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Prophecy

The Various Forms And Modes Of Expression

MICHAEL FILIPEK

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

As we begin this exploration of biblical prophecy, let's keep in mind a proposition discussed in the companion study entitled *The Basis of Our Epistemology*:[1] one of the greatest evidences that the Bible is God's Word is its routine use of prophecy. The Bible repeatedly anticipates history in advance. This ability belongs uniquely to God, who exists outside the dimension of time, and it is one of the ways He authenticates His message to us. In fact, Scripture tells us that the evidence provided by prophecy is even more compelling than an eyewitness account.

> **18** And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when **we were with him** in the holy mount. **19** 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: **20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. **21 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

In this passage, Peter essentially says that prophecy provides evidence even stronger than eyewitness experience. Although he had personally witnessed the glory of Jesus, he pointed to the "more sure word of prophecy" as an even firmer foundation for our faith.

One of the greatest ways the Bible authenticates itself is through its vast amount of prophetic content. Prophecy not only tells us that God exists, but also demonstrates that He is in control of all things. The future is not unknown to Him. God knows the future because He rules over it.

Because we have already witnessed the accuracy of biblical prophecy historically, we can also be confident that the currently unfulfilled predictions will be fulfilled with the same accuracy as the earlier ones. We can likewise trust everything else God says because He has already demonstrated His ability to foretell the future accurately. This gives us strong confidence that the One who inspired the biblical text is reliable and that the Bible as a whole is a trustworthy source of truth. Prophecy provides powerful testimony to the existence of God – the God revealed in the Bible.

As we have already noted, prophecy is an ability unique to God because He is not limited by the boundaries of time.

> **9** Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and **there is none like me, 10 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

In this passage, God expresses His uniqueness – "there is none like me" – through His ability to declare "the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." In other words, God identifies prophecy as evidence of His unique nature and authority.

A substantial amount of biblical content is prophetic and includes

human history from beginning to end, revealed in advance. According to one reckoning by J. Barton Payne in the *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*, the Bible contains:

- 8,352 predictive verses concerning future events, representing approximately 27 percent of the entire Bible;
- 1,817 predictions, on
- 737 separate subjects of prediction[2]

The Bible is extensively prophetic. It cannot reasonably be dismissed, as some uninformed critics attempt to do, as nothing more than a quaint record of ancient tribal history.

Prophecy appears in several forms. In its most commonly recognized form, prophecy involves the foretelling of events that will occur in the future. However, not all prophecies are presented in the same way. Some biblical prophecies are given through spoken utterances or writing, ranging from simple and straightforward predictions to exquisite poetry containing a variety of rhetorical devices. Others are presented through symbolic visions or through prophetic types, shadows, and patterns that deliberately anticipate future fulfillments.

It is also important to recognize that the Hebrew understanding of prophecy involves more than direct prediction. Prophecy can also anticipate future realities through types, shadows, and patterns, as illustrated in Hebrews 8:5.

What do we mean by a "type"? Put simply, when someone intends to build or produce something in the natural world, such as a building or a car, a prototype is often created first. That prototype serves as a model or pattern that anticipates the finished product. The same basic idea helps explain a prophetic type. A type is a divinely designed copy, pattern, or model that anticipates a greater future reality, called the "antitype," in which the pattern reaches its ultimate fulfillment. We will examine this concept in greater detail in the chapters ahead.

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1. Michael Filipek, *The Basis of Our Epistemology*, Springfield, NJ: LetUsReason Publishing, 2026.
2. 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.

CHAPTER 2

MODES OF PROPHETIC EXPRESSION

Let's now examine several modes of prophetic expression used by God and some of the different ways prophecy was communicated in the Bible. These categories often overlap. A prophet might receive revelation through a dream or vision, communicate it orally, preserve it in writing, or act it out symbolically before the people.

> Long ago, at many times and **in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,**
>
> -Hebrews 1:1 (ESV)

#1 – Writing Prophets

The mode that most readily comes to mind is written prophecy. The prophets who preserved their messages in writing are generally the ones we know best – men such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the so-called "Minor Prophets," including Habakkuk and Zephaniah. In the New Testament, apostolic writers such as Paul, Peter, and John also recorded prophetic revelation.

However, grouping all these writers into one broad category can obscure the great variety of personalities, backgrounds, and writing

styles found among them. They range from herdsmen such as Amos to gifted poets such as Isaiah, from reluctant prophets such as Jonah to courageous men such as Daniel, and from lesser-known figures such as Joel to prominent men such as King David.

Their writing styles also differed considerably. Some, including Ezekiel, Daniel, and Haggai, frequently wrote in prose, meaning ordinary non-poetic language. Others, including David, Isaiah, Joel, and Micah, often expressed their messages through poetry. Still others preserved messages that read much like sermons or public proclamations, as we find in books such as Jeremiah, Amos, and Zechariah.

Many prophets received direct verbal revelation introduced by expressions such as, "Thus saith the Lord." Others received revelation through dreams and visions. Some books, such as Hosea and Jonah, also record events from the prophets' lives that carried prophetic significance. Written prophecy could preserve direct speech, visions, symbolic imagery, historical experiences, sermons, poetry, or combinations of several of these forms.

#2 – Speaking Prophets

Some of the Bible's most important prophets left no writings of their own, or at least none that have been preserved for us. We know about them because other biblical writers recorded their revelations, pronouncements, and actions. Elijah and his successor Elisha belong to this category, as does Samuel.

The greatest Prophet who ever lived also communicated most of His teaching orally – the Prophet foretold by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-18. We are speaking, of course, about Jesus Christ. Jesus was recognized as a prophet during His earthly ministry, and His words were later preserved by His disciples. His prophetic teachings include the Olivet Discourse recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

Many speaking prophets are not well known. Only a few are mentioned in the New Testament, including the four daughters of Philip, who prophesied, and Agabus, who foretold what would happen to Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 21:9-11).

The Old Testament contains many more oral prophets. In addition to Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, there was Nathan, who confronted David (2 Samuel 12); Micaiah, who saw the Lord sitting upon His throne (1 Kings 22); and Ahijah, who pronounced judgment upon the house of Jeroboam (1 Kings 14). Scripture also mentions numerous unnamed prophets, including the "man of God" from Judah who foretold the birth of Josiah (1 Kings 13).

These examples remind us that being a prophet did not necessarily mean writing a biblical book. A prophet was someone chosen by God to receive and communicate His message. Sometimes that message was preserved in a book bearing the prophet's name, while at other times it was recorded by someone else.

#3 – Acting Prophets

God sometimes instructed His prophets to communicate through symbolic actions. These enacted prophecies presented God's message visibly before the people. Rather than only hearing the prophecy, the audience saw a physical demonstration of what God intended to do.

Not all acting prophets belonged exclusively to this category. Many also spoke or wrote prophetic messages. The enacted sign was simply another mode God used to communicate through them. These dramatic actions often attracted attention and made the message more difficult to ignore.

For example, God instructed Isaiah to remove his sackcloth and sandals and walk barefoot and without his outer garment for three years (Isaiah 20:2-4). His condition served as a sign of the humiliation and captivity that would come upon Egypt and Ethiopia.

Jeremiah was instructed to place a yoke upon his neck to illustrate God's command that Judah and the surrounding nations submit to the rule of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 27).

Ezekiel was called upon to perform symbolic actions on numerous occasions. God instructed him to prepare baggage for exile and bring it out in the sight of the people. He was then to dig through a wall and carry his belongings away as a sign that

Jerusalem's inhabitants would be taken into captivity (Ezekiel 12:1-12).

On another occasion, God instructed Ezekiel to lie on his left side for three hundred ninety days, corresponding to the years of Israel's iniquity. He was then to lie on his right side for forty days, corresponding to the years of Judah's iniquity (Ezekiel 4:4-8).

The Lord also told Ezekiel to take a brick, portray Jerusalem upon it, and construct a model siege around it. He was to build forts and ramps against it and arrange camps and battering rams around it. This acted-out prophecy illustrated the coming siege of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 4:1-3).

One of Ezekiel's most difficult assignments involved the death of his wife. God told him that "the desire of thine eyes" would be taken from him, but he was not to observe the customary public expressions of mourning. His response became a sign to the people of what they would experience when God's sanctuary was profaned and their sons and daughters were killed. They would be so overwhelmed by judgment that they would not mourn in the usual manner (Ezekiel 24:15-24).

Certainly, one of the most memorable acting prophets was Hosea. God told him to marry Gomer, a "wife of whoredoms," as a living picture of Israel's unfaithfulness to Him. Just as Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea, Israel had violated her covenant relationship with God by pursuing other gods. Even the names given to Hosea's children carried prophetic messages concerning God's judgment upon the nation.

After having children with Hosea, Gomer abandoned her family and pursued her lovers, continuing in her unfaithfulness. Her actions pictured Israel's repeated departure from God and pursuit of false gods. Eventually, Gomer's unfaithfulness brought her into a condition of bondage, where she needed to be redeemed.

God then instructed Hosea to seek her out and love her again despite her unfaithfulness. Hosea paid the price to redeem his wife and restore their relationship. Through this enacted prophecy, God portrayed His own faithful love for unfaithful Israel. Although Israel had abandoned Him and brought judgment upon herself, God would

not abandon His covenant purposes for the nation. He would discipline her, redeem her, and ultimately restore her to Himself.

Conclusion

God communicated prophetic revelation through several overlapping modes. Some prophets preserved their messages in writing. Others delivered them primarily through speech. At times, God also instructed prophets to act out His message through visible signs. The same prophet could be used in more than one of these ways.

These categories concern the mode through which prophecy was expressed, not necessarily the kind of prophecy being delivered. A written prophecy might contain a direct prediction, a symbolic vision, or a poetic description. A spoken prophecy might announce judgment or restoration. An enacted prophecy might visibly portray a coming historical event. In each case, God chose the mode best suited to communicate His message clearly and powerfully to its original audience.

CHAPTER 3

LITERAL VERSUS ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY

As we establish our framework for understanding biblical prophecy, we need to discuss one of the most important issues in Bible interpretation: the difference between literal and allegorical interpretation. **Hermeneutics is the study of the principles and methods used to interpret the text of the Bible.** 2 Timothy 2:15 commands believers to take this responsibility seriously:

> Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
>
> -2 Timothy 2:15

The phrase "rightly dividing" carries the idea of handling the Word of God accurately. Our goal should not be to make the Bible say what we want it to say, but to understand and teach it according to the meaning God placed within the text through its human writers. Biblical hermeneutics helps us determine that meaning by paying attention to the author's words, grammar, historical setting, literary form, and context. Abner Chou explains that the goal of interpretation is to discover the author's intended meaning as expressed through the text rather than to create a meaning supplied by the reader.[1]

The most basic principle is that the Bible should be interpreted according to its normal or plain meaning. Charles Ryrie defines this as an interpretation that gives words the meaning they would normally have in writing, speech, or thought. He also calls it **grammatical-historical interpretation** because the meaning of the words is determined by grammatical and historical considerations.[2] This approach recognizes symbols, poetry, figures of speech, and other literary forms, but it interprets them according to the way they function in normal language.

What Literal Interpretation Means

Literal interpretation may also be described as an **originalist interpretation** because it seeks the meaning intended by the original author and expressed through the words of the original text. Before asking how a passage applies to us today, we must first ask what the biblical writer intended to communicate to his original audience. That original meaning provides the foundation for every sound application and for understanding how the passage fits within the rest of Scripture. Michael Vlach describes this approach as one that follows the human authorial intent, which is also God's inspired intent, of the biblical text. The meaning of an Old Testament passage is tied to the inspired authorial intent expressed in that passage, while its applications, implications, and significance may extend beyond the immediate situation.[3]

An **application** takes the truth communicated by a passage and shows how that truth bears upon another person, audience, or situation. An **implication** is a truth that logically or theologically follows from the passage's meaning, even when it is not stated in the same words. **Significance** describes the larger importance of that meaning as it relates to other events, doctrines, and stages in God's plan. Later revelation may authoritatively establish any of these connections but cannot change the actual meaning of the earlier passage.

The original author did not need to fully understand every later application of his words for those later applications, implications, and

significances to be legitimate. However, every legitimate later use must remain consistent with what the earlier author actually meant. The New Testament writers may apply, develop, or draw implications from an Old Testament passage, but they do not reinterpret it in a way that cancels, contradicts, or transforms its original meaning.

This point is important because God is the ultimate Author of Scripture, but He communicated His truth through human writers who used real words to address real people in real historical settings. God's intended meaning and the human author's intended meaning are not competing meanings. God worked through each writer so that the words he chose communicated the message God intended to give. Abner Chou explains that biblical interpretation must seek authorial intent expressed by the rules of grammar and in light of the facts of history.[4] The meaning of Scripture is not decided by what a reader wants the text to mean, what a religious tradition assigns to it, or what seems most meaningful to a modern audience. It is found by carefully studying what the author communicated through the words he wrote.

Literal interpretation means understanding those words according to their normal use within their context. Charles Ryrie explains that literal interpretation gives each word "the same meaning it would have in normal usage, whether employed in writing, speaking or thinking."[5] Earlier we mentioned the name grammatical-historical interpretation. But this method is sometimes also called the **literal-grammatical-historical-contextual or plain interpretation** because the meaning is determined through the grammar of the passage, the normal use of language, and the historical setting in which it was written. It's the plain meaning any normal reader would understand.

Literal interpretation, however, does not mean that figures of speech are ignored. Normal language includes figures of speech, symbols, poetry, comparisons, idioms, parables, and other forms of expression. A normal interpretation recognizes each of these forms and understands them according to the way the author uses them. When Jesus said, "I am the door" in John 10:9, He was not claiming to be a wooden object with hinges. The statement is clearly figurative,

but the figure communicates a real and understandable truth that the reader does not have the freedom to reinterpret: Jesus is the way of entrance into salvation. Literal interpretation recognizes the figure of speech and then seeks the actual meaning communicated through it. A symbol is interpreted as a symbol, poetry is read as poetry, and historical narrative is read as history. Figures of speech do not remove meaning from a passage. They are part of the normal way language communicates meaning.

The key issue is consistency. Nearly every Christian interprets at least some portions of Scripture normally. The real question is whether the same method will continue to be used when the Bible speaks about topics like Israel, Jerusalem, the promised land, the throne of David, Christ's Second Coming, and His future kingdom. When Scripture says Israel, we should understand it to mean Israel unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. When it says Jerusalem, we should understand Jerusalem. When God promises land to Abraham and his descendants, we should not change the land into a symbol of salvation or heaven unless Scripture itself gives us a clear reason to do so. Later revelation may add information, explain an earlier passage more fully, or show how it fits within God's larger plan, but it does not erase the original meaning or replace it with something unrelated to what the earlier writer communicated. This is why literal interpretation can rightly be called originalist: it keeps every later explanation and application grounded in the meaning of the original text.

What Allegorical Interpretation Means

The allegorical method looks beyond the normal meaning of the words and searches for another spiritual meaning beneath the text. In some cases, the historical and grammatical meaning is minimized or replaced altogether. It should be understood, however, that the Bible *does* contain actual allegories. For example, Galatians 4:21-31 directly tells us that Paul is using Hagar and Sarah allegorically to illustrate two covenants. When Scripture itself establishes an allegory, we

should recognize it and interpret it accordingly. The problem begins when an interpreter treats a passage as allegorical even though the text gives no indication that it should be understood that way. This gives the reader freedom to replace the author's meaning with another meaning supplied from outside the passage.

This approach is especially common in the interpretation of prophecy. Many Christian traditions read historical narratives and prophecies concerning Christ's First Coming normally, but they change their method when Scripture speaks about Israel's future, the literalness of Christ's earthly reign, or the events surrounding His return. For example, the Old Testament repeatedly promises a future earthly kingdom involving the restoration of Israel, the regathering of the Jewish people, the possession of the promised land, the Messiah reigning from David's throne, Jerusalem serving as the center of His government, and the nations coming to worship the Lord.

Under an allegorical interpretation, these promises are often changed into descriptions of the present Church Age. Israel is understood as the Church. Jerusalem or Zion is taken to mean the Church rather than the actual city. The throne of David becomes Christ's present rule from heaven, and the promised earthly kingdom becomes the spiritual blessings Christians now possess. These conclusions do not come from a normal meaning of the text. They result from the interpreter's subjective decision to externally impose their own ideas by changing the identities of the people, places, and events named within the text.

Isaiah 35, for example, describes the desert blossoming, physical healing, the restoration of the land, and the redeemed returning to Zion. While literal interpreters take those at face value and expect a time when they will actually happen, an allegorical interpretation may turn the blossoming desert into a picture of the spiritual fruitfulness of the gospel in the Church. That is obviously not the meaning intended by Isaiah, nor does the Bible anywhere confirm such a meaning. Rather, the chapter describes real future conditions connected with Israel's restoration and the reign of the Messiah. Just as fulfilled prophecy came to pass through real events in history, prophecies that

remain unfulfilled should also be expected to come to pass through real events in history. It is easy to see then how a consistent literal approach results in a futurist view of the prophetic biblical events that obviously have not yet occurred literally.

Progressive Revelation Does Not Cancel Earlier Meaning

As Scripture progresses, God adds further revelation. Later passages may explain earlier truths more fully, introduce details that had not yet been revealed, or show how several earlier passages fit together. This is often called **progressive revelation**. Progressive revelation does not mean that later Scripture changes the meaning of earlier Scripture. A later writer may develop the *implications* of an earlier passage, but that development remains connected to what the earlier passage actually said. This approach is sometimes called **passage priority**, because the meaning of the passage itself has priority over a later interpretation imposed upon it. **For that reason, we believe in passage priority rather than New Testament priority.**

This is especially important when studying the New Testament's use of the Old Testament. The New Testament may reveal implications that the original readers did not fully understand. It may explain how a prophecy is fulfilled through Christ or how an earlier pattern fits into God's larger plan. Yet that later explanation remains connected with the wording, context, and meaning of the original passage. Vlach explains that while applications of an Old Testament passage may vary, later biblical writers do not add a new meaning that cancels or contradicts the earlier author's intended meaning.[6] This protects the integrity of the Old Testament as genuine revelation. If the original words could later be changed to mean something completely different, the first readers could never have truly understood what God was saying to them.

For example, the New Testament reveals truths about the Church that were not fully disclosed in the Old Testament. That additional revelation does not magically transform references to Israel into refer-

ences to the Church, nor does it cancel the national promises God made to Israel. God can carry out His present work through the Church while still preserving every promise He made to Israel. The same principle applies throughout prophecy. Later revelation can provide greater detail without changing the identity of the people, nations, lands, cities, or covenants named in the original text.

Characters in the Bible Always Interpreted Prophecy Literally

One of the strongest reasons for interpreting prophecy normally is that the people within Scripture always interpreted prophecy according to a normal, literal approach. Daniel gives us a clear example. Jeremiah had earlier prophesied that Jerusalem would remain desolate and that the Jewish people would serve Babylon for seventy years. As a captive in Babylon, Daniel later read Jeremiah's prophecy and understood the seventy years as an actual period of time:

> In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.
>
> -Daniel 9:2

The prophecy Daniel was reading had originally been given shortly before the Babylonian invasion and was later repeated in a letter sent to the captives in Babylon (Jeremiah 25:1-11; 29:1-10). Daniel did not interpret the seventy years as a symbolic description of a general period of difficulty. Instead, he rightly understood that Jeremiah had predicted an actual period of seventy years connected with the desolation of Jerusalem. When Daniel recognized that this period was approaching its end, he began to pray for the restoration of his people and city. The prophecy concerned Israel and Jerusalem, and it was fulfilled through real events involving Israel and Jerusalem. Daniel's

response provides a strong biblical example of how prophecy should be understood.

The religious leaders in Matthew 2 followed the same approach. When Herod asked where the Messiah would be born, the chief priests and scribes quoted Micah 5:2 and answered that He would be born in Bethlehem. They did not interpret Bethlehem as a spiritual condition or as a symbol of something else. They understood it as an actual town, and Jesus was born there just as the prophecy stated.

The prophecies concerning Christ's First Coming were fulfilled in the same normal way. He was literally born of a virgin in the literal town of Bethlehem. He literally entered Jerusalem riding upon a literal donkey. He was literally betrayed for thirty literal pieces of silver. His literal hands and feet were literally pierced, His literal garments were divided, He was literally buried with the rich, and He literally rose from the dead. Some of these prophecies used poetic language and figures of speech, but the predicted events still took place in real history. The presence of poetry did not turn Bethlehem into a spiritual idea, the donkey into an invisible condition, or the thirty pieces of silver into an undefined symbol.

The same expectation should guide our interpretation of prophecies concerning Christ's Second Coming. If the prophecies of His birth, suffering, death, and resurrection were fulfilled through real, literal events, we have strong reason to expect the prophecies of His return, judgment, reign, and kingdom to be fulfilled through real, literal events as well. In fact, Jesus Himself taught that every part of God's written revelation was important and would be fulfilled:

> **17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. **18** For verily I say unto you, **Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.**
>
> -Matthew 5:17-18

A jot referred to *yod*, the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, while a tittle was likely a small stroke that distinguished one Hebrew

letter from another. In modern terms, this would be similar to saying that not even the dotting of an "i" or the crossing of a "t" would fail. Jesus' point was that the Old Testament remained authoritative and certain of fulfillment down to its smallest details.[7]

Thus, Jesus did not treat the Old Testament as a collection of flexible religious symbols that could be reshaped according to the preferences of the reader. He treated its people, places, events, and predictions as true. His use of Scripture emphasizes the seriousness with which the written text should be approached.

The Problem With Allegorical Interpretation

A serious problem with allegorical interpretation is that it places too much power in the imagination of the interpreter instead of in the text itself. If Israel can mean the Church, Jerusalem can mean heaven, the land can mean salvation, and the throne of David can mean God's general rule, what then controls the interpretation? Once the normal meaning is discarded, seemingly limitless spiritual meanings can be assigned to the same passage. In the end, if the text itself does not guide the interpretation, nothing means anything with certainty because all objective guideposts have been abandoned. The result is that the interpreter becomes the one who assigns meaning instead of the one who uncovers the author's intended meaning.

God had a specific meaning in mind when He inspired the biblical writers. The literal, grammatical, historical, and contextual method seeks that meaning and keeps the interpreter accountable to the words that were actually written. This is the difference between **exegesis** and **eisegesis**. Exegesis draws the author's intended meaning out of the text, while eisegesis reads the interpreter's own ideas into it. The allegorical method may produce conclusions that could never have been reached from the passage itself because a person may begin with a teaching he already believes and then read that teaching back into the prophecy. As the old saying goes, "If you torture the data long enough, it will confess to anything," and the same can happen to a biblical passage when it is forced to support a meaning it never

intended. This reverses the proper order. Our doctrine should arise from Scripture rather than being placed over Scripture.

For these reasons, the normal meaning of unfulfilled prophecy should not be abandoned. The same method used to understand fulfilled prophecy should also be used to understand prophecy that still awaits fulfillment. Dr. David L. Cooper, founder of the Biblical Research Society, described this method of interpretation in the following way:

> When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning, unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.[8]

Symbols and Figures of Speech Do Not Cancel Literal Fulfillment

Some opponents of literal interpretation argue that prophecy cannot be understood normally because it often contains symbols and figures of speech. That objection is based on a misunderstanding of what literal interpretation means. Literal interpreters have always recognized that the Bible uses symbols, metaphors, comparisons, poetry, visions, and other forms of expression.

The real issue is whether those figures of speech are interpreted according to the way the biblical author used them. A symbol does not leave the passage without a definite meaning. It uses one thing to communicate truth about something else. Once the symbol has been recognized, the interpreter must determine what real person, object, institution, or event it represents. That meaning must come *from the text itself* and its context rather than from the reader's imagination. Ryrie explains this clearly:

> Symbols, figures of speech and types are all interpreted plainly in this method and they are in no way contrary to literal interpretation. After

> all, the very existence of any meaning for a figure of speech depends on the reality of the literal meaning of the terms involved. Figures often make the meaning plainer, but it is the literal, normal, or plain meaning that they convey to the reader.[9]

His point in this quote is important. Figurative language does not stand in opposition to literal interpretation because figures of speech are part of normal language. We use them constantly in ordinary conversation. If we say that someone has a heart of stone, we are not claiming that the person's heart is made of rock. We are using a figure to communicate the real idea that the person is cold or unfeeling. The statement still has an intended meaning that can be understood and is not subject to the whims of the hearer's imagination.

The same is true in Scripture. When John the Baptist saw Jesus approaching and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), he was obviously not identifying Jesus as a literal animal. He was using the lamb as a symbol that drew upon the Old Testament sacrificial system, especially the spotless sacrifices offered for sin. The symbol pointed to Jesus as the final and perfect sacrifice who would give His life for sinners.

Yet the symbolic title did not make the fulfillment symbolic in the sense of being unreal. Jesus literally entered human history, literally suffered, literally shed His blood, and literally died as a sacrifice for sin. The figure of the lamb helped explain the meaning of His literal death. It did not replace the historical event with a vague, allegorized, spiritual idea.

The same principle applies to the symbolic beasts found in Daniel and Revelation. These passages use beasts to represent rulers, kingdoms, or political powers. Daniel 7 provides its own interpretation by explaining that the beasts represent kings or kingdoms. The symbols are vivid because they communicate something about the nature and behavior of those powers. Their beast-like appearance emphasizes their violence, pride, cruelty, and opposition to God.

The symbol does not mean that the prophecy is only describing the general presence of evil in the world. It points to literal rulers and

kingdoms that act within history. In the same way, when Revelation describes the final world ruler as a beast, the imagery communicates his brutal and God-defying character. It does not prevent him from being an actual literal individual who will rule, speak, persecute, and eventually be judged.

This gives us an important rule for interpreting symbolic prophecy: **the symbol may be figurative, but the reality represented by the symbol is real and literal**. The interpreter must allow Scripture to self-identify those symbols whenever it provides a direct explanation (as it often does). When the text does *not* immediately explain a symbol, its meaning must be sought through the surrounding context, the historical background, and related passages. We should not assign meanings according to personal imagination or current events simply because a symbol appears unusual or is initially difficult for us to understand.

God Himself tells us that He used this kind of language through the prophets:

> I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.
>
> -Hosea 12:10

A similitude is a comparison in which one thing is used to help explain another. God used visions, comparisons, and symbolic pictures because they communicated His message in a powerful and memorable way. These forms did not make the message less certain. They were chosen by God to reveal truth more clearly.

The question is not whether prophecy contains symbolism. It clearly does. The question is whether the symbol is being interpreted according to the meaning God placed within the text. Symbolism should help us understand the prophecy, not become an excuse for replacing its meaning.

The Pattern of Fulfilled Prophecy Matters

The history of fulfilled prophecy gives us a reliable guide for understanding prophecy that remains unfulfilled. Again and again, the Bible predicted real people, places, nations, judgments, and events, and those predictions came to pass in the normal historical sense of the words. Sir Robert Anderson expressed the principle this way:

> There is not a single prophecy, of which the fulfillment is recorded in Scripture, that was not realized with absolute accuracy, and in every detail; and it is wholly unjustifiable to assume that a new system of fulfillment was inaugurated after the sacred canon closed … Literalness of fulfillment may therefore be accepted as an axiom to guide us in the study of prophecy.[10]

Anderson's point is that we should allow *fulfilled* prophecy to establish the pattern by which we understand *unfulfilled* prophecy. We do not need to invent a new method for future passages that would result in an inconsistent approach. We should instead use the method that has already proven accurate.

The Old Testament predicted that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Jesus was born in the actual town of Bethlehem. It predicted that He would enter Jerusalem riding upon a donkey. He entered the actual city of Jerusalem upon an actual donkey. It predicted that He would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, that His garments would be divided, that He would suffer, and that He would die. These events took place in real history.

Some of those prophecies contained poetry, imagery, and figures of speech, but their fulfillment was not reduced to an inward spiritual experience or a broad theological principle. The language pointed to actual events. The figures helped explain those events, but they did not erase them.

This becomes especially important when we turn to prophecies concerning Christ's Second Coming and the future of Israel. The Bible speaks about Christ returning to the earth, Israel being regathered and

restored, Jerusalem becoming prominent, the Messiah reigning from David's throne, the nations coming before Him, and the earth experiencing the conditions of His kingdom. Nothing in the text requires us to change those promises into descriptions of the present Church Age.

If Bethlehem meant Bethlehem in the prophecies of Christ's First Coming, Jerusalem should continue to mean Jerusalem in prophecies concerning His return. If the descendants of Israel experienced the predicted judgments, the same people should receive the promised restoration. If David's throne referred to the royal throne promised to David and his descendants, we should not redefine it as a general reference to God's rule from heaven.

To accept the judgments upon Israel literally while changing Israel's promised blessings into blessings for another group is not consistent interpretation. The same words, covenants, people, and places appear in both the judgment passages and the restoration passages. We should not change their meanings when the subject turns from punishment to blessing.

Literal Interpretation Preserves God's Faithfulness

This issue concerns more than the technical method we use to interpret prophecy. It also concerns the faithfulness of God. God made specific covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and the nation of Israel. Those promises included descendants, land, national restoration, a coming King, and an earthly kingdom.

If those promises can later be changed into something different from what the original recipients were led to understand, serious questions arise. Could Abraham have understood the land promise if "land" would later mean heaven or spiritual salvation? Could David have understood the promise of a descendant ruling upon his throne if that throne would later be changed into a completely different kind of rule? Could Israel have understood promises of national restoration if the nation itself would eventually be removed from the fulfillment?

A normal, originalist interpretation protects the reliability of those promises. It allows God's words to retain the meaning they had when

He gave them. Later revelation may provide more details about how and when the promises will be fulfilled, but it does not transfer them away from the people to whom they were made.

This does not limit God or prevent Scripture from having applications beyond its original audience. A promise to Israel may reveal truths about God's grace, faithfulness, holiness, and power that apply to all believers. An Old Testament passage may also establish a pattern that later Scripture develops. Yet those applications and patterns do not erase the original promise.

Application is not the same as interpretation. A passage may have many proper applications, but its meaning remains rooted in what the author intended to communicate by divine inspiration. This distinction allows us to benefit from all of Scripture without taking promises away from their original recipients.

Conclusion

The difference between literal and allegorical interpretation comes down to where meaning is found. Literal interpretation seeks the meaning intended by the original author and expressed through the words, grammar, context, literary form, and historical setting of the passage. Allegorical interpretation often searches for another meaning beneath or beyond the text, even when the text gives no reason to do so.

Literal interpretation does not deny symbols, poetry, visions, parables, types, or figures of speech. It recognizes them as normal forms of language and interprets them according to the way the biblical writer used them. A symbol may be figurative, but it points to a literal truth. When prophetic symbols describe people, kingdoms, judgments, or events, those realities should not be spiritualized away.

The record of fulfilled prophecy gives us strong reason to expect the same accuracy in the future. The prophecies of Christ's First Coming were fulfilled through real events in history. We should expect the prophecies of His Second Coming, Israel's restoration, His reign

from David's throne, and His future kingdom to be fulfilled with the same faithfulness.

Later revelation may add details, explain earlier passages more fully, and show how different parts of God's plan fit together. It does not cancel the original meaning of earlier Scripture. Israel remains Israel, Jerusalem remains Jerusalem, the promised land remains the promised land, and the covenants God made remain promises that He will fulfill.

For these reasons, biblical prophecy should be interpreted according to its normal, grammatical, historical, contextual, and originalist meaning. This method keeps the authority in the text rather than in the imagination of the interpreter, and it gives us confidence that the God who fulfilled His Word accurately in the past will fulfill every remaining promise in the future.

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CHAPTER 4

FORMS OF PROPHECY

Prophecy can be classified in several ways depending on the question being asked. In Chapter 2, we examined the modes through which prophetic revelation was communicated, including writing, speech, and symbolic actions. In the next chapter, we will examine the ways prophetic fulfillment may unfold through time, including hidden intervals, multiple references, and multiple-stage fulfillments.

In this chapter, we are asking a different question: **How does Scripture anticipate later events and realities?** For the purpose of answering that question, we will examine two broad forms of prophetic anticipation. The first is **direct predictive prophecy**, in which God announces something before it happens. The second is **typological prophecy**, in which God establishes a historical person, event, institution, or object that forms a pattern anticipating a later and greater reality.

These should not be understood as the only two possible ways of classifying prophecy. A direct prediction may be written in prose or poetry, communicated through a dream or vision, expressed through symbolism, and fulfilled in one event or through several stages. Those

descriptions do not contradict one another because they answer different questions about the same prophecy.

#1 – Direct Predictive Prophecy

Direct predictive prophecy involves the announcement of an event before it occurs. God reveals what will happen in advance, sometimes centuries before its fulfillment. These predictions may concern individuals, nations, kingdoms, judgments, blessings, the coming of the Messiah, or events associated with the end times.

Some predictive prophecies are stated plainly. Micah directly identified Bethlehem as the location from which Israel's future Ruler would come:

> 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

Matthew later records that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and directly connects that event with Micah's prophecy (Matthew 2:1-6).

Isaiah also named Cyrus long before the Persian king came to power:

> That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.
>
> -Isaiah 44:28

> Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; …
>
> -Isaiah 45:1

These are straightforward predictions. A person and place were

very clearly identified in advance, and the later historical fulfillments corresponded to the words that were written.

Other predictive prophecies are expressed through symbols. In Daniel 2, the succession of world kingdoms was presented through the image of a great statue composed of different materials. In Daniel 7, kingdoms were represented by beasts. The symbols did not prevent the prophecies from referring to actual kingdoms and historical events. The imagery was symbolic, but what it predicted was real and historically accurate.

Predictive prophecy may also appear in poetry. Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 use poetic language, but their literary form does not make their prophetic content unreal or less exact. Poetry communicates through imagery, parallelism, and figures of speech while still conveying an intended meaning.

This distinction is important. **Plain, poetic,** and **symbolic** describe how a prediction is expressed. They are not separate alternatives to predictive prophecy. A prophecy can be predictive and poetic, predictive and symbolic, or predictive and plainly stated at the same time.

A Clear Example of a Direct Predictive Biblical Prophecy

The prophecies concerning Tyre provide one of the clearest examples of detailed predictive prophecy. Tyre was a wealthy Phoenician commercial power located on the Mediterranean coast in the area of modern Lebanon. Because of its pride, wealth, and opposition to God's people, the Lord pronounced judgment against the city through the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel. They did not simply predict that Tyre would eventually experience trouble. They recorded numerous highly specific details concerning its future judgment, and those details were precisely fulfilled across successive periods of history. The following are just five of them.

1. Nebuchadnezzar Would Come Against Tyre

What Was Prophesied: Ezekiel specifically identified Nebuchadnezzar,

king of Babylon, as a ruler who would come against Tyre with a large army and place its mainland settlements under siege.

> **7** For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. **8** He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee. **9** And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.
> -Ezekiel 26:7-9

What Happened Historically: Nebuchadnezzar later laid siege to Tyre for approximately thirteen years, from around 585 to 573 BC. Ancient historical records indicate that Tyre eventually submitted to Babylonian authority, although Nebuchadnezzar did not obtain the wealth and plunder his army expected after such a long campaign. The first-century AD Jewish-Roman historian Josephus, drawing upon Phoenician records available to him, reports that the siege lasted thirteen years during the reign of the Tyrian king Ithobaal.[1]

2. Many Nations Would Come Against Tyre

What Was Prophesied: Ezekiel foretold that Tyre's judgment would not be completed through the actions of Nebuchadnezzar alone. Many nations would come against the city in successive waves.

> **3** Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. **4** And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: …
> -Ezekiel 26:3-4

What Happened Historically: Tyre later came under attack or control through a succession of foreign powers, including the Babylonians,

Persians, Macedonian Greeks, and later empires. Alexander the Great captured the heavily fortified island city in 332 BC after a siege lasting approximately seven months.[2,3] The repeated arrival of foreign conquerors closely corresponds to Ezekiel's picture of nations coming against Tyre like successive waves of the sea.

The wording of the prophecy is also important. Ezekiel first spoke collectively of "many nations" and what "they" would do to Tyre. He then focused specifically upon what Nebuchadnezzar would accomplish. This allows the individual details of the prophecy to unfold through several conquerors rather than requiring Nebuchadnezzar personally to fulfill every statement.

3. Tyre's Stones, Timber, and Dust Would Be Thrown Into the Sea

What Was Prophesied: Ezekiel anticipated the highly unusual detail that the materials of Tyre's buildings would be cast into the water.

> And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.
>
> -Ezekiel 26:12

What Happened Historically: When Alexander the Great arrived at Tyre, the fortified island city stood offshore and could not be reached by his land forces. He therefore ordered the construction of a causeway from the mainland to the island. The first-century BC Greek historian Diodorus recorded that Alexander demolished mainland Tyre and used its stones to construct the causeway, while the second-century AD Greek historian Arrian described an abundant supply of stones and timber being deposited into the water.[4,5] Exactly as Ezekiel had prophesied, the city's stones and timber were cast into the sea and used to make Tyre's conquest possible.

This is one of the most remarkable details in the prophecy. Ezekiel did not just say that Tyre's buildings would be destroyed. He specifi-

cally said that its stones, timber, and dust would be laid "in the midst of the water." More than two centuries later, Alexander's forces did exactly that. The causeway permanently changed the geography of the area. Sand and sediment gradually accumulated around it, transforming the former island into the peninsula that still exists today.[6]

4. Tyre Would Be Scraped Bare and Become a Place for Spreading Nets

What Was Prophesied: Ezekiel declared that the site would be stripped of its former structures, made like the top of a bare rock, and used by fishermen for spreading their nets.

> **4** … I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. **5** It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God: …
>
> -Ezekiel 26:4-5

Ezekiel repeated the prediction later in the passage:

> And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; …
>
> -Ezekiel 26:14

What Happened Historically: Alexander's construction project stripped Old Tyre of its structures and building materials as the mainland city was demolished and its stones were carried away for the causeway.[7] In 1697, the English traveler Henry Maundrell visited Tyre and described the site as a mass of broken walls, pillars, and vaults, with only a few poor inhabitants who supported themselves mainly through fishing. He specifically observed that the ruined site had become "a place for fishers to dry their nets on," exactly as Ezekiel had prophesied.[8]

A city once known throughout the ancient world for its ships, merchants, wealth, and international influence was reduced to an ordinary place associated with fishermen and their nets.

5. Tyre Would Recover Its Trade, and Its Merchandise Would Be Used for the Lord

What Was Prophesied: Isaiah predicted that Tyre would experience a lengthy period of decline, after which it would return to commercial activity. He also stated that some of its merchandise would ultimately be devoted to the Lord.

> **15** And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot. … **17** And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. **18** And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: …
>
> -Isaiah 23:15, 17-18

What Happened Historically: After Tyre's period of decline under Babylonian power, the city regained a measure of its former commercial activity during the Persian period, exactly as Isaiah had predicted. Isaiah also said that Tyre's renewed merchandise would be used in service to the Lord. One historical fulfillment of this aspect of the prophecy can be seen when the people of Tyre and Sidon supplied cedar from Lebanon for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem under the authorization of Cyrus, as recorded in Ezra 3:7.

> They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.
>
> -Ezra 3:7

Thus, Tyre experienced both parts of Isaiah's prophecy: its commercial activity was revived, and the products of that renewed trade were used for the work of the Lord.

These prophecies about Tyre were recorded long before their major historical fulfillments. Isaiah ministered during the eighth century BC, while Ezekiel's prophetic ministry took place during the Babylonian exile in the sixth century BC. Significantly, Ezekiel 26 is itself dated to that historical setting, more than two centuries before Alexander the Great conquered Tyre in 332 BC. The detailed correspondence between Ezekiel's words and Alexander's later actions cannot therefore be explained as a description written after the event. The prophecy was already part of a book rooted in the Babylonian period long before Alexander constructed a causeway from the mainland and conquered the island city.[9] [10]

In sum, the strength of these prophecies lies in their accumulated details. Ezekiel and Isaiah did more than predict that Tyre would someday experience trouble. They foretold:

- Nebuchadnezzar would attack it.
- Many nations would come against it.
- Its walls and towers would be broken down and its stones, timber, and dust would be thrown into the sea.
- Its site would be scraped and laid bare, becoming a place for spreading fishing nets.
- The ancient city would eventually recover some of its commercial activity.

This is exactly why Tyre is such a valuable example of direct predictive prophecy. The fulfillment was not vague or general. The prophecy included some highly specific and even unusual details that no ordinary observer could reasonably have predicted from the circumstances of Ezekiel's day. The city's destruction, the involvement of multiple nations, the disposal of its materials into the sea, the permanent alteration of its geography, and its eventual commercial revival together provide a compelling demonstration of the accuracy of biblical prophecy.

Direct predictive prophecy, then, announces events before they occur. The prediction may be plain, poetic, or symbolic. It may concern

an event in the near future or one far beyond the prophet's lifetime. It may also contain elements fulfilled at different stages. But regardless of its form or timing, the prophecy should always be interpreted literally, according to its actual wording and context.

#2 – Typological Prophecy

The second broad form of prophetic anticipation to be examined is typology. Biblical typology involves a divinely intended historical correspondence in which an earlier person, event, institution, or object establishes a pattern that anticipates a later and greater reality. The earlier reality is commonly called the **type**, while the later corresponding reality is called the **antitype**. The antitype is not simply a repetition of the type. It is normally the greater, fuller, or climactic reality toward which the earlier pattern pointed.

Typology is a legitimate biblical concept, but it must be handled with care and kept under the control of the text. It does not give the interpreter permission to search for hidden meanings in every person, number, material, color, object, or event found in the Old Testament. Similarities can be created very easily by selecting certain details, ignoring others, and shaping the comparison around a preferred doctrine or interpretation. For that reason, the existence of a resemblance does not by itself prove that God intended a prophetic type. A genuine type must rest upon clear biblical warrant and a meaningful connection within the unfolding plan of Scripture.

Typology Preserves and Develops the Original Meaning

A genuine type begins with a real person, event, institution, or object within history. It had an actual meaning and function in its original setting before later revelation connected it with a greater reality. Adam was a real historical person before Paul identified him as "the figure of him that was to come" in Romans 5:14. The Passover was a real deliverance of Israel from Egypt before Paul declared that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" in 1 Corinthians 5:7. The

bronze serpent served an actual purpose in the wilderness before Jesus compared it with His own crucifixion in John 3:14-15.

In each case, the original meaning remains intact. Later revelation does not erase the historical event or assign the earlier passage an unrelated meaning. Instead, it reveals a broader significance of that meaning within the unfolding plan of God. It may draw out implications, apply an established truth to a later audience, connect the passage with other revelation, or identify a divinely intended pattern that was not yet fully explained. But it never changes the original author's meaning.

This is an important distinction. The meaning of a passage is the truth the original author intended to communicate through the words of the text. That meaning does not change. However, the meaning may carry implications, applications, and significance that become clearer as revelation progresses. The original author did not need to understand every later development for those developments to be legitimate, but every legitimate later use must remain consistent with what the earlier passage actually meant. Later revelation builds upon the earlier meaning and shows how the historical event participates in a larger pattern established by God.

As discussed previously, this reflects the concept of *passage priority*. Each passage must first be understood according to its own wording, context, historical setting, and authorial intent. Later revelation may clarify, expand, apply, or develop what came before, but it does not replace the earlier meaning with a different one.

Types Must Be Identified Textually

A genuine biblical type must be identified by the text of Scripture itself, not by a reader who notices similarities between an Old Testament event and something in the New Testament. Similarity alone is not enough to confidently call something a genuine type. This keeps us grounded in the actual text through exegesis rather than drifting into eisegesis by reading our own meanings into it. Readers can often create impressive parallels by selecting certain details, overlooking

others, and arranging the comparison around a conclusion or doctrinal view they already favor. Sound hermeneutical principles help protect us from these tendencies and keep the interpretation under the authority of Scripture.

The clearest types are those directly identified or clearly explained by later Scripture. Paul explicitly presents Adam as a type of Christ in Romans 5:14. Jesus compares the bronze serpent to His crucifixion in John 3:14-15 and Jonah's three days in the fish to His own burial and resurrection in Matthew 12:40. The book of Hebrews also explains how the Tabernacle and sacrificial system pointed ahead to the work of Christ. In each case, Scripture itself establishes the connection rather than leaving it to the imagination of the interpreter.

This does not mean the Bible must always use the word *type* before a typological connection can be recognized. Scripture may establish the connection by directly comparing the earlier event with the later one, by explaining how the earlier pattern pointed ahead, or by repeatedly developing that pattern across the biblical storyline. The key is that the connection must be established by Scripture itself, not created by a reader who simply notices a resemblance between two events.

When Scripture does not clearly establish a typological connection, it is better to speak of an analogy, illustration, possible parallel, or part of a wider biblical motif rather than an established prophetic type. Scripture may develop recurring themes, images, and patterns across many passages without making every individual occurrence a formal type of a later event. Recognizing those broader motifs can deepen our understanding of the Bible's unity, but we should still avoid claiming more than the text supports. This keeps interpretation under the authority of Scripture and prevents typology from becoming a form of reader-controlled allegory.

Biblical Words Associated With Typology

The New Testament uses several words to describe types, patterns, figures, and shadows as being divinely intended corresponding realities. These words demonstrate that typology itself is a biblical

concept, but their presence does not allow interpreters to go wild inventing types without textual evidence.

The apostle Paul refers to Adam as a *tupos*, translated "figure" in the King James Version:

> Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the **figure** of him that was to come.
>
> -Romans 5:14

Paul also uses the plural form, *tupoi*, when discussing events experienced by Israel in the wilderness:

> Now these things were our **examples**, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.
>
> -1 Corinthians 10:6

The word translated "examples" is the plural form of *tupos*. Paul understood the historical experiences of Israel as patterns that carried instruction for later believers.

The New Testament also uses the word *skia*, meaning "shadow":

> Which are a **shadow** of things to come; but the body is of Christ.
>
> -Colossians 2:17

Hebrews uses the words "example," "shadow," and "pattern" together when discussing the Tabernacle:

> Who serve unto the **example** and **shadow** 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** shewed to thee in the mount.
>
> -Hebrews 8:5

These passages establish the legitimacy of biblical types. The ques-

tion is how types should be recognized without allowing imagination to take control of interpretation.

Guidelines for Recognizing a Legitimate Type

Based on what has been discussed thus far, we can identify several safeguards that should govern the study of typology.

1. The Type Must Be Historical

The earlier person, event, institution, or object must have a real place within biblical history. Its typological importance does not eliminate its historical meaning.

The Exodus was not simply a symbolic story about salvation. Adam was not simply a literary picture of humanity. The Tabernacle was not only a collection of spiritual symbols. These were historical realities before they became part of a larger pattern.

2. The Original Meaning Must Remain Intact

The passage must first be interpreted according to what its words meant in their original context. A later typological correspondence cannot contradict or erase that meaning.

The biblical writers did not treat the Old Testament as raw material that could be reshaped to support any later teaching. They respected the earlier text and developed its meaning within the continuing revelation of God.

3. The Correspondence Must Have Biblical Warrant

The safest and clearest types are those explicitly identified or clearly developed by Scripture itself. An interpreter should ask: Does Scripture establish this correspondence, or am I creating it because the two things seem similar?

This does not mean that the Bible must always use the word *type*.

Jesus did not use that technical term when comparing the bronze serpent with His crucifixion or Jonah's experience with His burial and resurrection. Yet, the correspondence is still directly established by His own words.

At the same time, proposed connections that are not identified or clearly developed in Scripture should be stated cautiously. They may be useful analogies or illustrations without being genuine prophetic types.

4. The Correspondence Must Be Meaningful

A type involves more than a collection of superficial similarities. Two biblical figures may both have brothers, travel to foreign lands, suffer rejection, or marry Gentile women. Those similarities alone do not prove that one was designed as a prophetic portrait of the other.

A legitimate type participates in a meaningful biblical pattern connected with the unfolding plan of God. The correspondence must arise from the storyline and theology of Scripture rather than from isolated details selected by the interpreter.

5. The Antitype Normally Involves Escalation

The later reality is normally greater than the earlier pattern. Adam stands at the head of fallen humanity, while Christ stands at the head of a redeemed humanity. The Passover delivered Israel from physical slavery and temporal judgment, while Christ provides the greater redemption from sin and eternal judgment. The earthly sanctuary was temporary, while Christ ministers in the greater and true heavenly sanctuary. The antitype brings the pattern to a fuller and climactic realization.

6. Doctrine Must Not Be Built Upon Speculative Types

We do not establish doctrine from proposed types. We first establish doctrine from the clear teaching of Scripture and then recognize

legitimate patterns that support, illustrate, or develop that teaching through direct textual mention.

A proposed type should never become the sole basis for a doctrine. If a teaching cannot be established from the clear statements of Scripture, a collection of perceived similarities cannot establish it. Without this safeguard, interpreters may select certain details, overlook others, and shape a supposed type around a conclusion they already favor.

Several Clear Biblical Examples of Typology

The best way to understand typology is to examine several typological correspondences that Scripture itself establishes.

Note: In the appendix of this study, we have included a "comprehensive" list of biblical types, separating them into categories based on biblical certainty. The following are five examples from that list.

1. Adam as a type of Christ

Old Testament: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7-25; 3:1-24
New Testament: Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49

In Genesis, Adam was the first man and the representative head of humanity. Through his one act of disobedience, sin and death entered the human race, bringing condemnation upon humanity. Paul directly identifies Adam as a type of Christ in Romans 5:14 when he calls him "the figure of him that was to come," using the Greek word *tupos*. He then contrasts Adam and Christ directly: Adam's disobedience brought sin, condemnation, and death, while Christ's obedience brings righteousness, justification, and life.

Paul develops the correspondence further in 1 Corinthians 15 by calling Christ "the last Adam" and contrasting "the first man" with "the second man," who is from heaven. Death came through Adam, while resurrection and life come through Christ. Those who belong to Christ will ultimately bear the image of the heavenly Man rather than

the image of the earthly. Adam therefore serves as an explicitly identified type of Christ because each stands as a representative head whose actions bring far-reaching consequences to those connected with him.

2. *Jonah as a type of Christ's burial and resurrection*

Old Testament: Jonah 1:15-17; 2:1-10
New Testament: Matthew 12:38-41; 16:4; Luke 11:29-32

In the Old Testament account, Jonah was swallowed by a great fish and remained there for three days and three nights before God brought him back to dry land. Jesus directly identifies Jonah's experience as a sign of His own burial and resurrection. He said, "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." Jonah was swallowed by the fish and disappeared into what looked like certain death. In Jonah 2, he describes his experience using the language of the grave, the depths, and going down beneath the earth. God then brought him back to the land of the living. Jesus said this event pointed forward to His own burial and resurrection. Jonah did not actually rise from death, but his experience was arranged by God to picture what Christ would later fulfill completely.

3. *The bronze serpent as a type of Christ on the cross*

Old Testament: Numbers 21:4-9
New Testament: John 3:14-16; 12:32-33

In Numbers 21, Israel sinned against God and came under judgment through the fiery serpents, whose bites brought death. God then provided a single means of deliverance by commanding Moses to make a bronze serpent and lift it up before the people. Anyone who had been bitten could look upon the lifted serpent and live. Deliverance came through faith in the remedy God Himself had provided.

Jesus directly applies this event to His own crucifixion, saying,

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." John later explains that Christ being "lifted up" referred to the manner of His death. Just as the condemned Israelites looked in faith to God's appointed means of rescue and received life, sinners receive eternal life by believing in Christ, who was lifted up on the cross to save those under the judgment of sin. Jesus' direct comparison clearly establishes the bronze serpent as a type of His saving death.

4. The Passover lamb as a type of Christ

Old Testament: Exodus 12:1-28, 43-51; Numbers 9:12
New Testament: John 19:31-36; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19

In Exodus 12, God commanded each Israelite household to select a lamb "without blemish," kill it, and place its blood upon the doorposts of the house. When judgment fell upon Egypt, God promised, "when I see the blood, I will pass over you," so that those sheltered under the blood were spared from death. The Passover therefore established a clear pattern of an unblemished sacrifice whose shed blood provided protection from divine judgment.

The New Testament directly applies this pattern to Christ. Paul declares, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," while Peter describes Jesus as "a lamb without blemish and without spot." John also records that none of Christ's bones were broken at His crucifixion, corresponding with the Passover command that no bone of the lamb was to be broken. The Passover lamb therefore pointed forward to Christ, the perfect sacrifice whose blood provides deliverance from judgment and redemption for those who belong to Him.

5. The wilderness rock as a type of Christ

Old Testament: Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 20:1-13
New Testament: 1 Corinthians 10:4

During Israel's journey through the wilderness, God repeatedly provided water from a rock when the people had nothing to drink. What appeared to be an ordinary physical provision carried a greater significance that would not be revealed until the New Testament. Paul explains that the Israelites "drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." He therefore directly identifies the wilderness rock as a divinely intended picture of Christ.

The rock provided the water Israel needed to sustain life in the wilderness, pointing forward to Christ as the true source of spiritual life and provision for His people. Just as Israel depended upon God's supernatural provision from the rock, believers depend upon Christ for the life and sustaining grace that only He can provide. Paul's direct identification, "that Rock was Christ," makes this one of the clearest examples of explicitly established typology in Scripture.

Type, Analogy, Illustration, and Application

Several related categories are often confused with typology. A **type** is a divinely intended historical pattern that anticipates a later and greater reality. The connection is directly established or sufficiently supported by Scripture. An **analogy** is a comparison between two things that share certain features. The comparison may be true and useful without proving that the earlier event was intended to prophetically anticipate the later one.

Joseph, for example, shares several striking similarities with Christ. He was rejected by his brothers, suffered unjustly, was later exalted, and became a means of delivering those who had rejected him. These parallels may provide a helpful analogy with Christ. However, Scripture does not as explicitly identify Joseph as a type in the way it identifies Adam. We also should not assume that every detail of Joseph's life was designed as a coded prophecy of Christ. Calling these features **Christological parallels** is more cautious than presenting every similarity as an established prophetic type.

An **illustration** helps explain a truth. A preacher may use an Old

Testament event to illustrate a New Testament doctrine without claiming that the event was designed as a prophetic type.

An **application** draws a legitimate implication from a passage for the reader. The application may extend beyond the original historical situation, but it must remain consistent with the passage's meaning.

What Responsible Typology Does Not Permit

Responsible typology does not permit us to claim that every prominent Old Testament person is a type of Christ. It does not permit us to turn every Old Testament bride into the Church or every marriage into a detailed prophecy of Christ and His people. It does not permit us to declare that the wood of the Ark represents Christ's humanity, its gold represents His deity, Aaron's rod represents His resurrection, and every object inside it carries a separate prophetic message. Scripture simply does not provide sufficient warrant for those conclusions.

The interpreter's responsibility is to uncover the meaning and patterns God explicitly identified in the text, not to create new ones. Once interpreters begin assigning typological meaning to details that Scripture itself does not identify, the boundary between typology and allegory quickly begins to disappear. At that point, the interpretation is no longer controlled by the text but by the imagination of the reader, since almost any person, object, number, color, or event can be made to symbolize something else. This is how legitimate typology can gradually become uncontrolled allegorism.

Typology and the Unity of Scripture

Used responsibly, typology demonstrates the unity and prophetic integration of the Bible. The Old and New Testaments do not present unrelated plans. God's purposes develop across history through promises, covenants, patterns, predictions, and fulfillments.

The later revelation builds upon what came before. It does not change Israel into the Church, redefine earthly promises as exclusively spiritual realities, or cancel meanings established in earlier passages.

Instead, it continues the unfolding story while preserving the integrity of every part.

Typology also demonstrates God's sovereignty over history. God did more than predict future events through words. He also ordered earlier historical realities so that they participated in patterns that would later reach fuller expression.

At the same time, the recognition of those patterns must remain subject to Scripture. The divine authorship of the Bible does not give the human interpreter unlimited freedom. God's intention must be demonstrated from the text and from the way the biblical writers themselves develop earlier revelation.

Conclusion

For the purpose of this chapter, we have examined two broad ways Scripture anticipates later events and realities. Direct predictive prophecy announces beforehand what will occur. Typological prophecy establishes a historical pattern that anticipates a later and greater reality.

These are not the only ways prophecy can be classified. A prediction may be spoken or written, plain or symbolic, poetic or prosaic, conditional or unconditional, near or distant, and fulfilled at one time or through several stages. Those features will overlap because they describe prophecy from different perspectives.

Both direct prediction and typology demonstrate God's control over history. In direct prophecy, God declares future events before they occur. In typology, He establishes earlier historical patterns that develop toward later fulfillment.

Both must also be interpreted responsibly. Direct predictions must be understood according to their actual language and context. Typological patterns must preserve the original meaning, rest upon biblical warrant, involve meaningful historical correspondence, and avoid speculation.

The Bible contains genuine types, shadows, figures, and patterns. But the presence of typology does not give the interpreter permission

to find hidden meanings everywhere. Our task is not to make the text say something impressive. Our task is to understand what God and the biblical writers actually intended.

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CHAPTER 5

HOW PROPHECY UNFOLDS ACROSS HISTORY

Some biblical prophecies are very straightforward. God predicts that a particular event will happen, and that event later takes place exactly as predicted. The prophecy concerning the birthplace of the Messiah is a simple example. Micah predicted that the coming Ruler would come from Bethlehem, and Jesus was later born there. The prediction and its fulfillment are easy to recognize.

Other prophecies contain more intricate features. A passage may place two future events beside one another even though a long period of time will intervene between them. Other times, a prophecy may begin to be fulfilled in an earlier event but not reach its complete fulfillment until a later event. Yet another possibility is that prophecy may begin by speaking about a real person or near-term situation from the prophet's own life, but then use language that reaches beyond that immediate subject to a greater and more important person or event.

These features do not make prophecy vague or unreliable. Rather, they simply demonstrate that prophecy sometimes unfolds across different periods of history. However, these features must be clearly defined and supported by the biblical text. We cannot insert a hidden interval, claim a second stage of fulfillment, or extend a prophecy to a

greater figure simply because doing so supports a preferred interpretation.

This chapter will examine three related features of prophecy. The first is prophetic foreshortening, which concerns hidden intervals between separate future prophetic events. The second is multiple-stage fulfillment, in which a prophecy moves toward completion through more than one historical event. The third is multiple reference, in which a prophecy begins with an immediate historical person or situation but then reaches beyond that local setting to a greater and more ultimate person or event.

These features may sometimes overlap, but they are not the same. Keeping them separate will help us understand how a prophecy unfolds without changing the meaning of the passage or creating connections that Scripture does not support.

Prophetic Foreshortening and Hidden Intervals

Prophetic foreshortening, sometimes called prophetic telescoping or prophetic perspective, occurs when a prophecy places two or more future events together without telling us how much time will pass between them. In fact, the passage often has no obvious indicator that any such gap will occur. The prophecy moves from one event to the next without mentioning the interval between them.

A common illustration is that of a distant mountain range. When several mountain peaks are viewed from far away, they may appear to stand directly beside one another. Only when a person travels through the landscape does it become clear that deep valleys separate the peaks. The peaks were all visible from the beginning, but the distance between them could not be seen from that original viewpoint.

Prophecy can present future events in a similar way. The prophets were sometimes shown the major events of God's future plan without being shown the full amount of time between those events. Significant biblical events would take place during those "valleys" of time, and yet the details were not disclosed to the prophets. They saw the future

"mountain peak" events clearly, but they could not always see the intervals separating them.

This does not mean the prophecy was inaccurate or that the prophet misunderstood what God revealed. The prophet received true information about what would happen. However, he was not always told exactly when every event would happen or how much time would pass before the next event.

Peter explains that the Old Testament prophets carefully sought to understand the timing of the events they had been inspired to describe:

> **10** Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: **11** Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.
>
> -1 Peter 1:10-11

The prophets knew that the Messiah would suffer and that glory would follow. What they did not always know was how much time would pass between those events. We now understand that the sufferings of Christ took place at His First Coming, while much of His promised glory, judgment, and rule await His Second Coming and future kingdom. The Old Testament often places these events side by side within the same prophecy while giving no obvious indication of an intervening Church Age. It is only through later revelation and the actual course of fulfillment that we find out they take place at different times.

How a Hidden Interval Is Identified

Not every prophecy about the distant future contains a hidden interval. A prophecy may simply predict one event that will not occur until many years later. Prophetic foreshortening specifically occurs

when two or more separate events are presented together while the time between them is left unstated.

A hidden interval also cannot be inserted into a passage simply because it helps a preferred interpretation. If interpreters were free to place gaps wherever they wished, almost any prophecy could be made to fit almost any system. There must be a sound biblical reason for recognizing the interval.

Later Scripture may clearly separate events that an earlier prophecy placed together. One part of the prophecy may already have been fulfilled while another part clearly remains unfulfilled. The different parts may require historical conditions that could not exist at the same time. Parallel passages may provide additional information by placing the events at separate times. The actual course of fulfillment may also show that one portion of the prophecy was fulfilled while another portion still awaits fulfillment. In every case, the interval must be discovered from biblical evidence rather than created by the interpreter.

Isaiah 61 and the Two Comings of Christ

Isaiah 61 provides one of the clearest examples of prophetic foreshortening. In Luke 4, Jesus read part of this prophecy in the synagogue at Nazareth and showed that its different parts would be fulfilled at different times. He read the following words:

> **18** 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, **19** **To preach the acceptable year of the Lord**. **20** 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. **21** And he began to say unto them, **This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears**.
>
> -Luke 4:18-21

Jesus stopped after the words, "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." However, the prophecy in Isaiah continues:

> **1** 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; **2** 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 before the words, "and the day of vengeance of our God." He then declared that the portion He had read was being fulfilled at that time. The acceptable year of the Lord describes the gracious work of Christ at His First Coming. The day of vengeance describes the judgment that will accompany His Second Coming.

Isaiah placed these two parts of Messiah's work together in the same sentence, but Jesus showed that they would not be fulfilled at the same time. A long period separates the gracious ministry of His First Coming from the judgment that will take place when He returns. The prophecy moves directly from one event to the other without pointing out that there would be an interval of time separating them. This is one of the clearest examples of prophetic foreshortening because Jesus Himself showed us precisely where the separation occurs.

Zechariah 9:9-10 and the Two Comings of Christ

Zechariah gives another clear example of the time gap between Christ's two comings by placing the humble arrival of Israel's King right next to His future worldwide rule:

> **9** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. **10**

> And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.
>
> -Zechariah 9:9-10

Verse 9 was fulfilled when Jesus entered Jerusalem riding upon a donkey. Matthew 21:4-5 and John 12:14-15 directly identify that event as the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy. But verse 10 jumps thousands of years ahead to describe the messianic King ending warfare and ruling throughout the earth. Those events obviously did not take place at Christ's First Coming but instead await His future reign when He returns.

Zechariah placed the King's humble arrival and His glorious reign in the Millennial Kingdom directly beside one another. In the New Testament, passages like Jesus' Olivet Discourse and the book of Revelation describe these glorious Second Coming events in great detail. Both parts of the prophecy remain true, but a long period of time separates their fulfillment. No separation was obvious in the Zechariah passage.

Isaiah 9:6-7 and the Two Comings of Christ

Isaiah also placed the birth of the Messiah and events associated with His future coming into one continuous prophecy:

> 6 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. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.
>
> -Isaiah 9:6-7

The child was born and the Son was given at Christ's First Coming. However, Christ has not yet taken His seat upon the throne of David to rule the nations in peace and righteousness. The prophecy moves directly from the Messiah's birth at His First Coming to His future Kingdom Age government to be instituted at His Second Coming. It does not explain that His rejection, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and the present Church Age would intervene.

Both parts of the prophecy remain literally true. Isaiah simply presented them together without any obvious indication of an interval.

Micah 5:2 and the Two Comings of Christ

Micah also placed the Messiah's birth and His future rule together:

> 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

The Messiah came forth from Bethlehem at His First Coming. The Jewish leaders correctly understood this passage as identifying the place where the Messiah would be born, as recorded in Matthew 2:4-6. However, Micah does not explain that a long period would pass between the Messiah's birth in Bethlehem and His eventual rule over Israel.

Jesus came as the promised King, but He did not take the throne of David at His First Coming. His rule over Israel awaits His return. The prophecy joins His birth and His rule in the same verse while leaving the gap between them hidden.

Malachi 3:1-2 and the Two Comings of Christ

Malachi prophesied about the messenger who would prepare the

way for the Lord but then immediately describes the Lord coming in judgment:

> **1** Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. **2** But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:
>
> -Malachi 3:1-2

The New Testament identifies John the Baptist as the messenger who prepared the way for Christ, fulfilling this prophecy. However, the judgment described in verse 2 did not take place during Christ's First Coming. The passage moves from John's preparatory ministry directly to the Lord's future work of judgment and purification.

Once again, separate events are placed together without noting the gap hidden between them.

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel and the Church Age

Daniel 9:24-27 provides an important example of an interval within a numbered prophetic program. Gabriel told Daniel that seventy weeks were determined upon Daniel's people and Jerusalem:

> **24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, 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. **25** 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: … **26** And after threescore and two 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 sanctu-

ary; … **27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: …

-Daniel 9:24-27

The first sixty-nine weeks culminate in the arrival of Messiah the Prince. After those weeks, the Messiah is cut off, and the city and sanctuary are destroyed. The final week is then introduced in verse 27. The order here is important. Messiah is cut off *after* the sixty-nine weeks. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple also occurs after the sixty-nine weeks. Yet the seventieth week is still presented afterward. The text therefore does *imply* a gap since it places events between the sixty-ninth week and the final week. But this interval was placed subtly and is only obvious now in retrospect.

Some have claimed that this entire prophetic "seventy-week" calendar has been fulfilled. Yet the non-fulfillment of the six stated purposes listed in verse 24 makes that claim insufficient. The passage itself claims the prophecy is specifically for Daniel's people and city (Israel and Jerusalem). Israel's transgression has not been brought to its final end, everlasting righteousness has not yet been established throughout the nation, and the full prophetic program concerning Jerusalem has not yet been completed.

These details also support the existence of a time gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks. That interval includes the present Church Age, which was revealed more fully in the New Testament. Daniel was shown the major events concerning Israel and Jerusalem, but he was not given a full explanation of the Church or the length of time before the final week.

Summary of Prophetic Foreshortening

Prophetic foreshortening occurs when Scripture places separate future events together without explaining the time between them. It does not mean the events are the same, and it does not mean they must all happen at once. It means the prophecy moves directly from one event to another without describing the interval.

We should recognize a hidden interval only when the biblical evidence supports it. Later revelation may separate the events. One part may already be fulfilled while another clearly remains future. Parallel passages or the actual course of fulfillment may also show that the events take place at different times.

Prophetic foreshortening helps explain why the Old Testament can place the Messiah's suffering, glory, judgment, and kingdom together even though those events unfold across His First and Second Comings, which are separated by an interval of time.

Multiple-Stage Fulfillment

While prophetic foreshortening concerns the time separating different events, **multiple-stage fulfillment** concerns the way a prophecy may move toward completion through more than one historical event. A prophecy may begin to be fulfilled at one point in history without every part of it being completed at that time. An earlier event may fulfill part of the prophecy, begin the process described by it, or provide a preview of the complete fulfillment that will occur later.

This process can be pictured as prophetic ripples moving forward through history. A prophecy may have earlier, limited realizations that preview or anticipate its final fulfillment, much like ripples spreading outward across water. Each proposed ripple must still be established from the biblical text and identified more precisely as a **preliminary**, **partial**, or **typological fulfillment**. These terms help us describe the different ways a prophecy may unfold through more than one stage.

A partial fulfillment occurs when only part of what a prophecy requires has taken place. A preliminary fulfillment is an earlier event that begins, previews, or anticipates a later and more complete fulfillment. A typological fulfillment occurs when a real earlier person, event, institution, or object establishes a pattern that Scripture later identifies as being repeated in a greater person or event.

These categories answer different questions. An event may be partial because not every detail has occurred, and it may also be preliminary because it points forward to a later completion. For the

sake of organization, we should classify the event according to the feature being emphasized.

Multiple-Stage Fulfillment Must Be Established by Scripture

An interpreter should not claim that a prophecy has several stages of fulfillment simply because two historical events appear similar. Similarity alone is not enough. The connection must be established by the wording of Scripture, by later revelation, or by important details that remain unfulfilled after the earlier event.

A later biblical writer may directly connect the prophecy with another event. A major part of the prediction may still remain unfulfilled. A later passage may place the prophecy in the future even though an earlier event resembled it. Scripture may also develop a repeated pattern that clearly connects the earlier event with the later one.

Without this kind of biblical evidence, it is safer to speak of an analogy, possible parallel, historical resemblance, or wider biblical motif rather than an established stage of prophetic fulfillment. The interpreter's responsibility is to recognize the stages Scripture reveals, not to create new ones.

Joel 2 and Pentecost

In the Old Testament, the prophet Joel prophesied that God would pour out His Spirit upon Israel and that this outpouring would be connected with the Day of the Lord:

> **28** And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: **29** And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. **30** And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. **31** The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and

> the terrible day of the Lord come. **32** And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, …
>
> -Joel 2:28-32

In the New Testament, the apostle Peter then quoted this prophecy on the Day of Pentecost and said:

> But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.
>
> -Acts 2:16

Peter's statement means that Pentecost was not simply an illustration that happened to resemble Joel's prophecy. The Church truly participated in the New Covenant and the promised outpouring of the Spirit. Pentecost was a genuine beginning and preliminary fulfillment of what Joel had predicted. However, Pentecost did not complete the prophecy. The cosmic signs did not occur, the great Day of the Lord did not arrive, and the national deliverance centered on Israel and Jerusalem was not brought to completion. Joel's wider context concerns the future restoration of Israel and the conditions connected with the Messianic (or Millennial) Kingdom.

Pentecost was therefore a real preliminary fulfillment. It began the outpouring promised by Joel and allowed the Church to participate in that blessing. But the prophecy will only reach its complete fulfillment when the Spirit is poured out upon restored national Israel in connection with the Day of the Lord and the Millennial Kingdom.

This example also shows how an event may be both preliminary and partial. It was preliminary because it pointed forward to the later completion, and it was partial because only some of the prophecy's stated features occurred.

Elijah and John the Baptist

In the Old Testament, Malachi predicted that Elijah would return before the great and dreadful Day of the Lord:

> **5** Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: **6** And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, …
>
> -Malachi 4:5-6

In the New Testament, it's said that John the Baptist came "in the spirit and power of Elias" and performed an Elijah-like ministry of calling Israel to repentance:

> And he [John the Baptist] shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, …
>
> -Luke 1:17

Jesus also connected John with an Elijah-like role:

> And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.
>
> -Matthew 11:14

However, Jesus later spoke of Elijah's coming as still future:

> And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.
>
> -Matthew 17:11

John obviously was not literally Elijah returned to earth. John himself denied being Elijah in that personal sense when he was asked directly in John 1:21. Instead, he came in the spirit and power of Elijah and carried out a preliminary form of Elijah's promised future eschatological ministry.

John the Baptist therefore provided a preliminary fulfillment of the Elijah prophecy. His ministry anticipated the future completion associated with the great and dreadful Day of the Lord.

Antiochus, 70 AD, and the Final Abomination of Desolation

The abomination of desolation provides a clear example of prophecy unfolding through more than one historical stage. Daniel 8 and Daniel 11 describe a wicked ruler who would attack the Jewish people, stop the regular sacrifices, and desecrate the sanctuary.

These prophecies were fulfilled in an important preliminary way by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the second century BC. Antiochus invaded Jerusalem, interfered with the Temple worship, and profaned the sanctuary. His actions established an earlier historical pattern of a blasphemous ruler opposing God, persecuting His people, and defiling the place of worship.

This can be pictured as the first major prophetic ripple moving forward through history. Antiochus did not exhaust everything Scripture says about the abomination of desolation, but his actions provided a real preview of the final event. This is why Jesus could later speak of the abomination as still future long after Antiochus had died:

> **15** 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:) **16** Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:
>
> -Matthew 24:15-16

The events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD may also have formed another ripple of the same prophetic pattern. Jerusalem was surrounded by hostile armies led by a Roman prince named Titus, the Temple was destroyed, and the Jewish people experienced terrible suffering. These events resemble important parts of Christ's warning and may have provided another historical preview of the final crisis.

However, we should not view this potential ripple dogmatically, and we especially should not consider it an ultimate fulfillment because the events of 70 AD did not satisfy every detail given by Daniel, Jesus, Paul, and the other prophetic passages. Jesus connected the abomination with a time of unparalleled tribulation immediately

prior to His future return. Paul described a specific ruler who would exalt himself, enter the Temple, and present himself as God:

> Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
>
> -2 Thessalonians 2:4

Antiochus therefore provided a preliminary and typological fulfillment of the abomination pattern. His actions were preliminary because they occurred before and anticipated the final event. They were typological because they established an earlier historical pattern of a blasphemous ruler opposing God, persecuting His people, stopping the sacrifices, and desecrating the sanctuary. That pattern will be repeated in a greater and final way through the future Antichrist.

The events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD may also be understood as another preliminary typological ripple moving forward through history. They repeated certain features of the earlier pattern, but Scripture does not explicitly identify 70 AD as a fulfillment of the abomination prophecy, much less its complete fulfillment. For that reason, this connection should be suggested rather than stated dogmatically.

Neither Antiochus nor the events of 70 AD fulfilled every detail described by Daniel, Jesus, and Paul. Jesus placed the final abomination within a future period of unparalleled tribulation connected with His return, while Paul described a particular ruler who would enter the Temple and present himself as God. The future Antichrist will therefore bring the prophecy to its complete fulfillment.

The stages can be stated clearly: Antiochus provided a preliminary typological fulfillment, 70 AD may have provided another preliminary typological ripple, and the future Antichrist will bring the prophecy to its complete fulfillment.

Hosea 11:1 and Typological Fulfillment

Some interpreters appeal to Matthew's quotation of Hosea 11:1 as evidence that the New Testament sometimes assigns entirely new meanings to Old Testament passages, departing from their literal, original historical context. They argue that since Hosea was referring to Israel's historical Exodus rather than making a direct prediction about Jesus, Matthew's application of the passage demonstrates that biblical prophecy can be fulfilled in a non-literal or unexpected manner. This argument is sometimes used to justify spiritualizing other Old Testament prophecies, particularly those concerning the future of Israel.

However, this overlooks an important distinction between direct predictive prophecy and biblical typology. When we examine both passages in their proper contexts, we find that Matthew's interpretation is entirely consistent with a grammatical-historical approach to Scripture.

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

In its original setting, Hosea was looking backward to Israel's exodus from Egypt. He was describing a real historical event in which God brought the nation of Israel, His national son, out of bondage. Hosea was not directly predicting that the Messiah would someday travel to Egypt. However, in the New Testament, Matthew later applies the verse to Jesus:

> **14** When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: **15** 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

Matthew's typological usage does not delete or reinterpret Hosea's original reference to Israel. He identifies a divinely intended pattern

between Israel and Christ. Israel was called God's son and was brought out of Egypt. Jesus, the unique Son of God and Israel's Messiah, also came out of Egypt.

Jesus stands as the personal and representative head of the nation. In His own life, He retraced important parts of Israel's history and succeeded where the nation had failed. This does not erase Israel, replace the nation, or reduce the importance of its historical or future calling. A representative does not eliminate the people he represents. Instead, Christ's experience reveals the wider significance of Israel's history within the plan of God and shows how the nation's calling reaches its highest expression in its Messiah.

The later fulfillment therefore does not give Hosea 11:1 a different meaning. Hosea was still referring to the historical exodus of national Israel. Matthew draws out a greater significance and a typological implication already grounded in that history. Israel's exodus established the pattern, and Jesus repeated that pattern as the nation's representative Messiah.

This is typological fulfillment, not a second meaning hidden inside Hosea's words and not a replacement of Israel by Christ.

Multiple Reference

Multiple reference is closely related to multiple-stage fulfillment, but it describes a different feature. A multiple reference prophecy begins with a real person, event, or situation in the prophet's own near-term historical setting. As the prophecy continues, however, the language reaches beyond that immediate subject and points to a greater or more ultimate, far-term person or event.

The passage may begin by describing a local ruler, a Davidic king, or the prophet's own experience. However, at some point in the prophecy, the language becomes too great, too permanent, or too cosmic to be fully explained by that immediate person alone. The prophecy reaches its fullest expression in a greater figure, often the Messiah or, in some cases, Satan or the future Antichrist.

This does not mean that the passage contains two unrelated mean-

ings. The near and ultimate references belong to the same prophetic message. The immediate historical figure provides a real setting or pattern, while the prophecy clearly transcends him to refer to the greater figure who brings the language to its fullest realization.

A multiple reference should be recognized only when the text itself supports it. The wording may clearly exceed what the immediate person could fulfill, or later Scripture may directly identify the greater person as the ultimate subject.

Solomon and Christ as the Greater Son of David

God's covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7 first points directly to Solomon. He would come from David's own body, succeed him as king, and build the Temple. As the promise continues, however, the language rises beyond anything Solomon or any ordinary descendant of David could fulfill, especially the promise of an everlasting throne and kingdom. The passage therefore begins with Solomon as its immediate historical reference but reaches forward to the greater Son of David, the Messiah.

> **12** And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. **13** He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. **14** I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: … **16** And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.
>
> -2 Samuel 7:12-14, 16

The near-term reference is Solomon. He was David's physical son, he inherited the kingdom, and he built the Temple. The warning about committing iniquity also clearly applied to Solomon and the later kings in David's line. However, the promise of an everlasting throne and kingdom clearly reaches beyond Solomon. Solomon died, his

personal reign ended, and the Davidic throne eventually became temporarily vacant. The covenant could reach its complete fulfillment only through the greater Son of David (Christ) whose reign would never end.

The New Testament identifies Jesus as that promised Son. Gabriel told Mary that God would give Him the throne of David and that He would reign over the house of Jacob forever:

> **32** He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: **33** And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.
>
> -Luke 1:32-33

The prophecy therefore begins with Solomon and the historical Davidic dynasty but reaches its complete and ultimate fulfillment in Christ.

Psalm 72 and Christ as the Greater Son of David

Psalm 72 also begins with Solomon and the rule of a Davidic king clearly in view. Its title identifies it as "A Psalm for Solomon," and the opening verse refers to both "the king" and "the king's son." The Psalm first describes the kind of righteous, peaceful, and prosperous reign that was desired for Solomon:

> **1** Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. **2** He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. **3** The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. **4** He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.
>
> -Psalm 72:1-4

These words fit the immediate setting of Solomon's reign.

Solomon was David's son and successor, and his kingdom was known for wisdom, justice, peace, and prosperity. As the Psalm continues, however, the language rises far beyond anything Solomon ever accomplished:

> **8** He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. … **11** Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. … **17** His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.
>
> -Psalm 72:8, 11, 17

Solomon never ruled to the ends of the earth. All kings did not bow before him, all nations did not serve him, and his personal reign did not endure forever. The Psalm therefore begins with Solomon as its immediate historical subject but gradually reaches beyond him to the greater Son of David. Its worldwide and everlasting promises will reach their complete fulfillment in the reign of the Messiah.

Psalm 16 and the Resurrection of Christ

Psalm 16 begins with David speaking about his own trust in God, his confidence in God's protection, and his hope for life beyond his present troubles. The opening verses clearly arise from David's personal relationship with the Lord. As the Psalm continues, however, the language reaches beyond anything that was ultimately true of David himself:

> **8** I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. **9** Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. **10** For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. **11** Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.
>
> -Psalm 16:8-11

David could certainly express confidence that God would preserve him and ultimately bring him into His presence. But the statement that God's Holy One would not see corruption could not reach its complete fulfillment in David. David died, was buried, and his body experienced decay. In fact, Peter made this exact point on the Day of Pentecost:

> **29** Men and brethren, **let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day**. **30** Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; **31** **He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption**.
> -Acts 2:29-31

The Psalm therefore begins with David's own faith and hope, but its language eventually transcends David and points to the resurrection of the Messiah. David died and saw corruption, while Jesus was raised from the dead before His body experienced decay. David provides the near-term or immediate historical setting, but Christ is the far-term or greater figure in whom the promise reaches its ultimate fulfillment. This is one of the clearest examples of multiple reference because the New Testament itself explains that David's words ultimately spoke of Christ's resurrection.

Psalm 22 and the Sufferings of Christ

Psalm 22 also begins with the genuine suffering of David. However, parts of its language reach beyond anything recorded in David's life and point toward the crucifixion of Christ:

> **14** 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. **15** 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. **16** For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. **17** I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. **18** They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.
>
> -Psalm 22:14-18

David wrote from within his own experience of suffering, but several details unquestionably transcend anything recorded in his life and could reach their complete fulfillment only in the crucifixion of Christ. Jesus' hands and feet were pierced. His garments were divided, and lots were cast for His clothing. He experienced intense thirst, public ridicule, and death.

The connection becomes even more unmistakable when Jesus Himself cried out from the cross:

> And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, **My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**
>
> -Matthew 27:46

His words directly repeat the opening line of Psalm 22:

> My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? …
>
> -Psalm 22:1

David's suffering provided the immediate or near-term historical setting, but the inspired language reached far beyond David and prophetically described the far-term, greater sufferings of the Messiah.

The King of Tyre and Satan

Ezekiel 28 provides one of the clearest examples of a prophecy that begins with a real historical ruler but then reaches beyond him to a far greater spiritual figure. The chapter first explicitly addresses the

human ruler of Tyre, whose pride, wealth, and political power had led him to claim a status that belonged only to God:

> Son of man, say unto **the prince of Tyrus**, Thus saith the Lord God; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, …
>
> -Ezekiel 28:2

The prince of Tyre was an actual ruler who had become proud because of his wisdom, wealth, and success. Although he claimed to be a god, Ezekiel reminded him that he was only a man and announced that he would be killed by foreign invaders. The opening part of the chapter therefore clearly concerns a real historical ruler and the judgment that would come upon him.

Beginning in verse 12, however, Ezekiel takes up a lamentation over the "king of Tyrus," and the description begins to rise far beyond anything that could reasonably be said of an ordinary human king:

> **12** … Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. **13** Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, … **14** 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. **15** Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.
>
> -Ezekiel 28:12-15

The historical ruler of Tyre had obviously never been in the Garden of Eden. Also obvious is that he was not a created cherub, he had not stood upon the holy mountain of God, and he had not existed in a state of perfection before iniquity was found in him. At this point, the prophecy clearly transcends the earthly king and describes Satan's original position, his fall through pride, and his eventual judgment.

The connection between the two figures is not accidental. The human ruler of Tyre displayed the same pride and desire for divine

status that had characterized Satan's earlier rebellion. The earthly king was the immediate subject of the prophecy, but his conduct reflected the greater spiritual rebellion of Satan. As the lamentation continues, Ezekiel moves from the local ruler to the more ultimate figure behind the same pattern of pride, self-exaltation, and opposition to God.

This does not erase the historical ruler or turn the entire passage into an allegory about Satan. The prince of Tyre was real, his pride was real, and the judgment pronounced against him was real. Yet the language later becomes too great and too cosmic to be exhausted by that human ruler alone. The prophecy begins with the king of Tyre in his historical setting but then reaches beyond him to Satan, whose original fall provides the greater and more ultimate reference.

Ezekiel 28 is therefore a strong example of multiple reference. The immediate historical figure remains fully present in the passage, while the inspired description rises beyond him and reveals the greater spiritual figure whose rebellion stood behind the same pattern of pride.

Keeping the Categories Clear

Having examined each of these features separately, it will be helpful to place them side by side and briefly review how they differ. They can sometimes appear together in the same passage, but each one describes a different way in which prophecy may unfold.

Prophetic foreshortening occurs when separate future events are placed together without revealing the time between them. The prophecy moves directly from one event to another, even though centuries or millennia may separate their fulfillments. Isaiah 61, Zechariah 9, Isaiah 9, Malachi 3, and Daniel 9 provide clear examples of this feature.

Multiple-stage fulfillment occurs when a prophecy moves toward completion through more than one historical event or stage. These stages may take the form of preliminary, partial, or typological fulfillment. A preliminary fulfillment begins, previews, or anticipates what will later be completed. A partial fulfillment satisfies some of the prophecy's requirements while other details remain unfulfilled. A

typological fulfillment occurs when an earlier person, event, institution, or object establishes a divinely intended pattern that is later repeated in a greater way. Complete fulfillment occurs only when every detail required by the prophecy has been satisfied.

As noted, Pentecost was both a preliminary and partial fulfillment of Joel's promised outpouring of the Spirit, while John the Baptist provided a preliminary fulfillment of the promised Elijah-like ministry. Antiochus provided a preliminary and typological fulfillment of the abomination pattern, and the events of 70 AD may have formed another preliminary typological ripple, but neither brought the prophecy to its complete fulfillment. Hosea 11:1 provides another example of typological fulfillment, as Israel's historical exodus established a pattern that Matthew shows being repeated in Jesus, the personal and representative head of the nation.

Multiple reference occurs when a prophecy begins with an immediate historical person or situation but then moves beyond that local setting to a greater and more ultimate figure. As we have seen, the promise concerning Solomon in 2 Samuel 7 reaches forward to Christ. Psalms 16, 22, and 72 arise from the experiences or setting of David and Solomon but find their fullest realization in the Messiah. Ezekiel 28 begins with the historical ruler of Tyre and then rises beyond him to describe Satan.

These three broader prophetic categories can overlap, but they should not be treated as interchangeable. A passage may contain prophetic foreshortening without having more than one fulfillment. A preliminary fulfillment may begin or preview a prophecy without completing everything it requires. A typological fulfillment may repeat an earlier historical pattern without turning the earlier passage into a direct prediction. A multiple reference may begin with a real historical figure while using language that clearly rises beyond him to a greater person.

The correct category must be determined from the actual evidence of Scripture. We should not claim a hidden interval, repeated fulfillment, type, or greater reference simply because the idea appears interesting or supports a preferred interpretation. The wording of the

passage, its historical setting, later revelation, and the actual course of fulfillment must establish the connection.

Conclusion

Some biblical prophecies are fulfilled through one clear and direct event. Others contain more involved features that require careful attention. Prophetic foreshortening places separate future events together without revealing the time between them. Multiple-stage fulfillment describes a prophecy that moves toward completion through more than one historical event. Multiple reference describes a prophecy that begins with an immediate historical subject but reaches beyond that subject to a greater and more ultimate person or event.

These features must be identified from the biblical text. A hidden interval must be supported by the wording of Scripture, later revelation, parallel passages, or the actual course of fulfillment. A preliminary or repeated fulfillment must rest upon a real textual connection. A multiple reference must be supported by language that exceeds the immediate subject or by later Scripture identifying the greater figure.

Later revelation may clarify an earlier prophecy, explain its wider significance, or show how its fulfillment unfolds through several stages, but it does not cancel the original meaning or replace it with a different one. The immediate historical setting remains real, while later revelation shows how that passage fits within the larger plan of God.

When these categories are kept clear, we can understand the more involved features of prophecy without turning them into allegory or allowing the imagination of the interpreter to control the text.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this study, we identified biblical prophecy as being a central part of a larger argument concerning the origin and authority of Scripture. The Word of God presents an internal body of evidence that indicates its true source as being extra-dimensional. The Bible bears characteristics that point beyond the limitations of the human authors who wrote its individual books. It demonstrates the unmistakable characteristics of an Author who exists outside the dimension of time and can declare history in advance.

Human beings experience history one moment at a time. We remember the past, live in the present, and face a future that remains largely unknown to us. God is not limited in this way. He sees the end from the beginning, knows what has not yet occurred within human history, and is fully able to bring His declared purposes to completion. Biblical prophecy reflects this divine perspective by revealing future events before they take place.

> **9** Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none
> else; **I am God, and there is none like me, 10 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

God Himself presents this ability as evidence of His uniqueness. He does not simply observe history after it occurs. He declares the end from the beginning and announces things that have not yet been done. The prophetic character of Scripture therefore bears the mark of an Author whose knowledge and authority extend beyond the boundaries of time.

Throughout this study, we have examined the many ways in which God communicated that prophetic revelation. He spoke through written messages, spoken words, and visible actions. He revealed the future through direct predictions, symbolic visions, poetic descriptions, and divinely intended historical patterns. He sometimes placed separate future events together without revealing the time between them, unfolded a prophecy through more than one stage, or began with an immediate historical subject before reaching beyond it to a greater and more ultimate figure.

These features make biblical prophecy rich and sometimes complex, but they do not make it vague or unreliable. They show the variety and precision with which God has revealed His purposes across history. Because prophecy takes different forms, each passage must be interpreted carefully according to its wording, context, historical setting, and original purpose. Symbols must be understood from the clues Scripture provides. Types must be established by the biblical text rather than created from similarities noticed by the reader. Hidden intervals, multiple-stage fulfillments, and greater references must also rest upon real scriptural evidence.

The interpreter's responsibility is to discover what God placed within the text, not to add meanings that the text itself does not support. Later revelation may provide greater clarity about an earlier passage. It may explain how a prophecy will be fulfilled, reveal an interval that was not previously visible, identify a divinely intended pattern, draw out further implications, or show how a prophecy fits

within the larger plan of God. However, later revelation does not cancel the original meaning or replace it with a different one. Scripture develops as God reveals more of His plan, but every later development remains consistent with what He had already revealed.

This approach allows the whole of Scripture to remain connected and internally consistent. The historical setting of an Old Testament passage remains important, while its place within the larger biblical plan can also be recognized. Israel remains Israel. The Church remains the Church. The First and Second Comings of Christ remain distinct. Earlier fulfillments remain real without being mistaken for the complete fulfillment when important details still await the future. The different parts of God's plan fit together without one part being used to erase or redefine another.

The unity of this prophetic plan is itself significant. The Bible was written by numerous human authors across many centuries, yet its prophecies, patterns, promises, and fulfillments form one continuous and developing revelation. Earlier passages prepare for later events, later revelation clarifies what came before, and the different portions of Scripture move together toward the completion of God's purposes. This interlocking design reflects more than the isolated knowledge of the individual human writers. It reflects the oversight of the divine Author who knew the entire plan from the beginning.

The study of prophecy should therefore produce more than an interest in future events. It should strengthen our confidence in the Bible itself. Scripture repeatedly announces events before they occur and then records their fulfillment with remarkable accuracy. Nations rise and fall, rulers appear, cities are judged, the Messiah comes as promised, and the remaining parts of God's plan continue moving toward their appointed fulfillment. The Bible does not simply record history. It demonstrates knowledge of history before that history occurs.

As we close, it is worthwhile to once again remind ourselves of the words of the apostle Peter concerning the certainty of prophecy. He understood the importance of this evidence. Peter had personally been an eyewitness to the glory of Christ upon the mount of transfigura-

tion, yet he still directed believers to the "more sure" certainty of the prophetic Word:

> **18** And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. **19** **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: **20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. **21** 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's words bring us back to the proposition with which this study began. Prophecy did not originate in the independent will or limited foresight of human beings. God moved upon human authors to record a message that bears the characteristics of His own knowledge and perspective. Its ability to reveal the future, unfold one unified plan across the centuries, and bring its predictions to precise fulfillment testifies that its true Author stands outside the limitations of time.

Biblical prophecy therefore forms an essential part of the evidence for the extra-dimensional origin of the Word of God. It gives us solid reason to trust what God has already fulfilled and what He has promised for the future. The same God who precisely carried out His earlier promises will also complete every promise that remains. For that reason, we can study prophecy with confidence, interpret it with care, and rely upon Scripture as the trustworthy Word of God.

APPENDIX – A "COMPREHENSIVE" LIST OF PROPHETIC TYPES

How Our List Is Organized

As noted in this study, a genuine biblical type begins with a real person, event, institution, or object that had an actual meaning and purpose in its original historical setting. That original meaning must be understood first from the wording, context, and historical setting of the passage. Later revelation may show new applications, draw out implications, or explain the wider significance of that earlier reality within God's unfolding plan. An application shows how the truth bears on a later person or situation. An implication is a truth that follows from the original meaning. Significance refers to the larger importance of the passage within the whole biblical storyline. None of these gives the earlier passage a new or contradictory meaning. They build on the original meaning rather than replacing it.

A genuine type must also be identified by Scripture itself, not simply by a reader who notices similarities between an Old Testament event and something in the New Testament. The clearest types are those directly named, compared, or explained by later biblical writers, or those developed through a clear and repeated pattern across Scripture. Similarity by itself is not enough, because readers can easily

select certain details, ignore others, and create a connection the text never establishes. When Scripture does not clearly identify the relationship, it is better to call it an analogy, illustration, possible parallel, or wider biblical motif rather than a genuine prophetic type.

At the same time, the Bible does not provide a complete list of every type, nor does it always use words such as "type," "figure," or "shadow" when developing these connections. Some types are directly identified and explained, while others are established through repeated patterns, later revelation, and the progressive development of Scripture. For that reason, this list seeks to be as comprehensive as possible while carefully distinguishing between different levels of textual support. For clarity, the examples have been divided into three groups:

Textually Explicit Types – Scripture directly establishes the typological correspondence by identifying and substantially explaining how an earlier person, event, object, or institution points forward to a later fulfillment.

Textually Implicit Types – The typological connection is strongly grounded in the biblical text, but Scripture does not identify and explain the full correspondence as directly as it does with the types in the first category. The connection may involve direct comparisons, quotations, titles, prophecies, or applications, but its fuller significance emerges through repeated patterns and the way later Scripture develops and fulfills the earlier person, event, object, or institution.

Possible Types With Limited Textual Evidence – These proposed connections have limited explicit or implicit support within the biblical text itself. Instead, the typological relationship is observed externally by the reader through similarities between an earlier person, event, object, or institution and a later biblical reality. Some of these comparisons may be meaningful and consistent with broader biblical themes, but they should not be viewed with the same level of certainty or definitiveness as the types in the first two categories.

This three-part division is our best effort to represent the different levels of biblical support as carefully and honestly as possible. Scripture itself does not formally organize every type into these exact cate-

gories, so the classifications should not be treated as infallible or absolute. Some examples may reasonably be placed differently depending on how narrowly or broadly a person defines an explicit type. The categories are intended as a guide rather than a final or unquestionable classification.

Category #1: Textually Explicit Types

The examples in this first category are established by direct New Testament explanation. In some cases, the New Testament actually uses words such as "type," "figure," "example," "shadow," or "allegory." In other cases, Jesus or a New Testament writer directly compares an Old Testament person, event, object, or institution with a later fulfillment and explains the connection. This does not mean that every example is formally called a "type," but it does mean that the typological relationship is directly stated or clearly explained within the text itself.

1. Adam as a type of Christ

Old Testament: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7-25; 3:1-24
New Testament: Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49

In Genesis, Adam was the first man and the representative head of humanity. Through his one act of disobedience, sin and death entered the human race, bringing condemnation upon humanity. Paul directly identifies Adam as a type of Christ in Romans 5:14 when he calls him "the figure of him that was to come," using the Greek word *tupos*. He then contrasts Adam and Christ directly: Adam's disobedience brought sin, condemnation, and death, while Christ's obedience brings righteousness, justification, and life.

Paul develops the correspondence further in 1 Corinthians 15 by calling Christ "the last Adam" and contrasting "the first man" with "the second man," who is from heaven. Death came through Adam, while resurrection and life come through Christ. Those who belong to

Christ will ultimately bear the image of the heavenly Man rather than the image of the earthly. Adam therefore serves as an explicitly identified type of Christ because each stands as a representative head whose actions bring far-reaching consequences to those connected with him.

2. Jonah as a type of Christ's burial and resurrection

Old Testament: Jonah 1:15-17; 2:1-10
New Testament: Matthew 12:38-41; 16:4; Luke 11:29-32

Jonah was cast into the sea and swallowed by a great fish, where he remained for three days and three nights before God brought him safely back to dry land. Jonah describes his experience in the language of death and the grave, crying "out of the belly of hell" and saying that he went "down to the bottoms of the mountains" before God brought his life up from corruption. Although Jonah did not actually die, his descent and return pictured death followed by restoration to life.

Jesus directly identifies Jonah's experience as a sign of His own death, burial, and resurrection, saying, "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." Jonah's return after three days therefore anticipated the greater reality fulfilled in Christ, who truly died, was buried, and rose again. Jesus' own explanation directly establishes Jonah's experience as a prophetic type of His burial and resurrection.

3. The bronze serpent as a type of Christ on the cross

Old Testament: Numbers 21:4-9
New Testament: John 3:14-16; 12:32-33

In Numbers 21, Israel sinned against God and came under judgment through the fiery serpents, whose bites brought death. God then provided a single means of deliverance by commanding Moses to make a bronze serpent and lift it up before the people. Anyone

who had been bitten could look upon the lifted serpent and live. Deliverance came through faith in the remedy God Himself had provided.

Jesus directly applies this event to His own crucifixion, saying, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." John later explains that Christ being "lifted up" referred to the manner of His death. Just as the condemned Israelites looked in faith to God's appointed means of rescue and received life, sinners receive eternal life by believing in Christ, who was lifted up on the cross to save those under the judgment of sin. Jesus' direct comparison clearly establishes the bronze serpent as a type of His saving death.

4. The Passover lamb as a type of Christ

Old Testament: Exodus 12:1-28, 43-51; Numbers 9:12
New Testament: John 19:31-36; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19

In Exodus 12, God commanded each Israelite household to select a lamb "without blemish," kill it, and place its blood upon the doorposts of the house. When judgment fell upon Egypt, God promised, "when I see the blood, I will pass over you," so that those sheltered under the blood were spared from death. The Passover therefore established a clear pattern of an unblemished sacrifice whose shed blood provided protection from divine judgment.

The New Testament directly applies this pattern to Christ. Paul declares, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," while Peter describes Jesus as "a lamb without blemish and without spot." John also records that none of Christ's bones were broken at His crucifixion, corresponding with the Passover command that no bone of the lamb was to be broken. The Passover lamb therefore pointed forward to Christ, the perfect sacrifice whose blood provides deliverance from judgment and redemption for those who belong to Him.

5. The wilderness rock as a type of Christ

Old Testament: Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 20:1-13
New Testament: 1 Corinthians 10:4

During Israel's journey through the wilderness, God repeatedly provided water from a rock when the people had nothing to drink. What appeared to be an ordinary physical provision carried a greater significance that would not be revealed until the New Testament. Paul explains that the Israelites "drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." He therefore directly identifies the wilderness rock as a divinely intended picture of Christ.

The rock provided the water Israel needed to sustain life in the wilderness, pointing forward to Christ as the true source of spiritual life and provision for His people. Just as Israel depended upon God's supernatural provision from the rock, believers depend upon Christ for the life and sustaining grace that only He can provide. Paul's direct identification, "that Rock was Christ," makes this one of the clearest examples of explicitly established typology in Scripture.

6. Israel's wilderness experiences as types and warnings for Christians

Old Testament: Exodus 16-17; 32; Numbers 11; 14; 16; 21; 25
New Testament: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Israel experienced extraordinary acts of God's deliverance and provision after leaving Egypt, yet many later fell into serious sin and came under His judgment in the wilderness. Paul specifically points to their craving after evil things, idolatry, sexual immorality, testing God, and complaining. He then says, "these things were our examples," using the plural Greek form *tupoi*, and later adds that "all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition."

Paul directly applies these events to Christians as warnings against repeating Israel's failures. Although the Israelites had passed through the sea, received supernatural food and water, and shared in great

spiritual privileges, Paul says that "with many of them God was not well pleased," and they were overthrown in the wilderness. He therefore warns believers, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Israel's wilderness experiences were preserved in Scripture as divinely intended patterns showing that spiritual privilege does not excuse unbelief and disobedience, and Paul explicitly presents them as examples for God's people to learn from.

7. Hagar and Sarah as types of the two covenants and their sons as types of the children produced by each covenant

Old Testament: Genesis 16; 17; 21
New Testament: Romans 9:6-9; Galatians 4:21-31

In Genesis, Hagar was Sarah's bondwoman and the mother of Ishmael, while Sarah was Abraham's wife and the mother of Isaac, the promised son. Paul directly explains that Hagar and Sarah represent two covenants and that their sons represent the children produced under those covenants. Hagar represents the Old Covenant given at Mount Sinai, which Paul associates with bondage. Sarah represents the New Covenant of promise, which Paul associates with freedom. Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman, was born "after the flesh," while Isaac, the son of the freewoman, was born "by promise."

Paul also connects Hagar with "Jerusalem which now is," which was in bondage with her children, and Sarah with "Jerusalem which is above," which is free. The mothers represent the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, while their sons represent the people identified with each covenant. Ishmael pictures those who remain under the bondage of the Old Covenant, while Isaac pictures those who belong to the freedom and promise of the New Covenant.

8. Isaac's return from expected death as a picture of Christ's resurrection

Old Testament: Genesis 22:1-19

New Testament: Hebrews 11:17-19

In Genesis 22, Abraham obeyed God's command to offer Isaac, the promised son, but God stopped the sacrifice and returned Isaac to him alive. Hebrews directly explains that Abraham received Isaac back from expected death "in a figure." This means that Abraham received him back in a figurative or symbolic sense as though he had returned from the dead. Abraham believed that God was able to raise Isaac because God had promised that the covenant line would continue through him. From Abraham's perspective, he had already surrendered his son to death. When God stopped the sacrifice and returned Isaac to him alive, Abraham received him back in a way that pictured resurrection.

Although Hebrews 11 does not explicitly name Christ in its explanation of the figure, it identifies the event as a symbolic resurrection and gives us the textual basis for understanding Isaac's experience as pointing forward to Christ's resurrection. Isaac, the promised and beloved son, was given over to death and then received back alive. Isaac did not literally die, while Christ truly died and rose again. The figurative return of Isaac anticipated the greater and complete fulfillment in Christ's resurrection.

9. Melchizedek as a type of Christ as eternal King and Priest

Old Testament: Genesis 14:18-20; Psalm 110:4
New Testament: Hebrews 5:5-10; 6:19-20; 7:1-28

Melchizedek appears in Genesis as both king of Salem and priest of the Most High God. Psalm 110 later promises that the coming Messianic King will also be "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Hebrews applies this promise directly to Christ and explains the significance of Melchizedek's name and position, identifying him as "King of righteousness" and "King of peace."

Hebrews also points to the way Genesis presents Melchizedek without recording his genealogy, birth, or death, allowing him to

appear in the narrative as "like unto the Son of God" and to picture the continuing priesthood of Christ. His greatness is further shown by the fact that Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of the goods he had recovered in battle and received his blessing, demonstrating a priesthood greater than the Levitical priesthood that would later descend from Abraham. Melchizedek therefore serves as a directly established type of Christ, the eternal King and Priest whose priesthood does not depend upon Levitical descent and will never end.

10. Noah's deliverance through the flood as a type of salvation through baptism

Old Testament: Genesis 6-9
New Testament: Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:18-22

The Flood brought divine judgment upon a wicked world, while God protected Noah and his family in the ark and carried them safely through the waters into a new beginning. Peter directly points back to this event, saying that "eight souls were saved by water," and then declares, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." The Greek word translated "like figure" is *antitupos*, explicitly identifying baptism as the corresponding New Testament reality.

Peter immediately explains that he is not speaking of the outward washing of the body, but of a salvation grounded in "the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The Flood therefore establishes a pattern of passing safely through judgment into a new life, while baptism portrays the Christian's identification with Christ and His saving work. Paul develops this same truth in Romans 6, where baptism identifies the Christian with Christ's death and resurrection so that he may "walk in newness of life." Noah's passage through the Flood thus provides an explicitly identified pattern of salvation that finds its greater fulfillment in identification with the death and resurrection of Christ.

11. The tabernacle as a copy and shadow of the true heavenly sanctuary and Christ's priestly work

Old Testament: Exodus 25-40
New Testament: Hebrews 8:1-5; 9:1-24

In Exodus, God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle according to the pattern shown to him on the mountain so that God could dwell among Israel. Hebrews directly explains that the earthly tabernacle was a copy and shadow of the true heavenly sanctuary. Hebrews 8:5 says that the Old Testament priests served "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things," and it connects this with God's command for Moses to build the tabernacle according to the pattern shown to him on the mountain. The tabernacle was not the final reality. It was an earthly representation of the greater heavenly sanctuary where Christ now serves as High Priest.

Hebrews 9 then explains how the tabernacle and its services pointed forward to Christ's work. The priests repeatedly entered the first part of the tabernacle, but only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and he could do so only once each year with blood. Hebrews says that the Holy Spirit was using this arrangement to show that the way into the holiest had not yet been fully opened. It then contrasts those repeated earthly services with Christ, who entered the greater and more perfect tabernacle and appeared in the presence of God on our behalf. The tabernacle, its restricted access, and its priestly services all pointed forward to the true heavenly sanctuary and the greater priestly work of Christ.

12. The Levitical priesthood as a shadow of Christ's greater priesthood

Old Testament: Exodus 28-29; Leviticus 8-9; 16
New Testament: Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-10; 7:11-28; 8:1-6

God established the Levitical priesthood to represent the people before Him and offer sacrifices for sin. These priests served in a divinely appointed ministry, but their priesthood was limited by human weakness and death. They were sinners who needed sacrifices

themselves, their ministry passed from one generation to another, and their sacrifices had to be offered repeatedly. Hebrews explains that the Levitical system could not bring the perfection that required a greater priesthood to come.

Christ fulfills and surpasses this pattern as the perfect and permanent High Priest. He is sinless, lives forever, and holds a priesthood that never passes to another. Unlike the Levitical priests, who repeatedly offered sacrifices that could never fully remove sin, Christ offered Himself once and accomplished redemption completely. Hebrews calls the Old Testament priestly ministry an "example and shadow of heavenly things," directly establishing the Levitical priesthood as a pattern that pointed forward to the greater and everlasting priesthood of Christ.

13. The high priest as a type of Christ

Old Testament: Exodus 28-29; Leviticus 16
New Testament: Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 5:1-10; 9:6-14

In the Old Testament, the high priest represented Israel before God, offered sacrifices for sin, and entered the Holy of Holies with blood on the Day of Atonement. Hebrews directly presents the Old Testament high priest as a picture of Christ. However, he was also a sinner who needed to offer sacrifice for himself, and his work had to be repeated.

Jesus is the greater High Priest. He is sinless, He offered His own blood, and He entered the true heavenly sanctuary on behalf of His people. His sacrifice does not need to be repeated because it fully accomplished what the Old Testament priesthood could only picture. Hebrews repeatedly compares the work of the earthly high priest with the greater and final priestly work of Christ.

14. The Day of Atonement as a type of Christ's sacrifice

Old Testament: Leviticus 16:1-34; 23:26-32

New Testament: Hebrews 9:1-28; 10:1-22; 13:11-13

In Leviticus 16, God established the Day of Atonement as the yearly occasion when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies with blood to make atonement for sin. Hebrews directly presents the Day of Atonement as a picture of Christ's sacrifice and priestly work. He first had to offer sacrifice for his own sins and then offer blood for the sins of the people. Because these sacrifices could not permanently remove sin, the ceremony had to be repeated every year.

Christ fulfilled this pattern through one perfect and final sacrifice. He entered the true heavenly sanctuary, not with the blood of animals, but through the value of His own blood. Unlike the yearly sacrifices of the Day of Atonement, His sacrifice never needs to be repeated because it fully accomplished redemption. The Day of Atonement pointed forward to Christ's completed sacrifice and His work as our great High Priest.

15. The sin offerings burned outside the camp as a type of Christ's suffering outside Jerusalem

Old Testament: Leviticus 4:11-12, 21; 16:27
New Testament: Hebrews 13:11-13

Under the Old Testament sacrificial system, certain sin offerings were carried outside the camp and burned after the blood had been brought into the sanctuary for sin. This was especially seen on the Day of Atonement, when the blood was taken into the Holy of Holies while the bodies of the sacrificed animals were taken outside the camp.

Hebrews directly connects this pattern with Christ, saying, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." The phrase "without the gate" means outside the gates of Jerusalem, beyond the boundaries of the city. Jesus was taken outside Jerusalem and crucified there, bearing the reproach associated with rejection. Hebrews then calls believers to "go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." The

location of Christ's suffering therefore fulfilled a specific pattern established in the Old Testament sacrifices and became a call for His followers to identify with Him in His rejection.

16. The red heifer as a type of Christ's greater cleansing

Old Testament: Numbers 19:1-22
New Testament: Hebrews 9:13-14

In Numbers 19, God provided the sacrifice of the red heifer as a means of cleansing those who had become ceremonially unclean through contact with death. The heifer was to be without blemish, sacrificed outside the camp, and completely burned. Its ashes were then mixed with water and used to purify those who had been defiled, restoring them to ceremonial fellowship with God's people.

Hebrews directly compares this cleansing with the far greater cleansing accomplished through Christ, saying that if "the ashes of an heifer" could sanctify "to the purifying of the flesh," how much more would the blood of Christ "purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." The red heifer provided an outward cleansing from the defilement associated with death, while Christ, who offered Himself "without spot to God," provides the deeper cleansing from sin that restores the believer to fellowship and service before God.

17. Animal sacrifices as shadows of Christ's final sacrifice

Old Testament: Leviticus 1-7; 16-17
New Testament: Hebrews 9:11-28; 10:1-18

Under the Old Testament law, God established a system of animal sacrifices in which blood was repeatedly shed and offered for sin. These sacrifices provided the means of atonement God had appointed for Israel, but their constant repetition showed that they could not provide a final and permanent answer to sin. Hebrews explains that "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away

sins" and directly calls the law and its sacrifices "a shadow of good things to come."

Christ fulfilled what the animal sacrifices could only anticipate. Instead of offering another animal sacrifice, He offered Himself, and unlike the sacrifices that had to be repeated continually, His sacrifice was made "once for all." Hebrews contrasts "every priest" who "standeth daily" offering the same sacrifices with Christ, who "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever" and then sat down at the right hand of God. The repeated animal sacrifices therefore pointed forward to the one complete and final sacrifice of Christ.

18. The Sabbath as a shadow of the greater rest found in Christ

Old Testament: Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-17; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Isaiah 28:11-12
New Testament: Acts 2:1-18; 1 Corinthians 14:21-22; Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 4:1-11

The Sabbath was established as a day of rest and later given to Israel as a covenant sign, calling the people to cease from their ordinary work and rest according to God's command. Colossians directly identifies the Sabbath as part of the Old Testament system that served as "a shadow of things to come," while declaring that the substance belongs to Christ. The weekly Sabbath therefore pointed beyond the physical rest of one day to the greater spiritual rest and provision that would come through Him.

Isaiah 28 also speaks of rest and refreshing within a warning to those who refused to listen: "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. … This is the rest … and this is the refreshing." Paul later quotes this prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14 and associates it with the New Covenant outpouring of the Spirit, first manifested at Pentecost when believers "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Hebrews 4 develops the rest theme even further, tracing it from God's rest at creation through Israel's experience and declaring that

"there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." The Sabbath therefore points forward to the spiritual rest and refreshing believers receive through Christ and the New Covenant work of the Spirit, while also anticipating the complete rest God's people will ultimately enjoy in His presence.

19. The Old Testament festivals as shadows pointing toward major events in God's prophetic program

Old Testament: Leviticus 23
New Testament: Matthew 26:17-29; John 19:14, 31-36; Acts 2:1-33; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 15:20-23; Colossians 2:16-17

In Leviticus 23, God established a yearly calendar of appointed festivals and sacred assemblies for Israel. Colossians 2 directly identifies these festivals as shadows of things to come, with their ultimate fulfillment found in Christ. These were real days of worship and remembrance for Israel, but Scripture also connects the spring festivals with the major events of Christ's first coming. Christ died on Passover, was buried in the tomb on Unleavened Bread, rose on the Feast of Firstfruits, and poured out the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Paul directly calls Christ "our passover" in 1 Corinthians 5:7 and "the firstfruits of them that slept" in 1 Corinthians 15:20. Acts 2 also says that the Holy Spirit was poured out when the Day of Pentecost had fully come.

Because the spring festivals correspond so closely with major events fulfilled through Christ at His first coming, many interpreters understand the fall festivals as pointing toward major events connected with His future coming and kingdom. Within this proposed pattern, the Feast of Trumpets may picture the Rapture and resurrection of the Church, the Day of Atonement may point toward Israel's future repentance and cleansing, and the Feast of Tabernacles may anticipate the joy, restoration, and blessing of Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

However, while Colossians 2 explicitly establishes Israel's festivals

as shadows of things to come in Christ, and the New Testament directly connects several of the spring festivals with events surrounding His first coming, Scripture does not directly identify the specific future event represented by each fall festival. Therefore, the festivals belong in this category as an explicitly established system of prophetic shadows, but the proposed connections between individual fall festivals and particular events of Christ's future coming remain possible interpretations rather than proven fulfillments. They will be addressed in more detail further ahead in this list.

20. Firstfruits as a type of Christ's resurrection

Old Testament: Leviticus 23:9-14
New Testament: 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

In Leviticus 23, Israel was commanded to present the first portion of the harvest to God before gathering the remainder of the crop. This offering marked the beginning of the harvest and gave assurance that the rest would follow. Paul directly applies this imagery to Christ's resurrection by calling Him "the firstfruits of them that slept." Christ rose first, guaranteeing the future resurrection of those who belong to Him. Just as the firstfruits offering represented the beginning of the coming harvest, Christ's resurrection is the beginning and guarantee of the resurrection harvest that will follow.

Although #19 on our list discusses the prophetic significance of Israel's festivals as a whole, Firstfruits deserves separate treatment because Paul directly identifies Christ's resurrection with its specific harvest pattern.

21. Marriage as a picture of Christ and the Church

Old Testament: Genesis 2:18-25
New Testament: Ephesians 5:22-32

In Genesis 2, God created the woman for the man and established

marriage as a one-flesh union in which the husband and wife are joined together. Paul directly connects this original marriage pattern with Christ and the Church in Ephesians 5. After quoting Genesis 2:24, "they two shall be one flesh," he declares, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

Paul develops this comparison throughout the passage, describing Christ as the head of the Church who gave Himself for her in love, cleanses and sanctifies her, and will one day present her to Himself in glory. The husband is therefore called to love his wife as Christ loves the Church, while the marriage union reflects the close relationship between Christ and His people. By returning directly to the creation of marriage in Genesis, Paul shows that the one-flesh union established from the beginning was designed to point toward the greater union between Christ and the Church.

22. The veil in the Temple as a picture of access to God through Christ

Old Testament: Exodus 26:31-33; Leviticus 16:2, 11-17
New Testament: Matthew 27:50-51; Hebrews 9:6-8; 10:19-22

In the Old Testament sanctuary, the veil separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, where God's presence was uniquely manifested above the mercy seat. Access beyond the veil was severely restricted, with only the high priest permitted to enter once each year and only with sacrificial blood. Hebrews explains that this restricted access showed that the way into the direct presence of God had not yet been fully opened under the Old Covenant.

When Jesus died, the veil in the Temple was torn from top to bottom, dramatically showing that a new way into God's presence had been opened. Hebrews then says that believers now have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" through "the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Christ's body offered in sacrifice and His shed blood opened the access to God that the Old Testament veil had restricted. The veil and its removal therefore provide a directly

established picture of the way into God's presence opened through Christ.

23. The blood of the Old Covenant as a picture of Christ's greater New Covenant blood

Old Testament: Exodus 24:3-8; Jeremiah 31:31-34
New Testament: Matthew 26:27-28; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 9:15-22; 12:24

When the Old Covenant was established at Mount Sinai, Moses sprinkled the people with sacrificial blood and declared, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you." The blood confirmed the covenant relationship God was establishing with Israel. Jeremiah later promised that God would establish a New Covenant, preparing the way for a greater covenant founded upon a greater sacrifice.

At the Last Supper, Jesus deliberately echoed the words of Moses when He took the cup and said, "this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Luke likewise records Jesus calling the cup "the new testament in my blood." Hebrews explains that the first covenant was dedicated with blood and then presents Christ as the mediator of the New Covenant, whose own blood provides the sacrifice upon which that covenant is established. The blood that established the Old Covenant therefore pointed forward to the blood of Christ, through which the New Covenant was established and redemption from sin was made possible.

24. Joshua and the Promised Land of Canaan as types of Christ's greater rest and inheritance

Old Testament: Joshua 1-24; 21:43-45; Psalm 95:7-11
New Testament: Hebrews 3:7-4:11

In the Old Testament, Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land of

Canaan, where the nation received its inheritance and rest from many of its enemies. Hebrews directly uses Joshua and Israel's entrance into the Promised Land to explain the greater rest that God provides through Christ. However, Hebrews explains that this was not God's final and complete rest. If Joshua had provided that rest, God would not have spoken later in Psalm 95 about another future day.

The land gave Israel a real inheritance, security, and relief from its enemies, but Hebrews uses that historical rest to point toward the greater rest that still remains for the people of God. Joshua's work and Israel's entrance into Canaan pictured the greater salvation, rest, and inheritance God provides through Christ.

25. Sodom and Gomorrah as types of final judgment

Old Testament: Genesis 18:20-33; 19:1-29
New Testament: Matthew 10:14-15; 11:23-24; 2 Peter 2:6-9; Jude 7

In Genesis, Sodom and Gomorrah had become so deeply corrupt that God destroyed the cities with fire while rescuing Lot from the judgment. Their sudden and complete destruction became a biblical pattern of the judgment that awaits the ungodly. Jesus Himself carries the account forward to the future "day of judgment," declaring that it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for those who reject the greater revelation given through Him.

Peter and Jude make the connection even more direct. Peter says that God turned Sodom and Gomorrah "into ashes" and made them "an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly," while Jude says they were "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Their historical destruction therefore serves as a divinely established picture and warning of the final judgment that will come upon those who persist in rebellion against God.

26. The Days of Noah and Lot as a pattern for Christ's coming

Old Testament: Genesis 6:5-13; 7:1-24; 18:20-33; 19:1-29

New Testament: Matthew 24:36-42; Luke 17:26-30

In Genesis, the days of Noah and Lot were periods of widespread wickedness in which people continued their ordinary lives until God suddenly and simultaneously rescued the righteous and began a period of judgment on the wicked who were left. Jesus directly identifies the days of Noah and Lot as a pattern for His future coming. He says, "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" in Matthew 24:37. He repeats the comparison in Luke 17:26: "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." He then adds the example of Lot, saying, "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot" in Luke 17:28, before concluding, "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" in Luke 17:30.

This direct "as" and "so" language shows that these historical events provide a pattern for His future coming. The comparison focuses on the suddenness of His coming during a time of relative normalcy, catching the world off guard, along with the rescue of the righteous and the beginning of judgment upon the wicked. Jesus presents this as a pattern for the beginning of the period of His future *Parousia*, or coming.

27. Elijah as a type of John the Baptist's forerunner ministry

Old Testament: 1 Kings 17-19; Malachi 4:5-6
New Testament: Matthew 11:7-15; 17:10-13; Luke 1:16-17; John 1:21; Revelation 11:3-6

In the Old Testament, Elijah was a prophet who confronted wicked rulers and called Israel to repentance. Malachi later specifically prophesied, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." The New Testament directly connects John the Baptist with this promised Elijah-like ministry. Before John's birth, the angel Gabriel said that he would go before the Lord "in the spirit and power of Elias," and then used language drawn directly from Malachi 4:6 concerning the turning of hearts. Jesus like-

wise said of John, "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come."

John was not literally Elijah returned in person. When he was directly asked, "Art thou Elias?" John answered, "I am not." Rather, John fulfilled the Elijah pattern by coming "in the spirit and power of Elias." Like Elijah, he confronted wicked rulers, called Israel to repentance, lived apart from normal society, and prepared the people for God's intervention. Jesus could therefore truthfully say that Elijah "is come already," referring to the fulfillment of the Elijah role through John.

At the same time, John's ministry does not necessarily exhaust the prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6. Jesus' words contain an important qualification: "if ye will receive it." Israel as a nation ultimately did not receive either John or the Messiah whose way he prepared. Even more significantly, after John's ministry and death, Jesus said, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things," and then immediately added that "Elias is come already." Jesus therefore acknowledged both an Elijah fulfillment that had already occurred through John and an Elijah coming that could still lie in the future.

This allows Malachi's prophecy to retain its literal force. Malachi does not merely say that someone like Elijah will come, but specifically says that God will send "Elijah the prophet" before the great and dreadful Day of the Lord. A future appearance of Elijah in connection with the events preceding Christ's return therefore remains a strong possibility. Revelation 11 describes one of the Two Witnesses performing distinctly Elijah-like signs, including shutting heaven so that it does not rain, making Elijah a likely candidate for one of those witnesses, although Revelation does not explicitly identify either witness by name.

Elijah therefore serves as a divinely established type and pattern of John the Baptist's forerunner ministry at Christ's First Advent, while the literal Elijah may yet fulfill the ultimate eschatological dimension of Malachi's prophecy before Christ's Second Advent. Gabriel's statement and Jesus' own explanation directly establish the Elijah-John

correspondence, placing this example among the textually explicit types.

28. Abel's blood as a type of the greater blood of Christ

Old Testament: Genesis 4:1-10
New Testament: Matthew 23:35; Hebrews 11:4; 12:24

Abel was a righteous man who was hated and murdered by his own brother Cain. After his death, God told Cain, "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Abel's innocent blood cried out for justice against the one who had killed him. Jesus refers to him as "righteous Abel," while Hebrews points to his faith and then directly compares his blood with the blood of Christ.

Hebrews says that Christ's blood "speaketh better things than that of Abel." Abel's blood cried out for judgment against his murderer, while Christ's blood provides forgiveness, reconciliation, and salvation for sinners. The direct comparison in Hebrews establishes Abel's blood as an earlier type that points forward to the far greater saving power of the blood of Christ.

29. The Temple as a type of Christ

Old Testament: 1 Kings 5-8
New Testament: Matthew 12:6; John 2:18-22; Colossians 2:9

Solomon's Temple was the place where God's presence dwelt among Israel and where the people came to worship Him and offer sacrifices. At its dedication, the glory of the Lord filled the Temple, marking it as the center of God's presence among His people. Jesus later declared that "in this place is one greater than the temple," showing that the Temple pointed beyond itself to a greater reality fulfilled in Him.

Jesus makes the connection even clearer in John 2 when He says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John

explains that "he spake of the temple of his body," directly identifying Christ with the Temple and connecting the imagery with His death and resurrection. The Temple had been the dwelling place of God's presence among Israel, while Christ is the greater fulfillment in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." John's direct explanation establishes the Temple as a clear type of Christ.

30. Manna as a type of Christ, the true Bread from Heaven

Old Testament: Exodus 16:1-36; Deuteronomy 8:2-3
New Testament: John 6:30-58

During Israel's journey through the wilderness, God provided manna from heaven to sustain the people when they had no food. Moses later reminded Israel that God fed them with manna to teach them that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord." The manna was therefore a supernatural provision from God that gave Israel the food needed to sustain physical life.

In John 6, Jesus takes this historical provision and applies it directly to Himself. After the people referred to the manna their fathers had eaten in the wilderness, Jesus explained that the Father now gives "the true bread from heaven" and declared, "I am the bread of life." He then contrasts the temporary life provided by manna with the eternal life He gives: Israel's fathers ate manna and eventually died, but whoever receives the true bread from heaven will live forever. Jesus' own explanation directly establishes manna as a type of Christ, God's greater life-giving provision for the world.

31. Moses as a type of Christ, the greater Prophet to come

Old Testament: Exodus 2-34; Deuteronomy 18:15-19
New Testament: Matthew 2:13-21; 5:1-7:29; Acts 3:20-23; 7:35-37; Hebrews 3:1-6

Moses told Israel that God would one day raise up "a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me," and God Himself confirmed that He would put His words in that Prophet's mouth. The prophecy therefore presents Moses as the pattern for a greater Prophet still to come. Peter directly applies this promise to Jesus in Acts 3, while Stephen repeats the same prophecy in Acts 7, clearly identifying Christ as the promised Prophet like Moses.

Hebrews develops the comparison further by placing Moses and Christ side by side. Moses was faithful as a servant in God's house, while Christ is faithful as the Son over His house and is worthy of greater glory than Moses. Both were divinely appointed deliverers who spoke God's words and stood between God and His people, but Christ fulfills these roles in a far greater way. Because the Old Testament specifically foretells a coming Prophet like Moses and the New Testament directly identifies that Prophet as Christ, Moses belongs among the textually explicit types.

Category #2: Textually Implicit Types

The examples in the first category are directly established by clear New Testament explanations, comparisons, or statements showing that an Old Testament person, event, or institution pointed forward to something greater. The examples in this second category are established differently. Their typological meaning is shown through repeated biblical patterns, later prophecies, direct quotations, and the way later Scripture develops and fulfills the earlier account. The connection is still strongly supported by the text, but it requires us to follow the Bible's larger storyline and put several passages together rather than relying on one direct New Testament explanation.

32. David as a type of Christ, the Messianic Suffering Servant and Reigning King

Old Testament: 1 Samuel 16-31; 2 Samuel 5-7; Psalms 2; 16; 22; 69; 110

New Testament: Matthew 1:1; 22:41-46; 27:35-46; Luke 1:32-33; John 19:23-24, 28-30; Acts 2:25-36; 13:32-37

David's life and writings repeatedly point beyond his own experience to Christ as both the Messianic Suffering Servant and the Reigning King. David was God's anointed one, yet he was rejected, persecuted, betrayed, and forced to suffer before receiving the throne. The prophetic Psalms show that David's experiences formed a pattern that would be fulfilled more completely in Christ. Psalm 22 describes the sufferer's hands and feet being pierced, his garments being divided, his enemies surrounding and mocking him, and the sufferer crying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Jesus spoke those exact words on the cross, and the Gospel writers connect the divided garments and mockery with that Psalm. Psalm 69 likewise describes the suffering of a righteous servant who is hated without cause and bears reproach because of his devotion to God.

David's pattern of suffering was followed by exaltation and kingship. God established David upon the throne and promised that one of his descendants would rule forever. Psalm 16 says that God's Holy One would not see corruption. In Acts 2, Peter quotes this passage from Psalm 16 and explains that David could not have been speaking ultimately about himself because David died, was buried, and his tomb remained among them. Peter says that David, speaking as a prophet, was referring to the resurrection of Christ. Psalm 2 presents God's Anointed King ruling the nations, while Psalm 110 presents David's Lord seated at God's right hand until His enemies are placed beneath His feet. Jesus applies Psalm 110 to Himself, and the New Testament repeatedly identifies Him as the promised Son of David who will reign forever. David's rejection, suffering, vindication, and eventual reign form a textual pattern fulfilled in Christ as the Messianic Suffering Servant and Reigning King.

33. Solomon as a type of Christ, the greater King

Old Testament: 1 Kings 3:5-28; 4:20-34; 8:1-66; 10:1-25; Psalm 72

New Testament: Matthew 12:42; Luke 1:32-33; 11:31

Solomon was the son of David who inherited his father's throne and became known for extraordinary wisdom, peace, prosperity, and the greatness of his kingdom. During his reign, Israel enjoyed peace and prosperity, and Solomon became renowned throughout the nations for his wisdom, drawing rulers from afar to hear him and bring him gifts. He also built the first Temple in Jerusalem, making his reign closely connected with the worship of God. Psalm 72 develops this royal picture even further, describing a king whose righteous rule, peace, worldwide dominion, and blessing extend far beyond what Solomon personally accomplished.

The New Testament presents Christ as the greater Son of David whose kingdom will never end. Jesus directly compares Himself with Solomon when He says that the Queen of the South came "to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." Solomon's wisdom, peaceful reign, prosperity, and international glory therefore provide an earlier pattern of the far greater kingdom of Christ, when the Son of David will reign in perfect righteousness and the nations will come under His rule and blessing.

34. Joseph as a type of Christ, the rejected and exalted Savior

Old Testament: Genesis 37-50
New Testament: Matthew 26:14-16; 27:1-10, 18-26; Luke 23:32-43; John 1:11; 19:23-24; Acts 7:9-16, 35, 51-52; Philippians 2:5-11

Stephen's speech in Acts 7 provides a New Testament basis for understanding Joseph as a type of the rejected and exalted Savior. Stephen explains that Joseph's brothers were moved with envy, rejected him, and sold him into Egypt. God was with Joseph, delivered him from his afflictions, and raised him to a position of authority. Joseph then became the one through whom his brothers and family were saved from death. Stephen follows Joseph with Moses, who was also rejected by Israel and later sent by God as a ruler and deliverer.

He then accuses Israel's leaders of following the same pattern by rejecting and killing Jesus, "the Just One." The structure of Stephen's speech shows that Joseph belongs to the biblical pattern of the rejected deliverer whom God later exalts and uses to save the people who rejected him.

The biblical account also contains numerous additional parallels between Joseph and Jesus that Stephen does not explicitly mention. Joseph was the beloved son of his father, yet his own brothers hated him, conspired against him, stripped him of his special garment, cast him into a pit, and sold him for silver. He later suffered falsely, was condemned despite his innocence, and was placed between two prisoners, one of whom was restored while the other was put to death. God then raised Joseph from humiliation to authority, required others to bow before him, and used him to preserve the lives of the same brothers who had rejected him. Jesus was likewise the beloved Son of the Father, rejected by His own people, betrayed for silver, stripped of His clothing, falsely accused, condemned despite His innocence, and crucified between two criminals, one of whom received the promise of life. God then raised Him from the dead, highly exalted Him, and appointed Him as the Savior of the very people who had rejected Him.

These additional parallels strengthen the Joseph-Christ connection, but most of them are not individually identified or explained as types by the New Testament. Considered by themselves, they would fit more naturally within the third category of possible types with limited textual evidence. Joseph remains in the second category because Acts 7 provides a stronger textual basis for the larger pattern: the deliverer is rejected by his own people, exalted by God, and later becomes the means of their salvation.

35. Israel as God's son and Jesus as the true Son

Old Testament: Exodus 4:22-23; Hosea 11:1
New Testament: Matthew 2:13-15; 3:16-17; 4:1-11

Matthew directly quotes Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt have I called

my son," and applies it to Jesus returning from Egypt. In its original context, Hosea was referring to Israel, whom God had called His son and brought out of Egypt. Matthew's application shows that Israel's history established a pattern that was repeated and fulfilled more completely in Christ.

Jesus then passes through water at His baptism, is declared God's Son, and enters the wilderness for forty days, where He answers Satan from Deuteronomy. Israel passed through the sea, was identified as God's son, and spent forty years in the wilderness, where the nation repeatedly failed. Jesus repeats the pattern but remains faithful. Matthew's quotation of Hosea and the structure of his account provide the textual basis for understanding Jesus as the true and obedient Son who represents Israel.

36. The exodus as a type of the greater salvation in Christ

Old Testament: Exodus 1-15; Isaiah 11:15-16; 40:1-11; 43:16-21
New Testament: Luke 9:30-31; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Colossians 1:13-14; Revelation 15:2-4

Israel's exodus from Egypt established one of Scripture's great patterns of divine deliverance. God's people were held in bondage under a hostile ruler, judgment fell upon the oppressing power, the Passover sacrifice provided protection from death, and God brought His people out through Moses, His appointed deliverer. The prophets later reused this exodus imagery when describing future acts of salvation, showing that the original deliverance from Egypt established a pattern that pointed beyond itself to still greater works of God.

The New Testament brings this pattern into direct connection with Christ. At the Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about the work He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem, and Luke specifically calls it His "exodus," using the Greek word *exodos* for His coming death and departure. Paul likewise identifies Christ as "our passover" and describes believers as having been delivered from the power of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's Son. Reve-

lation finally joins "the song of Moses" with "the song of the Lamb," linking God's great deliverance under Moses with His ultimate victory through Christ. Together, these passages present the historical exodus as a pattern of the greater redemption and deliverance accomplished through Christ.

37. The Red Sea crossing as a type of identification with Christ and separation from bondage

Old Testament: Exodus 14:1-31
New Testament: 1 Corinthians 10:1-2

At the Red Sea, God brought Israel decisively out from under the power of its former Egyptian masters. The people passed through the sea under Moses, God's appointed deliverer, while the Egyptian army that pursued them was destroyed behind them. Exodus says that "the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians," bringing to fulfillment Moses' promise that the Egyptians they had seen that day they would "see them again no more for ever." The crossing therefore marked a decisive separation from their former bondage and their entrance into a new relationship under God's appointed deliverer.

Paul directly applies Israel's experience to New Testament believers, saying that they were "all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" and then explaining that "these things were our examples" and were "written for our admonition." Israel's passage through the sea identified the people with Moses, while Paul uses their experience as a pattern for Christians identified with Christ, the greater Deliverer. His larger warning is that Israel's participation in these great redemptive privileges did not prevent many of them from later falling through unbelief, idolatry, and disobedience. The Red Sea crossing therefore provides a strong picture of identification with God's appointed Deliverer, while Israel's subsequent failure warns believers not to rely upon spiritual privilege apart from continuing faithfulness to God.

38. Noah's ark as a type of salvation through God's appointed refuge in Christ

Old Testament: Genesis 6:13-22; 7:1-24; 8:1-19
New Testament: Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:18-22

God warned Noah of the coming judgment and Himself provided the means by which Noah and his household could escape it. Noah responded in faith by building the ark God had prescribed, and when the time came, he and his household entered it before God Himself shut them safely inside. While the world outside perished under judgment, those within the ark were carried safely through the waters and emerged afterward into a world delivered from the former judgment.

Peter places Noah's deliverance within an explicitly Christ-centered context of judgment and salvation, immediately connecting the account with Christ's suffering, resurrection, and saving work. The New Testament does not directly state that the ark itself represents Christ, but Noah's deliverance establishes a clear pattern of salvation through the refuge God provides while judgment falls outside. The ark therefore provides a strong textually implicit picture of the saving refuge found in Christ.

39. Boaz as a type of Christ, the greater Kinsman-Redeemer

Old Testament: Leviticus 25:23-55; Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Ruth 1-4
New Testament: Galatians 4:4-5; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 2:11-18; 1 Peter 1:18-19

The Old Testament law established the role of the kinsman-redeemer as a qualified family member who could redeem property, release a relative from slavery, and preserve the family line. The book of Ruth shows this role being carried out by Boaz, a near relative who was both qualified and willing to redeem. He protected Ruth, provided for her, paid the required cost connected with the family inheritance, and took her as his bride.

Christ fulfills this pattern in a far greater way. Hebrews says that He shared in flesh and blood and was not ashamed to call His people brethren, while Galatians says that He was born under the law "to redeem them that were under the law." Titus says that He gave Himself to redeem His people, and Peter says that believers were redeemed by His precious blood. Boaz therefore provides the clearest Old Testament example of the kinsman-redeemer role being carried out in an actual person and story, pointing to Christ, who became related to humanity through the incarnation, willingly paid the price of redemption, restores what was lost, and receives His redeemed bride, the Church. Although the New Testament does not specifically identify Boaz as a type of Christ, his actions closely follow the biblical pattern of redemption that finds its fullest expression in Christ.

40. The bridegroom as a type and title of Christ

Old Testament: Psalm 45:1-17; Isaiah 54:5-8; 62:4-5; Hosea 2:16-20
New Testament: Matthew 9:14-15; John 3:28-30; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-32; Hebrews 1:8-9; Revelation 19:7-9

The Old Testament repeatedly uses marriage and bridegroom imagery to describe the Lord's covenant relationship with His people. Isaiah calls the Lord Israel's husband and compares His rejoicing over restored Jerusalem to a bridegroom rejoicing over his bride, while Hosea speaks of Israel's future restoration in terms of renewed betrothal. Psalm 45 presents a royal bridegroom in distinctly Messianic terms, and Hebrews 1:8-9 directly applies the Psalm's description of the king to the Son. These passages establish the broader pattern of the divine and Messianic bridegroom.

The New Testament carries this bridegroom imagery forward and applies it directly to Christ. Jesus identifies Himself as "the bridegroom," John the Baptist likewise speaks of Christ in that role, and Paul describes the Church as betrothed to Christ and develops the relationship between Christ and the Church through the pattern of

husband and wife. Revelation brings the imagery to its climax with "the marriage of the Lamb" and the "marriage supper of the Lamb."

The imagery therefore spans both Testaments, but it is applied within distinct covenant relationships: in the Old Testament, the Lord is presented as the husband of Israel, while in the New Testament Christ is presented as the bridegroom of the Church. The shared imagery does not erase the distinction between Israel and the Church, but reveals a recurring biblical pattern of the Lord entering into a covenant relationship of love, faithfulness, and union with His people.

41. The shepherd as a type and title of Christ

Old Testament: Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:10-11; Ezekiel 34:11-31; Micah 5:2-4; Zechariah 13:7
New Testament: Matthew 26:31; John 10:1-18; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4

The Old Testament repeatedly presents the Lord as the Shepherd of His people. Psalm 23 declares, "The Lord is my shepherd," Isaiah describes the Lord gathering the lambs in His arms, and Ezekiel 34 says that God Himself will seek, gather, and shepherd His scattered sheep. Yet Ezekiel also promises that God will raise up "my servant David" as the one Shepherd over them, while Micah describes the coming ruler from Bethlehem as the One who will shepherd His flock. These passages establish both the Lord Himself and the coming Davidic Messiah as the Shepherd of His people.

The New Testament brings these themes together in Jesus. He identifies Himself as "the good shepherd" who "giveth his life for the sheep," Hebrews calls Him "that great shepherd of the sheep" who was raised from the dead, and Peter calls Him "the chief Shepherd" who will appear again. Zechariah 13:7 also foretold that the Shepherd would be struck and the sheep scattered, a prophecy Jesus directly applied to Himself before His arrest. Jesus is therefore revealed as the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep, the Great Shepherd

who rose from the dead, and the Chief Shepherd who will return, bringing the Old Testament shepherd pattern to its full expression in Christ.

42. The Temple as a type of the Church collectively and the individual believer's body

Old Testament: 1 Kings 5-8
New Testament: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5

The Old Testament Temple was the dwelling place of the Lord among His covenant people. God's glory filled the Temple, and it stood as the physical place where His presence dwelt in the midst of Israel. The New Testament applies this Temple imagery both to the Church collectively and to the body of the individual believer. Paul tells the Corinthian congregation, "ye are the temple of God," because God's Spirit dwells among them. Ephesians likewise says that believers are joined together and "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Peter describes individual Christians as living stones being built together into a spiritual house. These passages present the Church corporately as God's dwelling place.

Paul also applies the same imagery to each believer personally. In 1 Corinthians 6:19, while addressing the proper use of the physical body, he says, "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you." Under the New Covenant, God dwells by His Spirit both within individual believers and among His people collectively. Thus, the Temple provides a biblical picture of both the believer's body and the gathered Church as dwelling places of the Holy Spirit.

43. The mercy seat as a type of Christ's atoning work

Old Testament: Exodus 25:17-22; Leviticus 16:2, 14-16
New Testament: Romans 3:24-26; Hebrews 9:5, 11-14, 23-28

In the Old Testament, the mercy seat covered the ark of the covenant within the Holy of Holies and was the place where God said He would meet with Israel. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered with sacrificial blood and sprinkled it upon and before the mercy seat to make atonement for the sins of the people. The mercy seat therefore stood at the meeting point between God's holy presence, His law contained within the ark, and the blood provided for sin.

Romans 3:25 uses the Greek word *hilasterion* in reference to Christ, the same term used for the mercy seat in Hebrews 9:5 and throughout the Greek Old Testament. Paul therefore presents Christ as the ultimate place where atonement for sin is accomplished through His blood. Hebrews 9 develops the same Day of Atonement pattern by contrasting the repeated entrance of the earthly high priest with Christ's once-for-all sacrifice and entrance into the true heavenly sanctuary. The mercy seat and the blood placed upon it thus pointed forward to Christ's completed atoning work, through which sinners can be reconciled to God.

44. Cities of refuge as a type of safety and salvation in Christ

Old Testament: Numbers 35:6-34; Deuteronomy 19:1-13; Joshua 20
New Testament: Hebrews 6:17-20

The cities of refuge were established in the Old Testament as places where a person could flee from the avenger of blood until the case could be judged. Hebrews uses similar language when it describes believers as those "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." The passage then identifies that hope with Jesus, who has entered within the veil as our forerunner and High Priest.

Hebrews does not explain every detail of the Old Testament refuge system, but its use of the language of fleeing for refuge in a Christ-centered passage provides a textual basis for understanding the cities of refuge as a picture of the safety and salvation found in Christ.

45. Antiochus IV as a type of the final Antichrist

Old Testament: Daniel 8:9-14, 23-26; 11:21-35
Later prophetic passages: Daniel 9:27; 11:36-45; 12:11; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10

Antiochus IV Epiphanes was a historical ruler who fiercely persecuted the Jewish people, desecrated the Temple, stopped the regular sacrifices, and exalted himself against God. Daniel 8 and 11 prophetically describe his career in remarkable detail, but as the latter portion of Daniel 11 develops, the prophecy at points appears to transcend what was historically fulfilled by Antiochus and reach forward to the final end-time ruler. In this way, Antiochus provides the historical pattern for a greater persecutor and opponent of God who will arise in the future.

Jesus later spoke of "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," as a future event even though Antiochus had already committed a historical abomination centuries earlier. Paul likewise describes the coming "man of sin" as one who "exalteth himself above all that is called God" and takes his place in the Temple of God, closely reflecting the pattern found in Daniel. Antiochus therefore serves as a historical type of the final Antichrist, whose persecution, self-exaltation, Temple desecration, and opposition to God will bring this pattern to its ultimate fulfillment. Because Scripture establishes the correspondence through prophetic development rather than explicitly naming Antiochus as a type, this is best classified as a textually implicit type.

46. The Tower of Babel as a type of the final Babylon

Old Testament: Genesis 11:1-9; Isaiah 13-14; 47; Jeremiah 50-51; Daniel 1-5
New Testament: Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17-18

The tower of Babel provides the Bible's earliest major picture of organized human rebellion against God after the Flood. Humanity united in the land of Shinar, sought to build a city and tower, and declared, "let us make us a name for ourselves," establishing a pattern of centralized power, human self-exaltation, and rebellion against God. The name Babel is the same Hebrew name later translated Babylon, and the geographical setting is significant because historical Babylon later arose in the same region. Historical Babylon developed this same pattern on a far greater scale, becoming a powerful empire marked by pride, idolatry, opposition to God's people, and exaltation against the Lord.

Revelation 17-18 brings this Babylonian pattern to its final and climactic expression in the end-time Babylon, which exercises world-wide influence, is associated with the kings and nations of the earth, exalts itself in pride, becomes a center of wealth and spiritual corruption, and ultimately receives sudden divine judgment. The final Babylon therefore represents the culmination of the rebellious pattern first established at Babel and developed through historical Babylon. Because the New Testament does not explicitly identify this as typology, it is best classified as a textually implicit type.

Category #3: Possible Types With Limited Textual Evidence

These comparisons may be useful, but the Bible does not provide enough direct textual proof to teach them with the same confidence as the previous examples.

47. Gentile brides in the Old Testament as pictures of Christ receiving a people from the nations

Old Testament: Genesis 2:18-25; 24:1-67; 41:45, 50-52; Exodus 2:15-22; Joshua 2:1-21; 6:22-25; Ruth 1-4
New Testament comparisons: Matthew 1:5; Acts 15:14; Ephesians 5:25-32; Revelation 5:9; 19:7-9

Several prominent men within the Old Testament storyline received brides who came from outside the immediate covenant family or the nation of Israel. Isaac received Rebekah from Mesopotamia, Joseph married Asenath of Egypt, Moses married Zipporah of Midian, Salmon married Rahab of Jericho, and Boaz married Ruth the Moabitess. Eve is also sometimes included at the beginning of this pattern because she became the bride of Adam, whom the New Testament directly identifies as a type of Christ.

Some interpreters see these marriages as forming a repeated picture of Christ receiving the Church as His bride from among the nations. The comparison is especially noticeable where the husband already fits a larger Christ-centered pattern. Isaac was the promised son who was figuratively received back from death before receiving his bride. Joseph was rejected by his brothers and later exalted among the Gentiles before receiving Asenath. Boaz acted as the kinsman-redeemer who redeemed Ruth and took her as his bride. Rahab and Ruth were also brought into Israel and placed within the Messianic family line.

This is sometimes described as a pattern of six Old Testament brides followed by Christ and the Church as the seventh. However, that description requires some qualification. Eve lived before the distinction between Israel and the Gentile nations existed, and Rebekah belonged to Abraham's extended family even though she came from outside the covenant household being established through Isaac. More importantly, no biblical writer gathers these marriages together and explains them as a unified type of Christ and the Church. The repeated pattern is meaningful and consistent with God's purpose of gathering a people from the nations, but it remains a possible typological connection rather than a directly established one.

48. Benjamin as a type of Christ's suffering and exaltation

Old Testament: Genesis 35:16-20; Isaiah 53:3
New Testament: Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 1:11

As Rachel was dying in childbirth, she named her son Benoni, meaning "son of my sorrow," but Jacob changed his name to Benjamin, meaning "son of the right hand." Some interpreters see in these two names a striking picture of the progression from Christ's suffering to His exaltation. Christ first came as the suffering Messiah, described prophetically as "a man of sorrows," but after enduring the cross He was exalted to the right hand of God.

The sequence is especially suggestive because the New Testament itself repeatedly presents Christ's sufferings as preceding His glory. Peter speaks of "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow," while Hebrews says that after enduring the cross Christ "is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Benjamin's two names therefore correspond remarkably well with this suffering-to-exaltation pattern. However, no later Scripture directly identifies Benjamin or his names as a type of Christ, so the connection remains a possible rather than established typological interpretation.

49. Rahab's scarlet cord as a type of Christ's blood

Old Testament: Joshua 2:1-21; 6:22-25
New Testament: Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25

In the Old Testament account of Jericho, Rahab was instructed to bind a scarlet cord in her window so that her house would be identified and spared when judgment fell upon the city. Everyone who remained within that marked house would be preserved, while those outside would perish with the rest of Jericho. The combination of impending judgment, a visible scarlet sign, and safety for those gathered within the place marked for deliverance has led many interpreters to see the cord as a possible picture of the blood of Christ, through which sinners are sheltered from divine judgment.

The comparison is especially suggestive because the pattern resembles other biblical deliverance accounts in which God provides a specific means of escape from judgment, most notably the blood-

marked houses at the Passover. However, Hebrews and James commend Rahab's faith and actions without assigning any symbolic meaning to the cord or to its scarlet color. Thus, Rahab's deliverance is clearly established in Scripture, but identifying the scarlet cord specifically as a type of Christ's blood remains a plausible rather than demonstrated interpretation.

50. Eve coming from Adam's side as a type of the Church coming from Christ

Old Testament: Genesis 2:21-23
New Testament: John 19:34; Ephesians 5:25-32

In Genesis 2, God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep, opened his side, and from what He took from Adam formed Eve, the woman who would become his bride and be joined to him as "one flesh." Paul directly connects the marriage of Adam and Eve with Christ and the Church in Ephesians 5:31-32, quoting Genesis 2:24 and declaring, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." The broader relationship between Adam and his bride therefore has clear biblical support as a type of Christ and the Church.

Some interpreters see an additional correspondence in the manner of Eve's formation. Adam entered a deep sleep, his side was opened, and from his side God brought forth the woman who became his bride. Christ likewise entered death, His side was pierced, and through His sacrificial death He secured the redemption of the people who constitute His Church and bride.

John 19:34 records that blood and water came from Christ's pierced side, making the parallel especially suggestive. However, no New Testament passage directly connects Christ's pierced side with Eve's formation from Adam, so while the broader marriage typology is explicitly established by Scripture, this specific side-to-side correspondence remains a possible but unproven extension of that established type.

51. The ark of the covenant's wood and gold as pictures of Christ's humanity and deity

Old Testament: Exodus 25:10-22
New Testament: John 1:1, 14; Philippians 2:6-8; Hebrews 8:5; 9:1-5

The ark of the covenant was constructed of acacia wood and overlaid within and without with pure gold. Because Hebrews places the ark within a tabernacle system that served as a "copy and shadow of heavenly things," interpreters have often looked for typological significance in its carefully prescribed materials. The combination of wood and gold has traditionally been understood as portraying Christ as both truly human and truly divine, with the wood representing His humanity and the gold representing His deity.

This interpretation corresponds with clear New Testament teaching that the eternal Word who "was God" also "was made flesh," and that Christ, while existing in the form of God, humbled Himself and came in the likeness of men. However, Scripture never directly states that the ark's wood symbolizes Christ's humanity or that its gold symbolizes His deity. The typological character of the tabernacle is clearly established, but the specific symbolism assigned to these materials should therefore remain a possible rather than certain interpretation.

52. The tabernacle colors as pictures of different aspects of Christ

Old Testament: Exodus 25-28; 35-39
New Testament: Hebrews 8:1-5; 9:1-12

In the Old Testament tabernacle, God specifically commanded the repeated use of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen in the curtains, veil, coverings, and priestly garments. These colors were therefore not incidental decorations, but carefully prescribed features of the sanctuary. Hebrews later establishes that the tabernacle and its ministry

belonged to the "copy and shadow of heavenly things" and pointed beyond themselves to greater realities associated with Christ and His redemptive work.

Traditional typological interpretation has often understood blue as representing heaven, purple as royalty, scarlet as sacrifice or blood, and fine white linen as purity or righteousness. Each of these associations corresponds with genuine biblical truths concerning Christ and may reflect intentional symbolism within the tabernacle. However, Scripture never directly assigns these specific meanings to the individual colors. The typological character of the tabernacle itself is clearly established, but the precise significance of each color remains a reasonable possibility rather than a demonstrated interpretation.

53. The grain offering as a type of Christ's perfect humanity and consecrated life

Old Testament: Leviticus 2; 6:14-23
New Testament comparisons: Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 10:5-10

In Leviticus, the grain offering was presented to God from fine flour with oil, frankincense, and salt, while leaven and honey were excluded. Unlike the animal sacrifices, it did not involve the shedding of blood. It represented an offering of produce given to God as an act of worship and consecration.

Some see the fine flour as a picture of Christ's perfectly balanced humanity, the oil as the Holy Spirit, the frankincense as the pleasing character of His life, the salt as incorruption, and the absence of leaven as His sinlessness. Christ certainly lived a perfect life, offered Himself fully to the Father, and was a pleasing sacrifice to God. However, the New Testament never interprets the grain offering ingredient by ingredient. The offering may reasonably be viewed as a broad picture of Christ's perfect and consecrated life, but the detailed symbolism assigned to each ingredient is not directly established by Scripture.

54. The Feast of Trumpets as a type of the Rapture

Old Testament: Leviticus 23:23-25; Numbers 29:1-6
New Testament comparisons: 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Colossians 2:16-17

In the Old Testament, the Feast of Trumpets was a sacred day of rest and assembly observed on the first day of the seventh month and marked by the sounding of trumpets before the Lord. It was the first of Israel's fall festivals and was followed by the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:52 that the resurrection and transformation of believers at the Rapture will occur "at the last trump" may provide a New Testament connection to the Feast of Trumpets. Some Jewish sources do also exist linking that phrase to the Feast of Trumpets.[1] [2] Paul also says in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, while discussing the Rapture, that the Lord will descend from heaven with "the trump of God" when the dead in Christ are raised and living believers are caught up together with them. Because Jewish observance of the Feast of Trumpets involved a series of trumpet blasts ending in a final blast, some interpreters believe Paul's reference to "the last trump" may reflect language associated with the feast. This possible textual connection may receive additional support from historical and cultural evidence outside Scripture, but Paul never directly names the Feast of Trumpets or states that the Rapture will occur on that day.

The proposed connection is also supported by the broader prophetic pattern of Israel's festivals. The spring festivals are closely associated with the major events of Christ's first coming. Christ died on Passover, was buried in the tomb on Unleavened Bread, rose on the Feast of Firstfruits, and poured out the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Because these spring festivals correspond with major events already fulfilled through Christ, many interpreters understand the fall festivals as pointing toward major events connected with His future coming and Millennial Kingdom.

Within this proposed pattern, the Feast of Trumpets may picture the Rapture and resurrection of Church Age believers at the opening of the broad Day of the Lord, followed by Israel's future repentance and cleansing (the Day of Atonement) and then the blessing of Christ's Kingdom (the Feast of Tabernacles). Since Colossians 2:16-17 identifies Israel's festivals as shadows of things to come in Christ, the reference to "the last trump" gives the Feast of Trumpets a reasonable possible connection with the Rapture. However, Scripture never makes this identification explicit.

55. The Day of Atonement as a type of Israel's future repentance and cleansing at Christ's return

Old Testament: Leviticus 16:1-34; 23:26-32
Prophetic comparisons: Zechariah 12:10-14; 13:1; Romans 11:25-27

Under the Old Testament law, the Day of Atonement was Israel's national day of affliction, atonement, cleansing, and restored fellowship with God. Its sacrificial ceremonies directly pointed to Christ's atoning sacrifice and priestly work, as explained in Hebrews. That fulfillment was discussed earlier and is explicitly established by the New Testament.

Some interpreters also see a broader future application of the feast to Israel's national repentance and cleansing when Christ returns. Zechariah says that Israel will look upon the One whom they pierced, mourn for Him, and experience the opening of a fountain "for sin and for uncleanness." Paul likewise teaches that Israel's present partial blindness will one day be removed and that "all Israel shall be saved" when the Deliverer comes and turns ungodliness away from Jacob.

These passages closely reflect the themes of the Day of Atonement: national mourning, recognition of sin, cleansing, forgiveness, and restored covenant blessing. Its place between the Feast of Trumpets and the Feast of Tabernacles also fits the proposed prophetic pattern in which the Church's gathering at the Rapture is followed by Israel's repentance and cleansing, and then by the blessing of Christ's King-

dom. However, Scripture does not directly identify the future repentance of Israel as the prophetic fulfillment of the Day of Atonement. The connection is reasonable and fits the larger pattern of the fall festivals, but it remains a possible interpretation rather than a proven typological fulfillment.

56. The Feast of Tabernacles as a type of Christ's Millennial Kingdom

Old Testament: Leviticus 23:33-43; Deuteronomy 16:13-15; Isaiah 2:2-4; 35:1-10; Ezekiel 37:26-28; Amos 9:11-15; Zechariah 8:20-23; 14:9, 16-19
New Testament: John 7:37-39; Revelation 20:1-6; 21:3

In the Old Testament, the Feast of Tabernacles was a joyful harvest festival in which Israel lived in temporary booths to remember God's provision during the wilderness journey. It celebrated the completion of the harvest and called the people to rejoice before the Lord.

Some interpreters see the feast as a picture of the joy, restoration, worship, and divine blessing of Christ's Millennial Kingdom. This connection receives particular support from Zechariah 14, which says that after the Lord comes and reigns as King, the surviving nations will go up to Jerusalem each year to worship Him and keep the Feast of Tabernacles, making the feast directly associated with the conditions of Christ's future earthly reign. The broader Old Testament picture of the future kingdom reinforces these same themes. Isaiah describes the nations streaming to Jerusalem to worship the Lord and the redeemed returning to Zion with everlasting joy; Amos portrays the restored Davidic kingdom as a time of extraordinary agricultural abundance and Israel securely dwelling in the land; Ezekiel says of restored Israel, "My tabernacle also shall be with them;" and Zechariah 8 describes peoples from many nations coming to Jerusalem to seek the Lord.

The feast's themes of completed harvest, rejoicing, restoration, divine provision, worldwide worship, and God dwelling with His

people therefore correspond closely with the blessings of Christ's Millennial Kingdom, while Revelation ultimately presents the final completion of the dwelling theme when God resides permanently with redeemed humanity. These connections do provide a reasonable basis for understanding the Feast of Tabernacles as a picture of Christ's Millennial Kingdom. However, Scripture does not directly state that the feast itself typologically represents the Millennium, so the proposed relationship should not be treated as a proven fulfillment.

57. Samson as a type of Christ's victory through death

Old Testament: Judges 13:2-5, 24-25; 15:9-14; 16:23-30
New Testament: Matthew 20:18-19; 27:27-31; Hebrews 11:32

In the book of Judges, Samson was set apart to God from before his birth, his birth was announced beforehand by an angel, and he was raised up to begin delivering Israel from the Philistines. The Spirit of the Lord repeatedly empowered him for his mission. Significantly, Samson was later bound and handed over to the Philistines by his own countrymen, was humiliated and mocked by his enemies, and ultimately accomplished his greatest victory through his own death, so that "the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."

These features provide several suggestive parallels with Christ, who was uniquely set apart for God's purpose, delivered into Gentile hands by His own people, mocked by His enemies, and achieved His decisive victory over the powers of evil through His death. At the same time, Samson was deeply sinful and often acted from personal anger and improper motives, while Christ was perfectly righteous. Although Hebrews 11:32 identifies Samson as a man of faith, no later Scripture interprets him as a type of Christ, so the similarities are noteworthy but the typological connection should remain tentative.

58. Esther as a type of Christ's intercession and deliverance

Old Testament: Esther 3:8-15; 4:13-16; 5:1-3; 7:3-6; 8:3-8
New Testament: Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34

Esther's people were placed under a legal sentence of death, and she willingly identified herself with them and risked her own life in order to plead for their deliverance. Her words, "if I perish, I perish," express her willingness to face death on behalf of the condemned, and after a three-day fast she entered the king's presence "on the third day." She was received by the king and became the intercessor through whom deliverance was secured for her people.

These features provide several notable parallels with Christ, who identified Himself with those under condemnation, willingly gave His life for them, rose on the third day, entered the presence of God, and now intercedes for His people. Esther's intervention also resulted in the defeat of the enemy who sought their destruction and the deliverance of those condemned to die. The parallels are substantial and suggestive, particularly the pattern of self-sacrifice, the third day, intercession, and deliverance, but because Scripture never explicitly identifies Esther as a type of Christ, the correspondence remains a possible type with limited textual evidence.

59. Mordecai as a type of Christ's rejection and exaltation

Old Testament: Esther 3:2-6; 5:14; 6:1-11; 7:9-10; 8:1-2, 15; 10:3
New Testament: Philippians 2:8-11; Hebrews 2:9; Revelation 19:11-16

Mordecai was hated by Haman and specifically marked for destruction because he refused to bow before him. Haman prepared a gallows for his death, yet before the sentence could be carried out, the king remembered Mordecai's previously unrewarded faithfulness and publicly honored him with royal apparel and proclamation. The intended destruction was then completely reversed: Haman was executed on the very gallows prepared for Mordecai, while Mordecai

received Haman's position, the king's signet ring, and increasing authority within the kingdom.

This pattern of rejection, threatened death, vindication, exaltation, defeat of the enemy, and royal authority bears a notable resemblance to Christ, who was rejected and put to death, then vindicated and exalted to the highest position of authority. Mordecai ultimately became second in the kingdom and used his exalted position to seek the good and peace of his people, providing an additional parallel with Christ's rule and care for His own. However, because no later Scripture explicitly identifies Mordecai as a type of Christ, the correspondence remains suggestive rather than firmly established.

60. Daniel in the lions' den as a type of Christ's death and resurrection

Old Testament: Daniel 6:4-24
New Testament: Matthew 27:18-26, 57-66; 28:1-10

In Daniel 6, Daniel was targeted by jealous officials who could find no fault in him, so they devised a legal trap specifically to bring about his condemnation. Although King Darius recognized Daniel's innocence and labored to deliver him, the law was used to secure the sentence, and Daniel was cast into the lions' den. A stone was placed over its opening and sealed with the king's own signet. Early the following morning, the king hurried to the den and discovered that Daniel was alive, having been miraculously preserved by God.

These details provide several notable parallels with Christ, who was condemned through the schemes of jealous leaders despite His innocence, whose Roman governor sought to release Him, and whose tomb was closed with a stone and officially sealed. Daniel's emergence alive the following morning also resembles the pattern of resurrection and divine vindication, after which his accusers were judged and Daniel continued to prosper. Nevertheless, Daniel did not actually die, and no later Scripture identifies the event as a type of Christ's resurrection. The correspondence is therefore highly suggestive but should

remain a possible type rather than an established resurrection prophecy.

61. Nimrod as a type of the final Antichrist

Old Testament: Genesis 10:8-12; Isaiah 10:5-27; 14:24-27; 31:8-9; Micah 5:2-6; Daniel 11:40-45
New Testament: 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 13; 19:19-21

Nimrod appears after the Flood as the first great ruler to establish and expand a powerful kingdom, setting an early pattern of ambitious centralized rule and the pursuit of widespread dominion. He "began to be a mighty one in the earth" and became "a mighty hunter before the Lord," an expression that points to defiance and opposition to God. The beginning of his kingdom was Babel in the land of Shinar, and Genesis also connects his expanding dominion with the region that later became Assyria. This connection is preserved in Micah 5, where Assyria is specifically called "the land of Nimrod." In the same Messianic passage, Micah looks ahead to "the Assyrian" entering Israel and being defeated when the coming Ruler from Bethlehem delivers His people.

The historical Assyrian invasions described by Isaiah develop this same pattern of an arrogant imperial power invading God's land, seeking widespread conquest, and ultimately being destroyed by divine intervention. Those passages refer first to historical Assyria, but Micah carries the Assyrian pattern into a future Messianic setting. Daniel likewise seems to describe the pattern of the final end-time ruler entering "the glorious land" before coming to his end, while the New Testament portrays the Antichrist as a powerful ruler who exalts himself against God, dominates nations, and is finally destroyed by Christ's coming.

Nimrod may therefore represent the earliest form of this recurring pattern, which develops through Assyria and later rulers such as Antiochus IV before reaching its final expression in the Antichrist. Because no later Scripture directly identifies Nimrod as a type of the

Antichrist, the connection remains strong and suggestive rather than firmly established.

62. Job as a type of the suffering and vindicated Christ

Old Testament: Job 1:1, 8-12; 2:3-7; 9:32-35; 16:19-21; 19:25-27; 42:7-10
New Testament: James 5:11; 1 Peter 2:21-24

Job is introduced as an upright and blameless man who nevertheless endured extraordinary suffering through satanic opposition, despite not being guilty of the sins for which his friends condemned him. Throughout his suffering he was misunderstood and falsely accused, yet maintained his desire for vindication before God. He longed for a mediator between himself and God, spoke of a witness in heaven, and expressed confidence that his Redeemer lived. At the conclusion of the book, God publicly vindicated Job, rebuked his accusers, and instructed them to seek Job's intercession on their behalf.

These themes provide several notable parallels with Christ, the perfectly righteous sufferer who endured satanic opposition, was falsely accused and condemned despite His innocence, serves as the mediator and intercessor for others, and was ultimately vindicated and exalted by God. James specifically points to Job as an example of endurance and God's ultimate purpose in suffering, but neither James nor any other New Testament writer identifies Job as a type of Christ. Job therefore contributes strongly to the biblical pattern of the innocent sufferer who is ultimately vindicated by God, while the more specific Christological correspondence remains suggestive rather than firmly established.

63. Jeremiah as a type of the rejected Christ

Old Testament: Jeremiah 7:1-15; 11:18-23; 20:1-2; 26:7-15; 37:11-16; 38:1-13

New Testament: Matthew 16:14; 21:12-13; 23:29-37; Luke 19:41-44

Jeremiah was God's prophet to Judah and Jerusalem but was repeatedly rejected and persecuted by the very people he was sent to warn. He confronted corruption surrounding the Temple and, because of his message, faced intense opposition from priests and political leaders, was falsely accused and beaten, threatened with death, imprisoned, and eventually cast into a pit. His enemies even plotted to "cut him off from the land of the living." Jesus followed a strikingly similar pattern, confronting the religious leadership and corruption surrounding the Temple, being rejected and falsely accused, and ultimately being condemned to death. Jesus even quoted Jeremiah's Temple warning when He declared, "ye have made it a den of thieves."

Both Jeremiah and Jesus also lamented over Jerusalem and warned of coming judgment because of the nation's rejection of God's word. Some people in Jesus' own day even thought He might actually be Jeremiah, showing that similarities between their prophetic ministries were readily recognizable. These parallels place Jeremiah prominently within the biblical pattern of the rejected and suffering prophet that reaches its fullest expression in Christ. However, no later Scripture explicitly identifies Jeremiah as a type of Christ, so the correspondence remains suggestive rather than firmly established.

Final Summary

The strength of a proposed biblical type is not determined merely by how many similarities can be found. The most reliable types are established by the way Scripture itself explains, compares, develops, or fulfills an earlier person, event, object, or institution.

Textually Explicit Types

These types are directly established or substantially explained by Jesus or the New Testament writers:

- Adam as a type of Christ
- Jonah as a type of Christ's burial and resurrection
- The bronze serpent as a type of Christ on the cross
- The Passover lamb as a type of Christ
- The wilderness rock as a type of Christ
- Israel's wilderness experiences as types and warnings for Christians
- Hagar and Sarah as types of the two covenants and their sons as types of the children produced by each covenant
- Isaac's return from expected death as a picture of Christ's resurrection
- Melchizedek as a type of Christ as eternal King and Priest
- Noah's deliverance through the flood as a type of salvation through baptism
- The tabernacle as a copy and shadow of the true heavenly sanctuary and Christ's priestly work
- The Levitical priesthood as a shadow of Christ's greater priesthood
- The high priest as a type of Christ
- The Day of Atonement as a type of Christ's sacrifice
- The sin offerings burned outside the camp as a type of Christ's suffering outside Jerusalem
- The red heifer as a type of Christ's greater cleansing
- Animal sacrifices as shadows of Christ's final sacrifice
- The Sabbath as a shadow of the greater rest found in Christ
- The Old Testament festivals as shadows pointing toward major events in God's prophetic program
- Firstfruits as a type of Christ's resurrection
- Marriage as a picture of Christ and the Church
- The veil in the Temple as a picture of access to God through Christ
- The blood of the Old Covenant as a picture of Christ's greater New Covenant blood
- Joshua and the Promised Land of Canaan as types of Christ's greater rest and inheritance

- Sodom and Gomorrah as types of final judgment
- The Days of Noah and Lot as a pattern for Christ's coming
- Elijah as a type of John the Baptist
- Abel's blood as a type of the greater blood of Christ
- The Temple as a type of Christ
- Manna as a type of Christ, the true Bread from Heaven
- Moses as a type of Christ, the greater Prophet to come

Textually Implicit Types

These connections are strongly grounded in Scripture, but their fuller typological significance must be developed by comparing multiple passages and following larger biblical patterns:

- David as a type of Christ, the Messianic Suffering Servant and Reigning King
- Solomon as a type of Christ, the greater King
- Joseph as a type of Christ, the rejected and exalted Savior
- Israel as God's son and Jesus as the true Son
- The exodus as a type of the greater salvation in Christ
- The Red Sea crossing as a type of identification with Christ and separation from bondage
- Noah's ark as a type of salvation through God's appointed refuge in Christ
- Boaz as a type of Christ, the greater Kinsman-Redeemer
- The bridegroom as a type and title of Christ
- The shepherd as a type and title of Christ
- The Temple as a type of the Church collectively and the individual believer's body
- The mercy seat as a type of Christ's atoning work
- Cities of refuge as a type of safety and salvation in Christ
- Antiochus IV as a type of the final Antichrist
- The Tower of Babel as a type of the final Babylon

Possible Types With Limited Textual Evidence

These proposed connections may be meaningful and consistent with biblical truth, but Scripture does not establish them clearly enough to teach them with the same confidence as the first two categories:

- Gentile brides in the Old Testament as pictures of Christ receiving a people from the nations
- Benjamin as a type of Christ's suffering and exaltation
- Rahab's scarlet cord as a type of Christ's blood
- Eve coming from Adam's side as a type of the Church coming from Christ
- The ark of the covenant's wood and gold as pictures of Christ's humanity and deity
- The tabernacle colors as pictures of different aspects of Christ
- The grain offering as a type of Christ's perfect humanity and consecrated life
- The Feast of Trumpets as a type of the Rapture
- The Day of Atonement as a type of Israel's future repentance and cleansing at Christ's return
- The Feast of Tabernacles as a type of Christ's Millennial Kingdom
- Samson as a type of Christ's victory through death
- Esther as a type of Christ's intercession and deliverance
- Mordecai as a type of Christ's rejection and exaltation
- Daniel in the lions' den as a type of Christ's death and resurrection
- Nimrod as a type of the final Antichrist
- Job as a type of the suffering and vindicated Christ
- Jeremiah as a type of the rejected Christ

These categories help distinguish between what Scripture directly establishes, what it strongly supports through broader textual patterns, and what remains a possible comparison observed by the reader. That distinction allows us to recognize the richness of biblical

typology without presenting uncertain connections as though they carried the same authority as those explicitly or strongly established by Scripture.

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2. Herman Kieval, The High Holy Days - Book One: Rosh ha-Shanah, New York: The Burning Bush Press, 1959, p. 120.

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