

Fulfilled Prophecies

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Dual Fulfillment - Double Fulfillment A Biblical Refutation Of Prophetic Second Fulfillments



By Dan Maines

Double Fulfillment A Biblical Refutation Of Prophetic "Second Fulfillments"

Introduction

† One of the most common ways people avoid the clear fulfillment of Bible prophecy is by claiming a prophecy has both an initial fulfillment and a second fulfillment thousands of years later.

† This idea gives interpreters unlimited freedom to move fulfilled prophecies into the future without any direct statement from Scripture.

† The question isn't whether God can repeat similar historical patterns. The question is whether God declared the same prophecy would be fulfilled twice.

† Throughout Scripture, fulfilled prophecy is presented as fulfilled. The Bible never tells believers to expect another fulfillment after God says it has already happened.

The Time Was Fulfilled

Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

† Jesus announced exactly what the prophets had anticipated. The kingdom was near, not thousands of years away. (Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44)

† Nothing in His preaching suggested the kingdom would arrive, disappear, and then return in another future fulfillment.

† The New Testament consistently moves prophecy toward fulfillment in the first century, never away from it.

This Day Is This Scripture Fulfilled

Luke 4:21

Now He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

† Jesus didn't announce the beginning of a partial fulfillment. He declared Scripture fulfilled. (Isaiah 61:1-2)

† If another fulfillment was intended centuries later, this was the perfect place for Jesus to explain it, yet He never did.

† God's pattern is to identify fulfillment when it arrives.

All Things Which Are Written Must Be Fulfilled

Luke 21:22

because these are days of punishment, so that all things which have been written will be fulfilled.

† Jesus connected the destruction of Jerusalem with the fulfillment of everything written concerning that covenant judgment.

† He didn't leave room for another destruction of Jerusalem to fulfill the same prophetic warnings.

† The language is comprehensive. God's prophetic purpose concerning Israel's covenant judgment reached its completion. (Deuteronomy 28:49-68; Daniel 9:26-27)

Matthew 5:17-18

Do not presume that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter shall pass from the Law, until all is accomplished!

† Jesus spoke of fulfillment, not repeated fulfillment.

† He connected the Law and the Prophets to one period of completion when all things would be accomplished. (Luke 21:22)

† Nothing in this passage suggests another fulfillment centuries later.

Hebrews 1:1-2

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the world.

† The writer says they were living in the last days of that covenant age.

† The prophets pointed forward to Christ, not to an endless cycle of future fulfillments.

† God's revelation reached its climax in His Son. (Hebrews 8:13)

No Prophecy Of Scripture Is Of Private Interpretation

2 Peter 1:20-21

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture becomes a matter of someone's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

† We don't have the authority to invent second fulfillments that the inspired writers never mentioned.

† Prophecy must be interpreted according to Scripture itself, not according to later theological systems.

† If God intended multiple fulfillments, He was fully capable of saying so.

The Revelation Must Shortly Come To Pass

Revelation 1:1-3

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, everything that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

† John repeatedly emphasized the nearness of these events.

† A second fulfillment thousands of years later would empty "shortly" and "at hand" of their ordinary meaning.

† The original readers were expected to understand these prophecies as events approaching in their own lifetime.

Revelation 22:6, 10

And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show His bond-servants the things which must soon take place.

And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

† Revelation closes exactly as it opens, emphasizing that its prophecies were about to occur.

† John was specifically told not to seal the prophecy because its fulfillment was near. (Daniel 12:4 provides the contrast.)

† A fulfillment thousands of years later contradicts the inspired time statements.

It Is Done

Revelation 21:5-6

And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give water to the one who thirsts from the

spring of the water of life, without cost.

† God's own declaration is that His covenantal work had reached its completion.

† Scripture repeatedly moves from promise to fulfillment, not from fulfillment back to expectation.

† Once God says, "They are come to pass," we shouldn't search for another fulfillment unless Scripture explicitly tells us to do so.

Historical References

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 4, records the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70, matching Jesus' prophecy that not one stone would be left upon another.

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5, records that Christians fled Jerusalem before its destruction in obedience to Jesus' warning.

† Clement of Alexandria, Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?, Chapter 42, speaks of the apostolic generation as the generation to whom these events and teachings belonged, reinforcing the first-century setting of New Testament fulfillment.

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 5, Chapter 35, demonstrates that early Christians understood prophecy as having definite fulfillments rather than endlessly repeated fulfillments.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We can trust God's Word because He fulfills what He promises.

† We don't need modern speculation when Scripture already identifies the fulfillment of its own prophecies.

† Our faith rests on what God said, not on theories designed to postpone fulfilled prophecy.

† Understanding fulfilled prophecy gives us confidence that Christ accomplished everything He promised concerning the Old Covenant age.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Where does the Bible teach a general rule of double fulfillment for prophecy?

A: Nowhere. While Scripture sometimes records similar historical events, it never establishes a rule that every prophecy has two fulfillments. Each prophecy must be interpreted according to its own context. (Luke 21:22; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

Q: Can similar events happen without being the same prophecy fulfilled again?

A: Yes. History often repeats patterns, but repeated patterns are not repeated fulfillments unless Scripture specifically says so. (Ecclesiastes 1:9; Romans 15:4)

Q: Why is double fulfillment so popular?

A: Because it allows clear first-century time statements to be moved into the modern future without biblical evidence. Jesus and the apostles consistently pointed their audiences to events that were near in their own generation. (Matthew 24:34; Revelation 1:1-3)

Q: Doesn't Matthew 24 have both a near and far fulfillment?

A: Jesus never divided the discourse into two fulfillments. He repeatedly addressed His disciples with "ye," "your," and "this generation," identifying the fulfillment with those who first heard His words. (Matthew 24:15-34; Luke 21:20-32)

Q: How should fulfilled prophecy be interpreted?

A: We should allow Scripture to define its own fulfillment. When God says prophecy was fulfilled, we should accept His testimony instead of looking for another fulfillment that Scripture never promises. (Luke 4:21; John 19:28-30)

Q: Are there any prophecies in Scripture that explicitly say they will be fulfilled twice?

A: No. Scripture records typology, patterns, and illustrations, but it never teaches that a fulfilled prophecy automatically receives another fulfillment unless the Bible explicitly states it. We should never build doctrine on an assumption the Scriptures never make. (2 Peter 1:20-21; Luke 21:22)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies.†

Source Index

† Matthew 4:17, Luke 4:21, Luke 21:22, Matthew 5:17-18, Hebrews 1:1-2, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Revelation 1:1-3, Revelation 21:5-6, Revelation 22:6, 10

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 4; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5; Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 5, Chapter 35; Clement of Alexandria, Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?, Chapter 42

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