see that in one single sentence, the prophetic content can span thousands of years. Simply put, the comma punctuating the sentence in this passage has lasted around 2,000 years!

Let’s examine a few more examples of prophetic Messianic passages that involve hidden intervals or gaps. A few other well-known examples are found in Isaiah 9:6 and Micah 5:2. Let’s take a quick look at each...

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

-Isaiah 9:6

When the Lord had Isaiah write this prophecy 750 years before the fact, no one could have known from reading it that when the Messiah came the first time, He would only fulfill a portion of it. The child was born and the Son was given, but the government has never been upon His shoulders, and by Israel, to whom He was sent, He has never been called the names Isaiah attributed to Him. These are all Second Coming events, which will become obvious if we continue to read through Scripture. So, the one sentence in this verse includes a hidden gap of about 2,000 years, to date.

Let's examine the other passage...

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” –Micah 5:2

This prophecy calls for a Messianic Ruler of Israel to be born in Bethlehem, but gives no indication that thousands of years would pass between this Ruler's birth and His ascension to the literal throne of Israel (a Second Coming event that is fulfilled when Jesus will literally rule from the throne of David during the Millennial Kingdom).

When the Magi arrived in Jerusalem, they asked King Herod, “Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews?” (Mt. 2:2). Herod asked the Jewish leaders where the Messiah had been prophesied to be born, and they used this prophecy in Micah to confirm that He would be born in Bethlehem (Mt. 2:4-6). The Magi hastened there,

apparently believing they were going to visit a boy king who would grow up to rule over Israel.

Thinking along the same lines, Herod had all the young boys in Bethlehem killed in an unsuccessful effort to eliminate what He perceived to be an imminent threat to his rulership. But while the Coming King was born at that time, His intention was not to take His place on the throne in Israel at His First Coming (as He was rejected by Israel), but rather at His Second Coming. So again, in this prophecy in Micah, we see two references – one to His First Coming and one still to be fulfilled at His Second Coming – both in the same verse.

Another obvious example of a hidden interval in prophecy is found in Daniel 9:24-27, the famed 70 Weeks Prophecy. When reading this prophecy, we find 70 prophetic “weeks” of years predicted. If you superficially read the prophecy back then, you might have been tempted to conclude that the 70 weeks were contiguous (meaning uninterrupted, or without any gaps). In this prophecy, Gabriel gives Daniel a prophecy that 70 “weeks of years” (490 years) would take place concerning the Jews and Jerusalem before the end of the age.

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city (the Jews + Jerusalem), to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah

the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks (total = 69 weeks, or 483 years): the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

And after threescore and two (After the 69 weeks, or 483 years) weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

And he (the “prince that shall come,”) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (the final 70<sup>th</sup> week, which is still future): and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

-Daniel 9:24-27

Notice that:

1. The focus of the passage is on the Jews, not the church, nor the Gentile world. Also,
2. There are six major items, which as a whole, have yet to be completed:
  - to finish the transgressions;
  - to make an end of sins;
  - to make reconciliation for iniquity;
  - to bring in everlasting righteousness;
  - to seal up the vision and prophecy;

- to anoint the most Holy.

According to this prophecy, after the 69 weeks, the Messiah would be killed. That took place with the crucifixion of Jesus almost 2,000 years ago – probably the most well-documented event in ancient history. Yet, the fact that all of these six items have not yet been fulfilled since then demonstrates that the 70 weeks are not contiguous. In other words, there is a hidden gap implied.

We find out that this gap – positioned in between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks – is the time period in which God’s stopwatch has paused concerning Israel and has begun concerning the church. Remember – according to the prophecy, the 70 Weeks’ focus is on national Israel and Jerusalem – not the church or any other group! This gap includes what we may refer to as the “church age” – in which we currently live.

So, we find that this hidden interval in which God would separate for Himself a bride, which we call the church, was a hidden mystery all through the Old Testament, although subtly represented through types, shadows and patterns. In the New Testament, we find that the apostle Paul considered it his unique privilege to reveal the “mystery” of this distinct entity called the church!

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” –Ephesians 5:31-32

The word “mystery” here in the Greek (“mustērion” – Strong’s #G3466), conveys a slightly different meaning than the same word in English. In Greek, a mystery expresses something that was formerly hidden or unknown, but is now revealed.

-Thayer, p. 420.

Earlier in his letter to the Ephesians, Paul tells us even more about this mystery age called the church – an age that was unknown to Old Testament times. In other words, it was a hidden interval or gap that was imperceptible in Old Testament prophecy. Paul says...

“For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles – assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel (in other words, the church).”

-Ephesians 3:1-6 (ESV)

This same Greek word “mustērion” is also used throughout this passage to convey the same concept. The mystery of the church and the church age was hidden in many of these gap prophecies we encounter throughout Scripture. For more details on the incredible 70 Weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 – specifically, the 69-Week “Countdown to the Messiah,” please consult the companion study

entitled, “The Daniel 9:25 Prophecy: An Exact Timeline For The Arrival Of The Messiah”.

## 2. Multiple References and Multiple Stage Fulfillments in Prophecy:

You may also hear many of these simply referred to as “dual reference” or “near/far-term fulfillment” prophecies. In Scripture, there are prophecies where it is clear who or what the original subject is, but then, within the text, the prophecy clearly begins to transcend that person and point to a future person or subject that will be the ultimate fulfillment. At some point in the text, it becomes very clear that the prophecy is a “double prophecy” that goes to a depth far beyond what the first subject could ever fulfill. In other words, it has both a near or short-term fulfillment as well as a far or long-term fulfillment. Often, the near-term fulfillment is in some ways a “less literal” version of the ultimate fulfillment. Put another way, the nearer fulfillment may be a less exact fulfillment in that it may not meet every specificity in the text – and yet, it acts as a sort of “type” or “shadow” of the ultimate far-term fulfillment. We may refer to these as “multiple reference” or “multiple stage fulfillment” prophecies.

The following is one of the better-known examples of a multiple reference prophecy, because it refers to an individual alive at that time, but also points to a future ultimate figure. However, it could also be described as a multiple stage fulfillment prophecy because it has two stages of fulfillment (one near and one far-future).

- In the Book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 28:12-19), there is a description of someone called the King of Tyre. Though there was an

actual historical person who was the King of Tyre, the description the Bible gives of this person at some point seems to go far beyond just describing this human leader. Though in context, Ezekiel was first speaking about the historical King of Tyre, at some point in the prophecy, he seemingly moved into the dateless past with a description of the original fall of Satan – the true power behind the earthly King of Tyre.

Let's take a closer look...

At first, God was directly addressing the King of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:1-11). Because the King of Tyre boasted that he was a god, the true God declared that he would die and be thrown down into the pit (Verse 8). However, starting in Verse 12, the lamentation begins to clearly transcend the King of Tyre and clearly extends to address Satan – the ultimate villain who far earlier, had attempted the same idiocy – only on a more cosmic level. Let's read Verses 12-14, where we can see that the content obviously transcends the human King of Tyre:

“Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.”

-Ezekiel 28:12-14

Clearly, the King of Tyre was never an anointed cherub in Eden, etc. Instead, we see in this passage a prime example of a double meaning prophecy with both a near and a distant reference, or ultimate fulfillment. In this case, the King of Tyre becomes a “type” of Satan, and the chapter provides us with a flashback to his fall and a proclamation of his eventual demise.

More specifically, we can say that the King of Tyre is a partial “reverse type” of Satan because he was a current version of what Satan did far in the past – attempt to ascend to godhood. So, the first part of the passage, which clearly applies to the King of Tyre also applies to Satan. But yet the King of Tyre is still a type of a future event concerning Satan in the sense that his demise typifies the future demise of Satan.

- Further examples of these types of prophecies are found in the writings of David in the Psalms. The Psalms are sprinkled with prophecies that in the near-term sense, applied directly to David and his day, while in a far-term sense, also applying to – and being fulfilled in – Jesus Christ. Psalm 22 is the classic example, with David’s sufferings being a vivid foreshadowing of the Messiah’s future sufferings and death. At certain points in the chapter, it is clear that the prophecy

transcends David's natural experiences and targets the future trials of the Messiah.

In David's narrative, we see for example that Verses 14-18 are a clear prophetic portrait of Jesus Christ as He died on the cross – and far transcend the near-term experiences of David.

“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” -Psalm 22:14-18

These passages clearly transcend the experiences of David, and point toward the antitype fulfillment in Christ. David was a prototype of Christ, but these statements could only be most literally fulfilled in the experience of the crucifixion. For instance, Verse 14 was vividly fulfilled in the physical experience of Christ's crucifixion. The first part, describing being “poured out like water” would seem to describe a state of total physical exhaustion, and could include the loss of fluid volume in the body due to excessive sweating, trauma, and blood loss.

The next three phrases also clearly portray the bodily experience of crucifixion. “All my bones are out of joint” illustrates the torturous feeling of being stretched out on a rack. During crucifixion, it was common for the shoulders to be ripped out of joint due to the weight of the hanging body. The body would then sink lower, dislocating the wrists.

Verse 15 describes his tongue cleaving to his jaws – a description of intense thirst and dehydration. Jesus, while on the cross, was likely in a state of hypovolemic shock, causing him to experience this kind of thirst. At the end of His life, John records that Jesus shouted out, “I thirst” (Jn. 19:28), confirming this.

Verse 17 mentions the piercing of hands and feet – which was precisely fulfilled in the crucifixion. Jesus’ hands and feet were pierced through to the cross as the wicked gathered around Him in ridicule (Jn. 20:25, Acts 2:23).

There is much more just within those five verses that clearly point to the crucifixion of Jesus – but it suffices to say that David clearly never experienced these sufferings as literally as Christ.

In fact, in further confirmation of this, the New Testament records that while dying on the cross, Jesus, as the far-term fulfillment of the Psalm 22 prophecy, actually cried out, speaking the exact words that were prophesied in that

passage. Matthew 27:46 says that “Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” – the exact words of Psalm 22:1 (“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”).

So, we can see that the writings of David, in a less literal way, spoke of his own sufferings during his life – but in a more literal and more ultimate sense, were a clear prophetic portrait of Christ’s sufferings during His crucifixion. For more information on this, please consult the companion study entitled, “[The Psalm 22 Prophecy: The Messiah On The Cross](#)”.

- Another example of a multiple reference prophecy is found in Hosea, a book home to much prophetic content. In the verse to follow, the prophet Hosea recounts Israel’s exodus out of Egypt. That was a big event, but it also turns out to be part of a bigger prophetic picture...

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” –Hosea 11:1

As we mentioned earlier, the story of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament prefigures certain aspects of the earthly life of Jesus. In Matthew, we are told that Hosea’s words also apply to Jesus Christ when He was a young boy.

“When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:  
And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.”

–Matthew 2:14-15

Jesus and His parents fled out of Israel to Egypt when King Herod tried to kill all the young boys in Bethlehem. A few years later, Jesus returned to the land of Israel from Egypt.

So, this statement from Hosea had a past historical relevance – concerning God bringing national Israel out of Egyptian bondage – but also had an ultimate future prophetic reference to the Messiah – a double meaning or reference.

- Maybe one of the most well recognized multiple reference/multiple stage fulfillment prophecies involves the “Abomination of Desolation” prophecy found in Daniel 12:11. The Prophet Daniel predicted the coming of an evil ruler who would put a stop to the Temple sacrifices in Jerusalem.

In 167 B.C. the Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes acted out the near-term fulfillment of this prophecy by attacking Jerusalem and stopping the Jewish sacrifices in dramatic fashion. Antiochus slaughtered a pig on the altar in the Temple and set up an idol in the Holy of Holies, thus desecrating it in a way not done before and never done since. Daniel 12:11 calls this then-future event the “abomination that maketh desolate.”

The Jewish holiday called Hanukkah is the celebration of the rededication of the Temple following this desecration by Antiochus.

-<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/hanukkah> (Retrieved 11/12/18)

The celebration of this holiday is even mentioned in John 10:22. These events are well documented in historical records such as 1 and 2 Maccabees and Josephus. However, in Matthew Chapter 24 – long after Antiochus – Jesus tells us that the “abomination of desolation” profiled a far future ultimate event...

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:”  
–Matthew 24:15-16

Preterists (who are Christians who believe all Bible prophecy has already been fulfilled) wrongly conclude that this prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D. at the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. However, although they try to stretch history to make it fit, there are a number of Biblical problems with that belief.

One of the biggest problems is that companion passages in Daniel, the Gospels, 2 Thessalonians, and Revelation clearly depict this abomination of desolation event as occurring in the

future Seventieth Week (or Tribulation) directly prior to the Second Coming of Christ. So, at most, the events of 70 A.D. could potentially serve as another phase of prophetic shadowing of the ultimate fulfillment by the future Antichrist. If some want to see the events of 70 A.D. as being another phase of prophetic fulfillment of the abomination of desolation, we don't have a huge problem with that. That is how prophecy works, as we have shown. It often repeats itself in history, foreshadowing a final culminating fulfillment.

But we know from Scripture that sometime in the future, a new Temple will be built in Jerusalem and animal sacrifices will resume. Toward the beginning of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21), the Antichrist will commit an act of desolation similar to that of Antiochus, putting an end to the Temple sacrifices and desecrating the Holy of Holies (Dan. 12:11; 2 Thess. 2:4; Mt. 24:15).

So, we can view both near and far-future realizations of this "abomination of desolation" prophecy in Daniel. It is examples such as this that often throw off novice prophecy investigators. For example, if they have discovered a compelling historical or Biblical fulfillment of a particular Scriptural prophecy (like Preterists do with 70 A.D.), they often simply view it as an already-fulfilled prophecy, neglecting the possibility that it could have both a near and a far-future double fulfillment – or multiple near-term phases of fulfillment foreshadowing a final ultimate fulfillment.

In other words, the first or second near-term fulfillments could have acted as “types” for the ultimate “antitype” fulfillment. The Bible clearly suggests that to be the case, as we see in this example. In this “abomination of desolation” instance, the Bible gives ample clues to the studious Bible reader to allow us to recognize that this ultimate prophesied event will take place also at the end of the age in Daniel’s final “70<sup>th</sup> week,” (the final 7-year period of time before the Second Coming of Christ).

To conclude this section, we can see that Scripture contains numerous examples of prophecies with hidden gaps or intervals, multiple references, and multiple stage fulfillments. In fact, most (if not all) of the Messianic prophecies had both a near-term realization (applicable to the human author and his day), as well as a long-term fulfillment found in Jesus Christ – and many concern both First and Second Coming events. This brings to mind Jesus’ statement in Hebrews 10:7 about the whole volume of Scripture being written about Him – again confirming to us the integrated design of the Bible.

## Conclusion

As we conclude our study, let's briefly review what we've discovered.

### -Forms of Prophecy

1. Predictive Prophecy (Plain, Symbolic, Poetic)
2. Typological Prophecy (Types/Shadows/Patterns)
  - Individuals or Groups
  - Events and Institutions
  - Objects/Animals, et al.

### -Modes of Prophetic Expression

1. Writing Prophets
2. Speaking Prophets
3. Acting Prophets

### -Hidden Intervals/Gaps and Multiple References/Multiple Stage Fulfillments in Prophecy

1. Hidden Intervals and Gaps in Prophecy
2. Multiple References and Multiple Stage Fulfillments in Prophecy

As we close, let's recognize the ultimate point of our study on Biblical prophecy. One of the greatest evidences of the validity of the Bible as being God's Word comes from its routine use of prophecy. This quality of consistently, accurately, and precisely anticipating future events is unique only to God – Who exists outside of the dimension of time altogether – and

is one of the primary ways He authenticates His message to us. We can be confident in our reliance upon the Bible as being God's Word – as we have, like Peter said in 2 Peter 1:19, “a more sure word of prophecy” – an evidence even more undisputable than if we were eyewitnesses of the events ourselves.

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