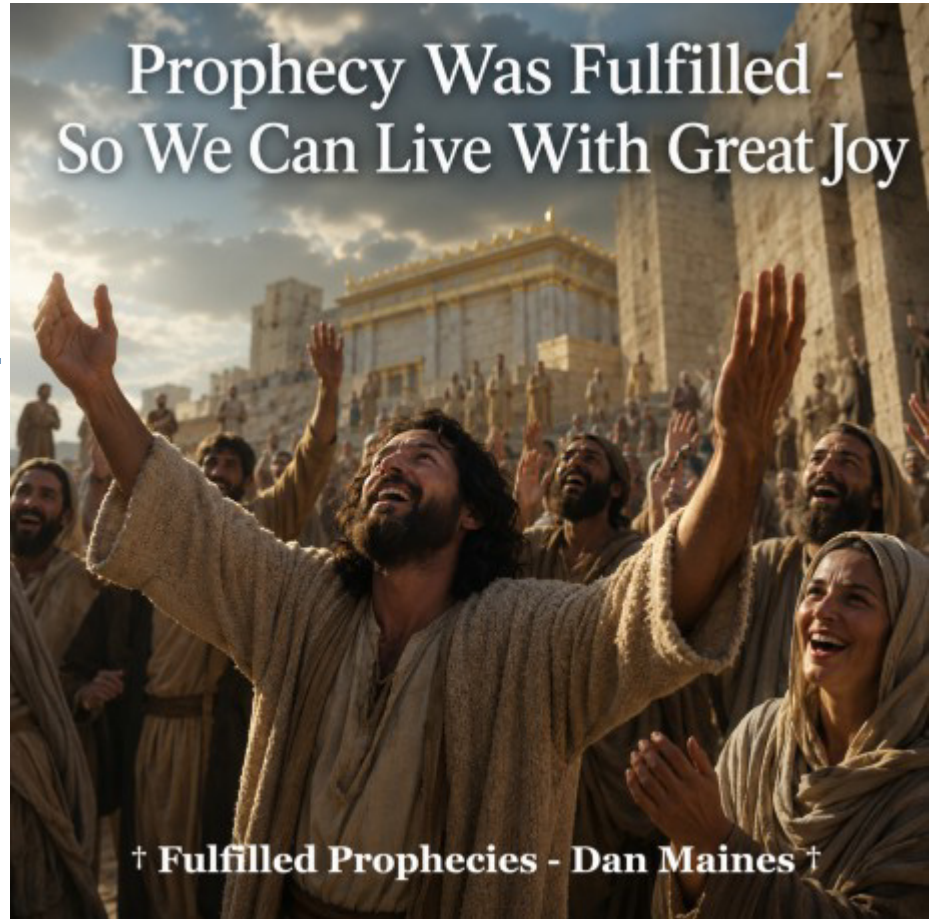


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Joy Of Fulfillment -
Prophecy Was
Fulfilled - So We
Can Live With
Great Joy



By Dan Maines

Prophecy Was Fulfilled - So We Can Live With Great Joy

Introduction

† Fulfilled prophecy isn't supposed to produce fearful Christians who spend their lives wondering what disaster is coming next.

† Jesus gave prophecy so His disciples could recognize God's faithfulness, understand His victory, and rejoice when the things He promised were accomplished.

† The fulfilled perspective doesn't leave us staring anxiously into the future. It points us to the finished work of Christ and gives us confidence about how we can live today.

† Jesus didn't tell His disciples that their redemption would remain thousands of years away. He told them that when they saw the predicted events taking place, they were to lift up their heads because their redemption was drawing near (Luke 21:28, 31-32).

† Revelation doesn't end with God's people defeated, abandoned, or separated from Him. It ends with God dwelling with His people, the curse removed, His servants serving Him, and the river of life flowing freely (Revelation 21:3; 22:1-3).

† Fulfillment should produce joy. Christ kept His word. Christ established His kingdom. Christ brought His people into the New Covenant creation. We're not waiting for Jesus to become victorious. We live because He is victorious.

Luke 21:28

But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

† Notice what Jesus told His disciples to do when the predicted events began happening. He didn't tell them to panic. He told them to look up. The prophetic signs were ultimately pointing toward redemption for His people and judgment upon the old covenant world that had rejected Him (Luke 21:20-22).

† This changes the emotional tone of prophecy. Jesus wasn't teaching His followers to live in endless fear. He was preparing them to recognize that God's promised redemption was approaching within their historical setting (Luke 21:25-28).

† Their redemption was drawing near, not moving farther away. The same discourse identifies the generation that would see these things fulfilled (Luke 21:31-32).

Luke 21:31-32

So you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.

† Jesus connected the fulfillment of these prophetic events with the kingdom of God. When His disciples saw these things occurring, they could know that the promised kingdom reality

was near (Luke 21:29-31).

† Jesus then placed a clear historical boundary around His prophecy. He said this generation wouldn't pass away until all things were accomplished. Fulfilled prophecy takes that statement seriously instead of pushing its fulfillment thousands of years beyond the people Jesus addressed (Matthew 24:34).

† If Jesus said all these things would be accomplished within that generation, our joy rests in believing that Jesus told the truth and faithfully accomplished what He promised.

John 16:33

These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

† Jesus never promised His disciples a life without trouble. He promised something greater, peace in Him because His victory was certain.

† Biblical hope isn't pretending difficulties don't exist. It's knowing that difficulties don't have the final word because Christ has overcome (Romans 8:35-39).

† This is where fulfilled prophecy becomes practical. We're not supposed to wake up every morning terrified that Satan, evil, or some prophetic catastrophe is about to defeat God's kingdom. Jesus said, be of good cheer. He overcame.

Romans 14:17

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

† Paul described God's kingdom in terms of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Fear isn't the defining atmosphere of Christ's kingdom.

† If we're living under Christ's reign, then joy isn't a distraction from serious theology. Joy is one of the fruits of understanding what God has accomplished through Christ (Galatians 5:22).

† Fulfilled eschatology should produce people who are secure in Christ, thankful for His kingdom, and excited about serving

God today.

Hebrews 12:22-24

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

† The writer didn't tell these believers that Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem were merely distant locations they might reach someday. He said they had come to them.

† The New Covenant brings God's people into a heavenly kingdom relationship centered in Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:6; 9:15).

† This gives us enormous reason for joy. Our relationship with God isn't centered in an earthly temple, earthly priesthood, or earthly Jerusalem. We've come to Jesus and the heavenly Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:3-4

And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

† Revelation's great destination is the presence of God with His people. The Bible moves from humanity being driven from God's presence in Eden to God's dwelling being openly established with His redeemed people (Genesis 3:23-24; Revelation 22:3-4).

† This language describes the covenant world created through Christ, where separation from God is overcome and His people enjoy access to Him through the New Covenant (Ephesians

2:18-22).

† The first things passed away. Revelation isn't presenting God's people as permanently trapped in an unfinished transition. It presents the old order passing and God's dwelling with humanity established.

Revelation 22:3-5

There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illuminate them; and they will reign forever and ever.

† Revelation ends with the curse removed and the throne of God and the Lamb established. This isn't a picture of defeat. It's the language of victory.

† God's servants aren't pictured hiding from an unstoppable enemy. They're serving God and reigning with Him.

† Fulfilled prophecy gives believers a victorious worldview. Christ reigns, His kingdom stands, His light shines, and His people have a purpose within His everlasting kingdom (Daniel 7:27).

Revelation 22:6-7

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 behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

† Revelation itself tells us how its original audience was supposed to understand its timing. These things must shortly come to pass. Jesus then said He was coming quickly.

† Those statements weren't given to frighten Christians two thousand years later. They gave first-century believers confidence that God was about to fulfill what He had revealed (Revelation 1:1-3).

† The words were faithful and true. Our fulfilled hope rests on that declaration. Jesus didn't fail to keep His promised timing. He did what He said He would do.

† That's why fulfilled prophecy should end in joy rather than endless arguments over prophetic charts. The greatest message isn't, Something terrible might happen soon. The message is, Jesus Christ kept His word.

Historical References

† Josephus described the catastrophic Jewish-Roman War and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70, providing important historical testimony concerning the generation in which Jesus' judgment warnings reached their climax (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Books 5-7).

† Tacitus recorded the Roman campaign against Jerusalem and identified Titus and the Roman forces within the first-century historical setting of Jerusalem's fall (Tacitus, Histories, Book 5).

† Eusebius later reported the Christian tradition that believers in Jerusalem departed before the city's destruction, connecting early Christian memory with Jesus' warnings concerning the approaching crisis (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapters 5-7).

† These historical witnesses don't replace Scripture. They help confirm that the events Jesus described belonged to a real first-century world, involving real people, a real Jerusalem, a real temple, and a real judgment.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We can live with great joy because we're not waiting for Jesus to prove whether He can keep His prophetic promises. He kept them.

† We don't have to interpret every war, earthquake, election, disease, technological development, or international crisis as another possible sign of the end. Jesus gave His signs to His disciples within their own prophetic setting (Luke 21:20, 28, 32).

† We can stop living under the anxiety that the kingdom of God is constantly one catastrophe away from failure. Jesus received

an everlasting kingdom that won't be destroyed (Daniel 7:14).

† We can enjoy our relationship with God now. We've come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, and Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 12:22-24).

† We can serve instead of speculate. We can love instead of fear. We can encourage instead of terrify. We can proclaim Christ instead of constantly predicting disaster.

† Fulfilled prophecy gives us confidence that history isn't out of God's control. The same God who faithfully accomplished His prophetic word remains faithful to His people today.

† Our message isn't that everything in everyday life will always be easy. Jesus openly acknowledged tribulation. Our joy comes from knowing that He has overcome and that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ (John 16:33; Romans 8:38-39).

† Prophecy was fulfilled, Christ is reigning, the New Covenant is established, God's people have access to His presence, and His kingdom has no end. That's not a reason to fear tomorrow. That's a reason to wake up with great joy today.

Q & A Appendix

Q: If prophecy was fulfilled, does that mean Christians have nothing left to hope for?

A: No. Fulfillment doesn't eliminate hope, it establishes the foundation of our hope. We live in the accomplished kingdom of Christ, enjoy New Covenant access to God, and have confidence in our life with Him (Hebrews 12:22-24; Romans 14:17).

Q: Does fulfilled prophecy mean there'll never be trouble in the world?

A: No. Jesus said His followers would experience tribulation, but He also told them to be encouraged because He had overcome the world (John 16:33).

Q: Why should fulfilled prophecy produce joy?

A: Because fulfillment means God kept His promises. Jesus

said the predicted events would be accomplished within that generation, and Revelation declared that its events were shortly to occur (Luke 21:31-32; Revelation 22:6-7).

Q: Are believers living in God's kingdom now?

A: Yes. Paul described the kingdom as righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, and Hebrews says believers had come to Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem (Romans 14:17; Hebrews 12:22-24).

Q: What should we do instead of constantly looking for another prophetic disaster?

A: We should live faithfully in Christ's kingdom, love God and others, share the gospel, serve people, and rejoice in what Christ has accomplished (Romans 14:17; Revelation 22:3-5).

Q: What's the great message of fulfilled prophecy for believers today?

A: Jesus kept His word. The kingdom belongs to Him, God's dwelling is with His people, and we can live confidently and joyfully under the reign of Christ (Revelation 21:3-4; 22:3-7).

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

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Source Index

† Luke 21:28; Luke 21:31-32; John 16:33; Romans 14:17; Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 21:3-4; Revelation 22:3-5; Revelation 22:6-7

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Books 5-7; Tacitus, Histories, Book 5; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapters 5-7

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