

# **How Does Jesus Fulfill the Old Testament?**

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## **Introduction**

Does Jesus fulfill the Old Testament? If you are a Christian, your answer probably is a resounding, Yes. And if you were to ask a group of one hundred Christians the same thing, they all probably would raise their hands to affirm this. In fact, I cannot think of any true Christian who would argue against the idea Jesus fulfills the Old Testament.

But if you were to ask a group of believers, “How does Jesus fulfill the Old Testament specifically?” you probably would get some pauses and quizzical looks, perhaps some hesitant and disjointed answers. That Jesus fulfills the Old Testament is something we all affirm, but few can explain what this means.

Some believe “fulfillment in Jesus” means Old Testament promises and predictions somehow absorb, dissolve, or transform into Jesus. The Old Testament is viewed as a vast landscape of types and shadows that metaphysically dissolve into Jesus. Allegedly, Jesus fulfills the Old Testament by collapsing the promises into himself. Thus, looking for a future literal fulfillment of Old Testament promises about Israel, land, and physical matters is unnecessary. They merge into Jesus. Also, promises about an earthly kingdom of the Messiah from Jerusalem over geo-political nations allegedly morph into a “spiritual” kingdom in Jesus. And so on.

For example, in a theology class I explained how Jesus will fulfill certain Old Testament physical and land promises involving Israel. By “fulfill” I meant “happen as stated.” Jesus will save and restore Israel in the future based on many Old Testament texts such as Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Leviticus 26:40-45; Jeremiah 30-33 and others. One student, though, objected, saying, “But aren’t all the promises of God fulfilled in Jesus?” He appealed to 2 Corinthians 1:20a which states, “For as many as are the promises of God, in Him [Jesus] they are yes.” As we interacted, he thought there would be no literal completion of land and physical promises for Israel since Jesus already “fulfilled” all of God’s promises in Jesus. Jesus was the fulfillment of Israel. He was the fulfillment of

land and physical promises, etc. For this person, the details of Old Testament prophecies dissolved or merged into Jesus in such a way that literal accomplishment of the details of these Old Testament promises was no longer necessary.

On another occasion I talked to someone who changed his views on Israel and end times events. He said, “I no longer believe in a future for national Israel like you do anymore because Jesus is the true Israel and He fulfills the promises made to Israel.” For him, the details of Old Testament prophecies for Israel were subsumed into Jesus in such a way that a literal accomplishment of prophetic details concerning Israel vanished into Christ.

This kind of thinking also appears in academic books and articles. Kim Riddlebarger, a representative of Amillennialism, argues against literal fulfillment of Old Testament physical promises to the nation Israel because Christ is the “true Israel.” He says:

The New Testament writers claimed that Jesus was the true Israel of God and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. So what remains of the dispensationalists’ case that these prophecies will yet be fulfilled in a future millennium? They vanish in Jesus Christ, who has fulfilled them.<sup>1</sup>

Note Riddlebarger’s use of “vanish” concerning “Old Testament prophecies.” Old Testament predictions concerning an earthly kingdom allegedly “vanish in Jesus Christ.”

Using similar language, covenant theologian, Mark Karlberg, believes Old Testament prophecies about national Israel’s kingdom will be “dissolved”: “In that day the typological phenomenon of the ancient Israelite theocracy would be dissolved into the antitypical reality of the Church as the New Israel.”<sup>2</sup> In his discussion of why Old Testament prophecies concerning an earthly kingdom will not occur literally, Robert Strimple claims that because of Jesus “. . . fulfillment may transcend the terms in which a promise is presented.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 70.

<sup>2</sup> Mark W. Karlberg, “The Significance of Israel in Biblical Typology,” in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 31.3 (1988): 267.

<sup>3</sup> Robert B. Strimple, “Amillennialism,” in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, ed. Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 99.

In his book, *Gospel and Kingdom*, Graeme Goldsworthy asserts that the Old Testament will not be fulfilled literally because of Jesus: “For the New Testament the interpretation of the Old Testament is not ‘literal’ but ‘Christological’. That is to say that the coming of the Christ transforms all the Kingdom terms of the Old Testament into gospel reality.”<sup>4</sup> This quote reveals several noteworthy points. First, for Goldsworthy, a literal-contextual fulfillment of the Old Testament will not occur. Second, the reason for this alleged non-literal fulfillment of the Old Testament is Jesus. He claims Jesus “transforms” all kingdom terms in the Old Testament into gospel reality. Third, because of Jesus, the Bible interpreter should abandon “literal” interpretation for “Christological” interpretation. So Jesus supposedly changes and transforms the message and prophecies of the Old Testament.

Gary Burge also is a major proponent of a mystical fulfillment in Jesus approach. He argues against a literal fulfillment of Old Testament land promises to Israel because of the person of Jesus. He says: “*Divine space is now no longer located in a place but in a person.*”<sup>5</sup> Note that Burge says, “divine space,” regarding a geographical locale can have its significance transcended in Jesus. Also, concerning John 15, Burge says, “In a word, *Jesus spiritualizes the land.*”<sup>6</sup>

We call this view of fulfillment in Jesus, “Mystical Personalism,” since the details of Old Testament prophecies allegedly dissolve into Jesus’ person in some mystical way.<sup>7</sup>

So how does Jesus fulfill the Old Testament? Specifically? Well, to start, we do not agree with the Metaphysical Personalism perspective. There is no evidence Jesus came to mystically dissolve or transform Old Testament promises and prophecies. This view represents what some want fulfillment in Jesus to mean, but the evidence for this perspective does not exist. Saucy rightly states, “The truth that all the promises are

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<sup>4</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom: A Christian Interpretation of the Old Testament* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994), 88.

<sup>5</sup> Gary M. Burge, *Jesus and the Land: The New Testament Challenge to “Holy Land” Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 52. Emphases in original.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 56. Emphases in original.

<sup>7</sup> The reference to “metaphysical Personalism” was found in Blaising’s response to Progressive Covenantalism’s use of the person of Christ: “KTC [*Kingdom Through Covenant*], at times, reads the Person of Christ as Himself the mystical consummation of the whole narrative. He personally is the fulfillment of Israel, the land, the nation, the church, the creation. The result is a vague mysticism that looks somewhat like a variant of metaphysical Personalism.” Craig A. Blaising, “A Critique of Gentry and Wellum’s, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Hermeneutical-Theological Response*,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 26.1 (Spring 2015): 124.

fulfilled in Christ does not, as some say, dissolve their meaning into the person of Christ.”<sup>8</sup> Fulfillment in Jesus does not mean absorb, transform, or vanish.

Instead, in this work, we will argue that “fulfillment” in Jesus means everything stated and predicted in the Old Testament will happen because of and through Jesus. This includes all the details of the Old Testament. Thus, “fulfillment” means “happens” or “occurs” in a way consistent with the original expectations of the Old Testament prophets.

So with this perspective, Jesus is at the center of God’s purposes, and Jesus works to make sure everything in the Old Testament comes to pass and happens just as predicted. This includes promises and predictions concerning creation, Israel, nations, individual salvation, physical blessings, spiritual blessings, and more. Everything will occur because Jesus makes them happen. Jesus does not absorb or subsume the Old Testament promises in some mystical way. He does not make Old Testament prophecies, promises, and covenants “vanish” into himself. He actively works to bring all of God’s purposes to completion in all of their details. Not only is this position accurate, but it is also more honoring to God and Jesus than is the alternative view. That Jesus works to complete all of God’s plans and purposes is superior to the idea that Jesus simply makes Old Testament promises vanish in Him.

There is a distinction between Jesus as a person and other persons, things, and events. While Jesus is most important, those other person, things, and events matter because they are related to God’s purposes. And Jesus works to complete all of God’s plans. Fulfillment in Jesus does not mean the absorbing or dissolving of things into Jesus, which is more akin to the eschatology of eastern religions like Hinduism or Buddhism, where the goal is the metaphysical merging of all things into the Absolute. Christian eschatology is not like that.

In short, we will argue that Jesus is the means for accomplishment (fulfillment) of the Old Testament in all its details. Jesus does not come to transform or make Old Testament promises vanish, He comes to bring all things to pass. This fulfillment of the Old Testament through Jesus occurs in five main ways:

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<sup>8</sup> Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface Between Dispensational & Non-Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 32.

1. *Jesus Accomplishes the Specific Details of Messianic Prophecies*
2. *Jesus Completes Messianic Hope Expectations*
3. *Jesus' Corresponds to Events in the History of Israel and David*
4. *Jesus Is the Substance of the Mosaic Covenant and its Ceremonies and Feasts*
5. *Jesus Guarantees the Future Fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecies*

## **Jesus and the Accomplishing of Everything in the Old Testament: Two Key Texts**

Two texts specifically state in a big-picture way how Jesus relates to Old Testament fulfillment—Matthew 5:17-18 and Romans 15:8-9. The first is particularly significant since Jesus himself states his relationship to the fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures.

### **Matthew 5:17-18: Jesus Guarantees Everything in the Old Testament Will Be Fulfilled**

As Jesus offered His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) He knew some wrongly claimed He was discarding the Hebrew scriptures. But this thinking was wrong. Jesus responded to this erroneous charge in Matthew 5:17-18:

“Do not think 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 shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”

The significance of this statement for Jesus' relationship to the Old Testament is great. But before diving into the details of this text we want to state upfront what we think Jesus' main point is. *With Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus asserts that that everything stated, promised, and predicted in the Old Testament must happen in all its details. He takes it upon himself to guarantee that every detail in the Old Testament will be accomplished.*

Far from discarding the Old Testament, Jesus is the means for the fulfillment of everything in it. Everything in the Hebrew scriptures will happen because of Him. Let's explain this further.

What initiates Jesus' words in Matthew 5:17-18 is the idea that He came to "abolish" or do away with "the Law" and "the Prophets." Jesus' reference to "the Law or the Prophets" comprehensively involves the Hebrew scriptures as a whole. "Law" is the first five books of Moses—Genesis through Deuteronomy. "Prophets" involves the rest of the Hebrew canon. By mentioning "Law" and "Prophets" together Jesus means the Hebrew Scriptures in their entirety, or what Christians often call the Old Testament. Ten other times in the New Testament "Law" and "Prophets" are coupled to indicate the whole of the Hebrew canon—Matthew 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16; 24:44; John 1:45; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 28:23; and Romans 3:21. Together, as Grant Osborne rightly observes, "The law or the prophets' means the whole of Scripture."<sup>9</sup> This detail is important for understanding Matthew 5:17-18. The topic at hand is the Hebrew Scriptures as a whole.

Concerning His relationship to the entirety of the Hebrew Scriptures Jesus makes two assertions in 5:17. First, from the negative side, Jesus did not come "to abolish the Law or the Prophets." The word "abolish" is the Greek term *kataluō*, which means "destroy," "demolish," "overthrow," "abolish," or "tear down." Jesus did not come to do away with or get rid of the Hebrew Scriptures. Any idea that Jesus came to discard the Old Testament is categorically wrong.

Second, from the positive side, Jesus came to "fulfill" the Hebrew Scriptures: "I did not come to abolish but to fulfill." Jesus actively works to fulfill the Old Testament.

We must understand what Jesus meant by "to fulfill" in this context. To do this we examine Matthew's use of "fulfill" in his gospel, and we look at the near context of this section including the key phrase in Matthew 5:18, "until all is accomplished." This explains what it means for Jesus to fulfill the Law and the Prophets.

First, the Greek term for "to fulfill" in Matthew 5:17 is *plērōsai*, coming from the verb, *pleroō*. There are about ninety uses of *pleroō* in the New Testament. The term is used in multiple contexts and the meaning of each *pleroō* use must be determined by context. The term can be translated "fill," "fulfill," "fullness," "make full," "fill," "complete," "consummate," "realize," "accomplish," "come to pass."

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<sup>9</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 181.

*Pleroō* is found sixteen times in Matthew outside of 5:17, with four understandings based on authorial intent in the context:

- (1) the literal accomplishment of an Old Testament prophecy in its details (1:22; 2:23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9, 35)
- (2) a correspondence between an event in Israel's history and an event in Jesus' life (2:15, 17)
- (3) the bringing to fruition of something or making something happen (3:15)
- (4) a filling to the top or making full (13:48; 23:32)

The most dominant meaning of *plerōō* in Matthew is the first option above concerning the literal accomplishment of the details of an Old Testament prophecy. And this, most likely, is the meaning in Matthew 5:17. Since Jesus references both "Law" and "Prophets" in 5:17, His intent includes Old Testament prophecies and the Old Testament as a whole. Thus, "to fulfill" in 5:17 concerns the completion or coming to pass of the Old Testament or Hebrew Scriptures.

Second, with 5:18 Jesus explains what He means by "fulfill": "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

That verse 18 begins with the term "for" is significant since this word connects verse 17 and verse 18 conceptually. In short, verse 18 explains what Jesus meant by "fulfill" in verse 17. What does Jesus mean by "fulfill" when it comes to the Old Testament? Verse 18 tells us. We do not have to stop with verse 17 and guess what Jesus meant—He tells us what "fulfill" means in the next verse.

When Jesus says, "until heaven and earth pass away," He means the current cosmic order with its "heaven" and "earth." These must remain until everything in the Hebrew Scriptures occurs. The creation cannot give way to the new creation until everything stated and promised in the Old Testament happens. History cannot culminate without everything in the Scriptures occurring. This includes every "letter" and "stroke" found in the Scriptures.

Moving on, Jesus' second use of "Law" in 5:18 is shorthand for "the Law or the Prophets" which He just mentioned in 5:17. This is important to grasp since sometimes people see "Law" in 5:18 and assume Jesus is making a point specifically about the Mosaic Law alone. But "Law" here still refers to the Law and Prophets just mentioned in verse 17. The context of 5:17, with the connecting word "for" in verse 18, indicates that Law and Prophets are still in view. Thus, Jesus refers to the entire Old Testament. If verse 18 is the explanation of verse 17, then the explanation of verse 18 must include the subject of verse 17, which is the entire Old Testament. Plus, we should note that "Law" sometimes refers to the Old Testament as a whole (see Romans 3:19–21). Thus, the context indicates that Jesus is addressing the entire Old Testament with His statement in 5:18. Grasping this is critical for understanding Jesus' main point.

The term "all" in 5:18 refers to *everything* in the Law and the Prophets. So, fulfillment in 5:17 involves "all" or everything in the Hebrew scriptures. All its predictions. All its covenants. All its prophecies, etc. Again, the scope of Jesus' intent is more than just the Mosaic Law—the entire Scriptures are in view. Since verse 17 is about the Hebrew Scriptures as a whole, and verse 18 is an explanation of verse 17, verse 18 must involve the Hebrew Scriptures in their entirety.

Next, we come to the strategic word, "accomplished." With this term we see what Jesus meant by "fulfill" in 5:17. This is the Greek verb, *genetai*, coming from *ginomai*. In the context of prophecies or events, *ginomai* carries the idea of "come to pass" "happen" or "take place" (Matt. 21:21; 24:6; 26:56). For example, in the Olivet Discourse Jesus declared that certain eschatological details must happen: "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must **take place** (*genesthai*)" (Matt. 24:6, emphases added).

When *ginomai* is used by Jesus concerning prophets or prophecies, the accomplishment of prophetic details is His intent. What is predicted must happen as stated. So by combining "all" with "accomplished" in 5:18—"until all is accomplished"—Jesus declares that everything stated in the Hebrews Scriptures must happen. They must occur. As Wayne Strickland notes, "That fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament is in view is signaled by the phrase, 'until everything is accomplished' in verse 18."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Wayne G. Strickland, "The Inauguration of the Law of Christ with the Gospel of Christ: A Dispensational View," in *The Law, The Gospel, and the Modern Christian: Five Views* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 258.



Every letter, every stroke, every word, and every verse of the Old Testament will happen just as stated! All things predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures must be accomplished in all their details because Jesus guarantees it. He takes it upon himself to bring them to completion. As we will discuss soon, since much of Matthew's gospel involves Jesus fulfilling messianic prophecies, the accomplishing of messianic prophecies is a major aspect of what Jesus meant. Commenting on "until all is accomplished" Vanlaningham states, "the precise idea probably being that the OT serves as a beacon shining upon Jesus as the one who provides the fulfillment of messianic prophecies."<sup>11</sup>

So how does Matthew 5:17-18 contribute to a proper understanding of how Jesus relates to fulfillment of the Old Testament? *With this passage we see our first way Jesus fulfills the Old Testament: Jesus is the means through which the Old Testament in its entirety will be fulfilled.*

Jesus does not metaphysically absorb the details of the Old Testament. No vanishing or transformation is found here. He works to complete everything in the Hebrew scriptures. Much of what we discuss going forward will describe in detail what this completing of Old Testament details means.

#### Romans 15:8-9: Jesus and the Confirming of Old Testament Promises

Another important text that addresses Jesus and the fulfillment of the Old Testament is Romans 15:8–9. Here Paul writes about Jesus' role concerning the accomplishing of Old Testament promises about Israel and the Gentiles:

For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written,

“THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES,  
AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME.”

Significant here is the statement, “Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers.” This links the relationship between Jesus and the Old Testament promises. Jesus is a “servant”

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<sup>11</sup> Michael G. Vanlaningham, “Matthew,” in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, eds. Michael Rydelnik and Michael G. Vanlaningham (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1461.

who has a role to “the circumcision,” a reference to Israel. And this role involves confirming promises made to the patriarchs of Israel. And it includes the Servant’s mission in bringing blessings to the Gentiles. With this text we see how Jesus relates to God’s promises involving Israel and the Gentiles.

Paul’s reference to “servant” in verse 8 draws upon the individual Servant concept found in texts like Isaiah 42, 49, 52, and 53. Israel as an entity is God’s servant, but there also is an ideal, sinless, individual Servant of God who will save and restore Israel as a corporate entity and bring blessings to the nations (see Isaiah 42, 49). This Servant will bring New Covenant atonement to Israel and nations (see Isaiah 52-53).

With Romans 15:8, Paul focuses on Jesus’ Servant role to Israel. Consistent with the Isaiah Servant sections, Paul affirms Jesus as the “servant to the circumcision.” Thus, Jesus is a servant of God with a mission to Israel. Jesus does not come to metaphysically absorb the idea of Israel, or make the nation irrelevant. He comes with a mission to Israel. This relates to what was promised in the Old Testament—“on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers” (Rom. 15:8). So Paul connects the Servant Jesus with what God promised Israel and the fathers of Israel in the Old Testament.

Jesus’ relationship to Israel already was discussed extensively by Paul in Romans 9–11. There, Paul offered a detailed explanation of Israel in God’s plans. Even though Israel as a whole was currently in unbelief the Word of God had not failed (see Rom. 9:6a). The covenants, promises, and temple service still belonged to Israel (see Rom. 9:4–5). God has not rejected His people Israel (see Rom. 11:1). Paul also noted that Israel’s coming “fullness” and “acceptance” would bring even greater blessings to the world and the nations (see Rom. 11:12, 15). And he declared a coming day when “all Israel will be saved” in 11:26 in connection with the Deliverer—Jesus. Paul then tied this coming reality with Isaiah 59:20–21 which foretold Israel’s salvation, the coming of Israel’s redeemer, and Israel’s inclusion in the New Covenant (see Rom. 11:26–27). Thus, Paul’s statement that Jesus came “on behalf of the truth of God” and “to confirm the promises given to the fathers” was well explained in Romans 9–11. Because of the ultimate Israelite—Jesus—the corporate entity of Israel will be saved.

The strategic term Paul used in Romans 15:8 to connect Jesus with Old Testament promises is “confirm.” Jesus came to “confirm” the promises of God. The word for “confirm” is *bebaiōsai* which means “to establish” “confirm” “ratify,” “secure,”

“establish,” “guarantee.” The term carries legal connotations and highlights the formal nature of Jesus’ mission to Israel. The Old Testament promised much to Israel in relation to the patriarchs, and Jesus came to “confirm” these promises. Jesus did not come to “transform,” “dissolve,” or make Old Testament promises “vanish” in Him. He came to “confirm” them—to bring them to completion in all their details, and thus, make good on God’s promises to the patriarchs.

Also, since the Servant of Isaiah also came to bless the Gentiles, Paul links Jesus’ confirming ministry with them as well:

and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written,

“THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES,  
AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME.”

To further his point, with Romans 15:9-12, Paul quoted four Old Testament verses that promised hope for the Gentiles—Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 117:1; and Isaiah 11:10. As he does in Romans and his other writings, Paul carefully distinguishes Gentiles from Israel. Gentiles are included as God’s people with equal blessings in the Messiah who is the “Root of Jesse,” (15:12a), yet Gentiles are Gentiles and Israel is Israel.

Romans 15:8-9, along with Romans 9–11, shows that Paul viewed Jesus, Israel, and Gentiles as three distinct entities. Jesus is the ultimate individual Servant of Israel who, as Israel’s corporate Head, restores corporate Israel. Thus, Jesus’ role as the Restorer of Israel exists alongside the corporate entity of Israel that remains “Israel.” Also, Jesus saves the Gentiles as Gentiles. There is no merging of believing Gentiles into Israel.

In sum, the Old Testament predicted a coming individual Servant of Israel who would save and restore Israel, and bring light and blessings to the Gentiles. Jesus is the One who does this. Paul’s words in Romans 15 are similar to his speech in Acts 26:22-23:

So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the

dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” (emphases added)

Romans 15:8-9 is significant concerning Jesus and fulfillment of the Old Testament. For Paul, Jesus did not come to absorb, dissolve, or transform the Old Testament promises. Jesus came to confirm and establish the promises of the Old Testament in all their dimensions for both Israel and the Gentiles.

#### Summary: Jesus Is the Means for Literal Fulfillment of the Old Testament

Jesus is at the center of all God’s purposes for all creation. And Jesus works in such a way that all of God’s creational, kingdom, covenant, and salvation purposes will happen in all their dimensions. This involves everything concerning the universe, earth, land, Israel, nations, spiritual blessings, physical blessings, etc.!

Jesus takes it upon himself to confirm every promise of God (see Rom. 15:8). Every messianic prophecy will be completed. All of God’s plans for a righteous and just earthly kingdom over all creatures and all nations will happen because of Jesus. The dozens of promises found in the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New covenants will occur because of Jesus. This includes all spiritual and physical blessings, and it involves God’s promises concerning creation, Israel, and the nations. The political, societal, cultural, and economic realms will be transformed because of Jesus. Jesus is the One who will orchestrate the takeback of planet earth with His devastating Day of the Lord judgments and the establishment of His kingdom. He is the One who will raise all people. He will judge everyone.

Also, since there are two comings of Jesus, fulfillment of God’s purposes will occur in stages. Some fulfillments of Old Testament promises occurred with Jesus’ first coming, yet other fulfillments await completion at Jesus’ return. But in the end, everything God promised and predicted will take place because of Jesus. As Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 1:20: “For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes.”

#### **Specific Ways Jesus Fulfills the Old Testament**

Jesus is the means for the fulfillment of the Old Testament. In this section we discuss five specific ways Jesus fulfills the Old Testament.

## *1. Jesus Accomplishes the Specific Details of Messianic Prophecies*

One major way Jesus fulfills the Old Testament is by directly accomplishing the details of messianic prophecies about himself. To clarify, a messianic prophecy involves a prediction in the Old Testament concerning a coming special Person who will be a King, Warrior, Savior, Prophet, Priest, etc. Jesus is the One who fulfills such specific messianic prophecies. Below are several examples of this type of fulfillment.

### **Luke 24:25-27; 44-47 and the Sufferings of the Messiah**

According to Luke 24:25-27, after His resurrection, Jesus told the men heading to Emmaus that He fulfilled Old Testament prophecies that predicted His suffering and glory:

And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Then with Luke 24:44-47 Jesus told the apostles that He fulfilled what the Scriptures predicted about His suffering, resurrection, and the Gospel being proclaimed to the nations:

Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

These passages in Luke 24 reveal two important things. First, Jesus viewed His actions of suffering and resurrection as the direct fulfillment and completion of what the Old Testament Scriptures predicted. And second, the content of fulfillment He focused upon involved: (1) His sufferings; (2) His resurrection; (3) His entering glory; and (4) the Gospel now being universally proclaimed.

We are not told which specific Old Testament passages Jesus cited as “He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27). He certainly had a wide array of passages to choose from since there are so many messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. Perhaps He cited texts like Genesis 3:15; Psalm 110; Isaiah 49; 52–53; Daniel 9:26 and others. These texts, and many others, predicted the things that Jesus said He fulfilled. Regardless, Jesus declared that He literally fulfilled Old Testament messianic prophecies about His sufferings and glory.

Because some have misunderstood this text, Jesus is not saying every Old Testament passage directly refers to himself. But He does say that all things that the Hebrew Scriptures stated about Him must be fulfilled by Him.

### **Matthew 2:5-6 / Micah 5:2 and the Messiah’s Birth in Bethlehem**

According to Matthew 2:5–6, Jesus literally fulfilled the prophecy of Micah 5:2 that the Messiah would be born Bethlehem. When Herod asked the Magi about Jesus’ whereabouts, we are told:

They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah;  
For out of you shall come forth a Ruler  
Who will shepherd My people Israel.’”

Jesus fulfilled the prophecy concerning the Messiah’s birth in Bethlehem.

### **Matthew 4:13-16 / Isaiah 9:1-2 and the Messiah Preaching Good News to Northern Israel**

Matthew viewed Jesus’ geographical movement in Matthew 4 to be the fulfillment of parts of Isaiah 9. Isaiah 9 not only discussed the coming of the Messiah (see 9:6–7), but also good news for Zebulun, Naphtali, and nearby Gentiles. Isaiah 9:1a says gloom would be removed from Israel, and “the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,” which experienced “contempt,” would be made “glorious.” Matthew then quoted Isaiah 9:1–2:

This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:

“THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES—

“THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED” (Matt. 4:14–16).

Jesus’ coming to Zebulun and Naphtali in connection with a message of kingdom hope to Israel with implications for Gentiles is a direct literal fulfillment of Isaiah 9:1–2.

### **Matthew 21:4-5; John 12:13-15 / Zechariah 9:9 and the Messiah Coming to Jerusalem**

Zechariah 9:9 predicted the Messiah would come to Jerusalem on a donkey in a humble manner. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy with His entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (see Matt. 21:4-5; John 12:13-15).

### **Luke 4:17–19 / Isaiah 61:1–2 and Good News**

Isaiah 61 foretold an anointed Person with God’s Spirit upon Him who will bring salvation and restoration to Israel, including rebuilt cities and “an everlasting covenant” (i.e. New covenant). According to verses 1–2a this person will preach the Gospel to the poor, release captives, give sight to the blind, free the oppressed, and proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. Centuries later at a synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus stood up and read Isaiah 61:1–2a and declared that this passage was fulfilled with Him: “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21). Isaiah 61 is a messianic passage about what the Messiah would do for Israel, and Jesus viewed Isaiah 61:1–2a as being fulfilled by Him. Jesus did not quote verse 2b which speaks of the day of God’s vengeance. That will be fulfilled with Jesus’ second coming. Nevertheless, Jesus’s first coming brought fulfillment of Isaiah 6:1–2a.

### **Mark 15:27-28 / Isaiah 53:12b and Being Numbered with Transgressors**

Isaiah 53:12b declared that the Suffering Servant would be numbered with transgressors in His suffering. Jesus fulfilled this by being crucified between two criminals (Mark 15:27-28):

They crucified two robbers with Him, one on His right and one on His left. And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And He was numbered with transgressors.”

Many other examples of this type of fulfillment—literal fulfillment of messianic prophecies—exist. But now we move to a second way that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament.

## *2. Jesus Completes Messianic Hope Expectations*

Early in John's Gospel Philip declared to Nathanael: "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1:45). Philip rightly noted that Jesus is the specific Person Moses and the Prophets wrote about. Jesus is the completion of their messianic hope expectations. So not only does Jesus fulfill specific prophecies about the Messiah, but He also fulfills Old Testament expectations, in general, concerning a promised special Person who would fulfill God's purposes.

### **Defeater of Satan and Evil**

With Genesis 3 a nefarious serpent tempted the first image-bearers to disobey God. He succeeded in his mission, but his victory will not stand forever. The first messianic prophecy is found in Genesis 3:15 where God promised a coming "seed" from the woman who would defeat evil and crush the serpent. This "seed" culminates in Jesus who through His two comings crushes Satan and puts an end of evil. Jesus inflicted a fatal wound to Satan at the cross as He broke the power of sin and death. And the final defeat of Satan will occur with Satan's confinement in the abyss and eventual casting into the lake of fire (cf. Rom. 16:20; Rev. 20:1-10). Paul stated in Romans 16:20 that, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." Thus, one of the primary roles of Jesus is that of Defeater of Satan and Evil.

### **Curse-Remover / Restorer of Creation**

When Adam sinned the ground was cursed. The ground Adam was supposed to rule over would now work against him.

"Cursed is the ground because of you;  
In toil you will eat of it  
All the days of your life.  
Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;  
And you will eat the plants of the field" (Gen. 3:17b-18).



But God offered hope to this dismal development. A second messianic hope text is Genesis 5:28-29 which expresses hope that someone will remove the curse upon the ground:

Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. Now he called his name Noah, saying, “This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed.”

Lamech hoped for “rest from our work and from the toil of our hand” stemming from the curse. His desire that Noah would be this curse-remover is significant. We know Noah was used by God with the flood of Noah’s day, but Noah was not the One who would remove the curse upon the ground. But Lamech presents a Messianic Hope expectation for removal of the curse upon the ground.

Jesus is the One who will ultimately fulfill this expectation. Jesus is the One who will restore creation and remove the curse upon the ground, as Romans 8:19-21 indicates:

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Isaiah 11 is a messianic text that states what the Messiah will do for the animal realm. Isaiah 11:6-9:

And the wolf will dwell with the lamb,  
And the leopard will lie down with the young goat,  
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;  
And a little boy will lead them.  
Also the cow and the bear will graze,  
Their young will lie down together,  
And the lion will eat straw like the ox.  
The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra,  
And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den.  
They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain,

For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
As the waters cover the sea.

### **Ruler of Nations**

Several messianic hope texts in the Old Testament predict a coming Ruler of Nations. According to Genesis 49:10 the coming “Shiloh” will rule the earth and be obeyed by the peoples on earth:

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah,  
Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet,  
Until Shiloh comes,  
And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.”

With Psalm 2:6-9 the LORD says He will give His Son, the Messiah, the nations as His inheritance:

“But as for Me, I have installed My King  
Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”  
“I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord:  
He said to Me, ‘You are My Son,  
Today I have begotten You.  
‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,  
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.  
‘You shall break them with a rod of iron,  
You shall shatter them like earthenware.’”

The messianic text of Psalm 110 presents the Messiah as having a session at the right hand of God until the time comes for Him to reign from Jerusalem:

The Lord says to my Lord:  
“Sit at My right hand  
Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”  
2The Lord will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying,  
“Rule in the midst of Your enemies.”

This involves the judging of nations:

He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.  
He will judge among the nations (Psalm 110:5b-6a).

Jesus is this Ruler who will rule over the nations. Revelation 1:5 calls Jesus, “the ruler of the kings of the earth.” And He will act as Ruler of nations at His second coming. In Matthew 25:31-32 Jesus states:

“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”

Revelation 19:15a also declares that Jesus will rule the nations as a result of His second coming:

From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron.

The Old Testament is clear on its messianic expectation for a coming ruler over nations. Jesus is the One who will fulfill this messianic hope with His second coming to earth.

### **Last Adam**

The Bible contrasts the roles of the two representatives of humanity—Adam and Jesus. The first Adam represented mankind but Adam failed in his relationship with God. Adam also failed the kingdom mandate from God to rule and subdue the earth successfully for God’s glory (see Gen. 1:26, 28). All humanity in Adam and since Adam has failed too. But Jesus is the Last Adam, the ideal King and ultimate representative of mankind. And He succeeds where Adam failed.

There are four main ways that Jesus, as Last Adam, succeeds where the first Adam failed. First, Adam failed the temptation test of Genesis 3. But Jesus succeeded where Adam failed according to Matthew 4:1-11. Satan tempted Jesus for forty days in the wilderness but Jesus overcame him.

Second, Jesus brings justification and life to those in union with Him in contrast to Adam who brought condemnation and death to all. This is Paul’s main point of Romans 5:12–21 when He compares how both Adam and Jesus impact humanity.

Third, because of sin Adam's body (and ours) is linked with corruption and death. Jesus, though, brings resurrection of the body (1 Corinthians 15:42–49).

Fourth, Jesus will successfully complete the kingdom mandate first given to Adam (see Gen. 1:26, 28; Psalm 8; Hebrews 2:5-9). Adam was tasked to rule and subdue the earth as God's mediator. He failed. But Jesus will succeed with a successful ruling and subduing of the earth at His return. In 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, we're told that the transition to the eternal state, the eternal kingdom, is going to be a result of Jesus successfully reigning. "Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to the God and father, when he has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet." So Jesus is the one that fulfills the kingdom mandate first given to Adam to rule and subdue the Earth and its creatures for the glory of God. And when he has done that successfully, there is a transition to the eternal kingdom discussed in Revelation chapters 21 and 22.

Jesus successfully completes everything God intended for humanity. For those who are in union with Jesus, they too, succeed and benefit in everything the Last Adam accomplishes.

### **Seed of Abraham**

The Abrahamic Covenant is the foundational covenant of promise, and is related to the other covenants of promise—Davidic and New. The Abrahamic covenant has many dimensions that are revealed throughout the Book of Genesis. These include promises related to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the nation Israel; the families and nations of the earth; physical blessings, spiritual blessings, etc. A full discussion of how all elements of the Abrahamic Covenant are fulfilled throughout history is too large a topic for our purposes here.

The seed of Abraham concept is broad with several dimensions. First, it includes the special physical seed line through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—culminating in the ethnic nation of Israel. Second, there is a non-special physical seed line of natural descendants such as Ishmael and the sons Abraham had with Keturah. Third, there is a spiritual seed of Abraham, which refers to all believers in God through faith alone, regardless of ethnicity. And fourth, there is Jesus, who is the ultimate Seed of Abraham and the center of the seed of Abraham concept.

Jesus is the ultimate Seed of Abraham who brings all dimensions of the Abrahamic Covenant to completion through His two comings. Galatians 3:16 states: “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.”

As the ultimate Seed of Abraham, Jesus does not collapse or absorb all the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant into himself, like the mystical personalism view asserts. No, it’s because of Jesus that dimensions of the Abrahamic Covenant will be completed in all their details. This includes national promises to Israel. Mary declared that her Son Jesus would bring help to Israel based on what God promised Abraham:

“He has given help to Israel His servant,  
In remembrance of His mercy,  
As He spoke to our fathers,  
To Abraham and his descendants forever.” (Luke 1:54-55)

According to the prophecy of Luke 1, Jesus is the One who will deliver Israel from her enemies, in fulfillment of the oath God made to Abraham:

To show mercy toward our fathers,  
And to remember His holy covenant,  
The oath which He swore to Abraham our father,  
To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies,  
Might serve Him without fear (Luke 1:67-74).

While there was the hope of Israel’s national deliverance occurring at Jesus’ first coming, the fulfillment of this national hope awaits fulfillment with the second coming of Jesus as explained in passages like Zechariah 14 and Matthew 24:30–31.

With Genesis 12:2-3 God told Abraham that through him and the nation Israel, the families of the earth will be blessed. Jesus is the One who brings messianic salvation to the Gentiles. Galatians 3:6-9 states:

Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the nations will be

blessed in you.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

The fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant only occurs in all its dimensions through the ultimate singular seed of Abraham—Jesus—who brings complete fulfillment of all dimensions of the Abrahamic Covenant. This includes the promise that Israel would be permanently delivered from her enemies and for Gentiles to be blessed through Abraham and Israel (see Gen. 22:17-18; Gal. 3:16, 29).

### **Davidic King / Messiah**

Jesus is the ultimate Davidic King and Messiah who will rule over Israel forever (Luke 1:31-33), judge the nations from David’s throne (Matt. 25:31-32), restore creation (Matt. 19:28-29), and bring messianic salvation to believing Gentiles (see Acts 15:13-18). Jesus, the ultimate Davidic King is also the One who brings transition from the Mosaic Era to the New Covenant era (Luke 22:20).

Psalm 2 predicted that God’s Son, the Messiah, will be given the nations as His inheritance and He will rule these nations with a rod of iron. Jesus will defeat and rule the nations on earth as Revelation 11:15 and 19:15 state.

Jesus is also the ultimate Davidic King and Messiah. The first verse of the New Testament links Jesus with David: “The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” Jesus is at the center of the Davidic covenant, and He is the one who will have the ultimate kingdom reign. In Zechariah 14:9, we are told, “And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day, the Lord will be the only one, and his name the only one.” Revelation 19:15 states, “From his mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it he may strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron.” So there are many passages in scripture, both Old Testament and New Testament, that predict that Jesus is going to fulfill the Genesis 1 mandate. He is going to rule the earth, its creatures, and He is also going to rule the nations of the Earth.

### **Prophet**

In Deuteronomy 18:15-19 Moses predicted a coming Prophet to whom the people of Israel would listen:

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.’ The LORD said to me, ‘They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.’”

Jesus is the fulfillment of this prophet like Moses. John 6:15 states: “Therefore when the people saw the sign which He [Jesus] had performed, they said, ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.’” Then John 7:40 states: “Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, ‘This certainly is the Prophet.’”

With Acts 3:20 Peter says Jesus is the Messiah appointed for Israel. Then Peter mentions Deuteronomy 18:15 and Moses’ prediction about a coming prophet in reference to Jesus:

[Jesus] whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. Moses said, “THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:21–23).

Peter explicitly stated that Jesus is that prophet whom Moses predicted would come. Jesus is not merely the culmination of the prophetic line from the time of Moses; He is the individual specific prophet whom Moses predicted.

## **Priest**

Priests mediate God’s presence to others. While various priests have existed in biblical history, Jesus is the ultimate Priest.

Psalm 110 presents the Messiah as seated at Yahweh’s right hand for a time until Yahweh sends the Messiah to defeat and rule the nations from Jerusalem (see Ps. 110:1–

2). Yet, with Psalm 110:4 we also see that the Davidic King at God's right hand is also a Priest:

The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind,  
"You are a priest forever  
According to the order of Melchizedek."

According to the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic kings were not priests. But with the Messiah, He is both King and Priest. And as verse 4 states, He is "a priest according to the order of Melchizedek." No person before Jesus every met the conditions of Psalm 110 with its King-Priest who has a session at God's right hand before He reigns over the earth.

Yet the Book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Psalm 110:4 Priest who is in the order of Melchizedek.

[Jesus] being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:10).

where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:20).

Thus, as a result of His death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus is the fulfillment of the Psalm 110 Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

### **Suffering Servant**

Another major messianic hope role Jesus fulfills is that of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 52 and 53. When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming towards him he declared, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29b). This truth of Jesus being a Lamb who takes away sin for Israel and the nations was foretold in Isaiah's depiction of the Suffering Servant. Isaiah 53 predicted a coming Suffering Servant of Israel, who would be "Like a lamb that is led to slaughter" (53:7b). This Servant would be without sin or blemish. In a substitutionary manner He would atone for the sins of Israel and also "sprinkle many nations" [i.e. Gentiles] (Isa. 52:15) with His New Covenant sacrifice.



The New Testament presents Jesus as the literal fulfillment of what was predicted concerning this Servant in Isaiah 53. At His Last Supper, Jesus declared that He fulfilled Isaiah 53:12b: “For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, ‘And He was numbered with transgressors’; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment” (Luke 22:37).

Jesus also fulfilled the Isaiah 53:4 prediction of the Servant taking infirmities and diseases upon himself: “This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: ‘He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases’” (Matt. 8:17).

With his speech to the “men of Israel” (Acts 3:12) Peter declared Jesus’ role as the fulfiller of a suffering ministry: “But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled” (Acts 3:18).

In Acts 8, Philip found an Ethiopian sitting in a chariot reading Isaiah 53:7-8, a text predicting the Suffering Servant’s role in dying for sins:

Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: “He was led as a sheep to slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He does not open His mouth. In humiliation His judgment was taken away; Who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth.”

The Ethiopian asked Philip to who this referred, and Philip answered that this spoke of Jesus:

The eunuch answered Philip and said, “Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. (Acts 8:34-35)<sup>12</sup>

The Bible makes clear that Jesus is the One who fulfills the hope of a coming Suffering Servant who would atone for the sins of Israel and the nations.

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<sup>12</sup> Other connections of Jesus with the Servant of Isaiah 53 are found with John 12:38 (Isa. 53:1); Romans 10:16 (Isa. 53:1); and 1 Peter 2:22-25 (Isa. 53:9).

## **Savior and Restorer of Israel**

The nation Israel has a major role in Scripture. According to Genesis 12:2-3 the great nation Israel would have a role in blessings “all the families of the earth” and “all the nations of the earth” (cf. 18:18). Yet as predicted in texts like Deuteronomy 30 and Leviticus 26, Israel would disobey God and need salvation. Thus, another important Messianic Hope role in the Old Testament concerns a special Person who will be the Savior and Restorer of Israel.

While the nation Israel is presented as a servant of God in the Old Testament, several chapters in Isaiah predicted a coming individual Servant who could save and restore the sinful nation. This individual Servant of Israel is described in Isaiah 49:3 where God speak to Him:

He said to Me, “You are My Servant, Israel,  
In Whom I will show My glory.”

Then with verse 5a, this perfect individual Servant speaks of His God-given task to save and gather wayward Israel back to God:

And now says the Lord, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant,  
To bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him.

Verse 6a then mentions the Servant’s role in raising up the tribes of Israel and restoring Israel:

He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant  
To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel.”

Note the relationship between the individual Servant of Israel and the corporate entity of national Israel. The coming individual Servant has a God-given role to the sinful corporate entity of Israel. This Servant, who is the ultimate Israelite, will save, gather, and restore the nation Israel. The One restores the many.

The Servant of Israel will also bring the New Covenant to Israel and will restore the land to Israel, according to Isaiah 49:8b:

“And I will keep You and give You for a covenant of the people,  
To restore the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages.”

The New Testament presents Jesus as this Servant who will save and restore Israel. With Romans 15:8 Paul calls Jesus the “servant to the circumcision” who fulfills God’s promises to Israel’s patriarchs: “For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers.”

In predicting the coming of Jesus an angel declared: “She [Mary] will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people [Israel] from their sins.” In Mary’s Magnificat of Luke 1:54, which discusses what God will do through her son, Jesus, Mary states that her Son will help Israel, God’s servant:

“He has given help to Israel His servant,  
In remembrance of His mercy . . . .”

With his speech to the “men of Israel” in Jerusalem (Acts 3:12), Peter states that God raised up Jesus His Servant to bless Israel: “For you first [Israel], God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways” (Acts 3:26). Peter draws upon Jesus as God’s Servant who brings salvation to Israel.

Isaiah 49 explicitly states that the individual Servant of Israel will save, regather, and restore national Israel. But we must discern that the Servant’s role does not stop with Israel. It goes broader. Isaiah 49:6b states the Servant will save the “nations” of the earth:

“I will also make You a light of the nations  
So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

In Luke 2:32 Simeon draws upon the truths of Isaiah 49 when he declared that Mary’s Son, Jesus, would be:

“A Light of revelation to the Gentiles,  
And the glory of Your people Israel.”

Thus, one major role Jesus must fulfill is that of the Savior and Restorer of Israel. The basis for Israel's salvation exists with Jesus' death and Suffering Servant role that He fulfilled at the time of first coming. Yet Romans 11:26 also predicts a coming salvation of "all Israel" that will occur in the future.

### *3. Jesus' Corresponds to Events in the History of Israel and David*

#### **Patterns with Israel**

The Israelites of biblical times were not only interested in the literal accomplishing of biblical prophecies, but they also looked for patterns and connections between persons and events. This can happen because God controls history. Key events and figures in Israel's history could point forward to even greater events and persons.

The Israelite people also understood the concept of *corporate solidarity* in which a special "one" can represent the "many," and the experiences of the "one" could relate to the experiences of the many. Such a connection is not familiar to modern Western audiences, but it was to ancient Jewish readers. As Craig Blomberg notes, "[F]or believing Jews, merely to discern striking parallels between God's actions in history, especially in decisive moments of revelation and redemption, could convince them of divinely intended 'coincidence.'"<sup>13</sup>

Thus, another way Jesus fulfills the Old Testament involves His connection with previous events and persons in Old Testament history. Events in Jesus' life sometimes correspond to events in Israel's history. These show a divinely intended connection between Israel and Jesus, and show that God's plans to save and restore Israel center on the person and work of Jesus the Messiah. *So, another way Jesus fulfills the Old Testament is by completing patterns found in Old Testament history.*

#### **Matthew 2:14-15 / Hosea 11:1**

Our first example involves the correspondence between Israel's first exodus from Egypt as God's son, and a coming second exodus for Israel led by the ultimate Son—Jesus.

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<sup>13</sup> Craig L. Blomberg, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 8. I am not claiming Blomberg is an advocate of single-meaning use of the OT.

Exodus reveals Israel as God's son who is called out of Egypt at the exodus (see Exod. 4:22-23; Hosea 11:1). In addition, since a messianic hope exists for a coming Messiah/Savior to come from Israel, the concept of "son" also will apply to this coming Messiah/Savior. For Matthew Jesus, too, is God's Son who also was called out of Egypt as a child after Herod's murder of male infants in Bethlehem. Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1 to make this point:

So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called My Son" (Matt. 2:14-15).

The book of Hosea predicted that a coming Davidic King would come and restore Israel after a long period of judgment and dispersion (see Hosea 3:4-5). This Davidic King, we now know as Jesus, will lead Israel in a second exodus that will be more prosperous and enduring than the first exodus under Moses (Hosea 11:9-11).

Significantly, God calling Jesus out of Egypt is said to "fulfill" God's calling Israel from Egypt. Matthew connects Jesus' "exodus-from-Egypt" experience as God's Son with Israel's "exodus-from-Egypt" experience as God's son hundreds of years earlier. Note the points of comparison:

- Israel as God's son corresponds to Jesus as God's Son.
- Israel being called out of Egypt corresponds to Jesus being called out of Egypt.

Jesus' experience as God's Son being called out of Egypt fills up or fulfills Israel's experience as God's son being called out of Egypt. What does this signify? Matthew shows that Israel and Jesus are connected in God's purposes. Jesus is the Messiah and corporate Head of Israel who can save and restore the corporate entity of Israel with a second and permanent exodus to freedom.

By showing correspondences in similar events, Matthew's Jewish readers would note these relationships as significant. Jesus is qualified to lead Israel to salvation, restoration, and a second exodus that leads to kingdom blessings. Jesus is the corporate head of Israel who will save and restore Israel.

## **Matthew 2:17-19 / Jeremiah 31:15**

Another example of correspondence between Jesus and Israel occurs in Matthew 2:17-19 and its use of Jeremiah 31:15. Matthew's quotation of Jeremiah 31:15 concerns the deep mourning over the infants murdered by the command of Herod:

Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

“A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Weeping and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
And she refused to be comforted,  
Because they were no more.”

As the people of Israel rightly grieved the execution of their infant sons under Herod, Matthew drew upon Jeremiah 31:15 an event that occurred hundreds of years earlier. But why?

Jeremiah 31 is a chapter of great hope for Israel. It comes in the midst of Jeremiah 30–33, often known as the Book of Consolation, which is a hopeful section describing the salvation and restoration of national Israel after a time of great distress. Yet sandwiched in the middle of Jeremiah 31 is verse 15, a sad verse concerning the mourning that occurred when the young men of Israel were deported from Jerusalem to Babylon, via Ramah, during the Babylonian captivity of 586 B.C. Ramah, just north of Jerusalem, was the place where Jewish men were gathered before departing for Babylon. The women of Jerusalem, who were not exiled, wept over the deportation of their young men.

So what does this Babylonian captivity of young men to Babylon have to do with Jesus and the killing of infant males by Herod? Matthew knows that a slaughter of infants by Herod is not the same event as the deportation of Israel's young men to Babylon. He also knows Ramah was not Bethlehem. So what is Matthew doing?

As was the case with Hosea 11:1, Matthew highlights a correspondence between an important event in Israel's history and an important event in Jesus' life to connect Jesus with Israel. Jesus is the One who brings hope and deliverance to Israel.

So, with Jeremiah 31:15, we see a tragic event for Israel in the context of hope. The rest of Jeremiah 31 will discuss the great New Covenant that Israel one day will

experience. This corresponds to a tragic event in the life of Jesus the ultimate Israelite, yet in the context of hope since Jesus is the Savior of Israel.

In sum, God intended for the deportation of the sons of Israel of Jeremiah's day to "fulfill" or correspond to the slaughter of infants in Jesus' day. Both events involve sorrow. But also, Jeremiah 31:15 is a lament in the context of future hope. And likewise Jesus brings hope for Israel amidst tragedy. The hope element found in Jeremiah for Israel corresponds to the hope Jesus brings to Israel.

### **Other Correspondences**

Other correspondences also exist. Adam and Eve failed their temptation from Satan as described in Genesis 3. The Last Adam, Jesus, too, was tempted by Satan. Yet Jesus did not fail. He overcame temptation and succeeded where the first Adam failed (Matt. 4:1–11). Also, the forty-day temptation of Jesus by Satan may correspond to Israel's forty year wandering in the wilderness. In addition, Moses' reception of the Mosaic Law on Mount Sinai (see Exodus 19-20) prefigures/corresponds to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount where He offers New covenant law (Matthew 5–7).

These examples further show that events in Jesus' life correspond to earlier events in Old Testament history. They reveal that Jesus is the ultimate Israelite who can save and restore Israel. And they show that Jesus is the Last Adam who overcomes Satan and can save mankind. Thus, one of the ways Jesus fulfills the Old Testament is by "filling up" experiences in the Old Testament.

### **Patterns with David**

On several occasions events in David's life are said to be fulfilled in Jesus' life. Not only is Jesus genetically the "Son of David" (see Matt. 1:1), but events in Jesus' life also have some correspondence to events in David's life. These show a strong connections between the first David and the ultimate Son of David—Jesus the Messiah.

#### **John 13:18 / Psalm 41:9**

In John 13, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples just hours before His death. With verse 18 Jesus predicted His betrayal by Judas by quoting a psalm of David:

I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, “HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.”

Jesus viewed His soon-coming betrayal by Judas as fulfillment of Psalm 41:9 and its statement that one eating bread will be a betrayer. Psalm 41 was written by David as a complaint concerning his enemies. In Psalm 41:5 David said, “My enemies speak evil against me.” Then with 41:9 David noted that his enemy was a close friend with whom he ate bread:

Even my close friend in whom I trusted,  
Who ate my bread,  
Has lifted up his heel against me.

This enemy who betrayed David probably is Ahithophel, a counselor for David who betrayed David to support David’s son, Absalom (see 2 Samuel 16–17). Thus, a betrayer in David’s life prefigures a betrayer in Jesus’ life, the One who is the greater David. So, David’s betrayer corresponds to Jesus’ betrayer—Judas. David’s betrayal is now filled up or fulfilled with Judas’s betrayal of Jesus. As S. Lewis Johnson observes, “It is perfectly natural and justifiable to see” David’s enemies “as prefiguring the Messiah’s enemies.”<sup>14</sup>

### **John 15:25 / Psalm 69:4**

With Psalm 69:4 David stated: “Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head.” Here David declared that his enemies hate him without a good reason. David experienced unjustified hate.

In John 15:18–25 Jesus connects hatred towards Him with what David experienced. Jesus quoted Psalm 69:4 and said what David experienced was fulfilled with Him: “But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, ‘THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.’”

What does this mean? Psalm 69 described David’s experiences as a righteous sufferer on God’s behalf. Likewise, Jesus is a righteous Sufferer on God’s behalf. There is a correspondence between the experiences of David and those of the Son of David—

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<sup>14</sup> S. Lewis Johnson, *The Old Testament in the New: An Argument for Biblical Inspiration* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 77.



Jesus. The opposition David experienced is “filled up” with the opposition Jesus experienced.

### **John 19:24 / Psalm 22:18**

John 19 describes Jesus’ crucifixion. While on the cross the Roman soldiers divided Jesus’ outer garments into four parts (v. 23). But when they came to Jesus’ seamless tunic they were reluctant to tear it. Verse 24 describes what followed:

So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be”; this was to fulfill the Scripture: “THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS.”

The dividing of Jesus’ garments and the casting of lots for Jesus’ tunic was linked with Psalm 22:18 which states, “They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

It is difficult to know how much of Psalm 22 is describing David’s actual experiences and how much is predictive of Jesus’ experiences on the cross. Psalm 22:11–18 could be predictive concerning Jesus. Yet, there is a close connection between David as a righteous sufferer for God and Jesus being the ultimate Righteous Sufferer. In sum, with Psalm 22:18 the suffering of David prefigures the suffering of the Messiah. But there also could be an element of explicit messianic prediction since Jesus, not David, literally experienced the conditions of Psalm 22:11–18. As Walter Kaiser notes, “While to a lesser degree it is possible to speak of some of these things happening in the life of David, it is only with that climactic descendant of his, the Messiah, that it is possible to see most of these things fulfilled in detail.”<sup>15</sup>

### **John 19:36 / Psalm 34:20**

With Psalm 34:19–20 David celebrated the Lord as a deliverer:

Many are the afflictions of the righteous,  
But the LORD delivers him out of them all.  
He keeps all his bones,  
Not one of them is broken.

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<sup>15</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 118.

With John 19:36, John applied Psalm 34:20 to the soldiers piercing Jesus' side instead of breaking Jesus' legs:

For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN."

For John, the words of David were fulfilled with Jesus' bones not being broken while on the cross. A theological truth stated by David is applied to Jesus who is the ultimate example of righteousness.

### **Luke 23:46 / Psalm 31:5**

Psalm 31 describes David's trust in God while in distress. It is the Lord in whom David takes refuge; and it is the Lord who is David's rock and fortress (Ps. 31:1–3). With verse 5 David declared: "Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth." David trusted the Lord with his life.

Centuries later, while on the cross, Jesus the Messiah quoted David's words of trust in Psalm 31:5:

And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He breathed His last (Luke 23:46).

The first David trusted God during troubling times, and now the ultimate David, Jesus, trusts His life to God during His darkest moment on the cross. Pao and Schnabel point out that Jesus' quotation of Psalm 31:5 reveals two truths. First, it demonstrates that Jesus' death fulfills God's purposes in the midst of darkness. And second, it reveals "that he [God] will rescue him [Jesus] from his enemies and raise him from the dead."<sup>16</sup> Trust in God was true for both David and the ultimate Son of David.

In sum, the examples above are not exhaustive, but they show that the gospel writers connected events and persons in biblical history with Jesus' experiences. This especially concerns events in Israel's history and events in the life of David. Thus, one way in which Jesus fulfills the Old Testament is by repeating and heightening experiences in Israel's history.

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<sup>16</sup> David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Luke," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 399.

#### 4. *Jesus Is the Substance of the Mosaic Covenant and its Ceremonies and Feasts*

According to Paul, in Colossians 2:16-17, ceremonial activities under the Mosaic Covenant are no longer binding for observance because of Jesus:

Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

Under the Mosaic Covenant era before Jesus, ceremonial activities concerning food and drink, festivals, new moon, and the Sabbath were requirements for Israel to keep. But with Jesus and the New Covenant era He brings, those activities are no longer binding for God's people. Paul likens these Mosaic requirements to a "shadow," (*skia*) that gives way to something greater. This something greater is Jesus who is said to be the "substance" of those things. The Greek term Paul uses here is *soma*, which can be translated as "body," "reality," or "substance."

The Mosaic Covenant was a temporary, conditional covenant. The Old Testament predicted that the Mosaic Covenant one day would give way to a better covenant—the New Covenant. As Jeremiah 31:31-32 declares:

"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord."

Thus, the Mosaic Covenant and its elements are called "shadow" by Paul. In the context of the superior New Covenant, Hebrews 10:1 also stated that the "Law . . . has only a shadow of the good things to come." In this context the good things to come refers to Jesus and His New Covenant. Thus the reality of Jesus means observance of Mosaic Covenant ceremonies no longer is required in the New Covenant era.

This reality does not mean that Israel's feasts lose all historical significance or cannot be celebrated in any way. For example, Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 5:7 that "Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed." So Christ is the ultimate Passover

sacrifice. But in Luke 22:14-16 Jesus stated in the future kingdom of God He will once again eat the Passover meal with His disciples:

When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

When the kingdom of God arrives we will eat a Passover meal with Jesus as we celebrate Him being the ultimate meaning of the Passover.

The Feast of First Fruits, explained in Leviticus 23:9-14, was a Jewish celebration marking the offering of the first barley sheaf to God. First Fruits occurred on the day after the Sabbath following Passover, pointing to the hope for a bountiful future harvest. With 1 Corinthians 15:20–23, Paul links the Feast of First Fruits with Jesus’ resurrection and what this means for the coming resurrection of those in union with Jesus. Paul says, “Christ is the first fruits of those who are asleep” (1 Cor. 5:20) and then mentions Christ as the “first fruits,” or first-stage, of a three-state resurrection program (1 Cor. 15:23-24). Jesus’ resurrection, occurring during the Feast of First Fruits, connects Him to this celebration and secures the hope of eternal life for Christians.

Hebrews 9:11-14 details how Jesus’ New covenant priesthood and sacrifice transcends the Day of Atonement under the Mosaic covenant. With the Day of Atonement under the Mosaic covenant, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place to make sacrifices for sin, but the efficacy of these were only temporary and could not cleanse the conscience or the inner man. But Jesus, the true High Priest, entered the heavenly sanctuary and offered His **own blood**, securing eternal redemption and internal transformation for all who believe.

### *5. Jesus Guarantees the Future Fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecies*

As noted, Jesus fulfills and accomplishes the Old Testament in various ways. Yet since there are two comings of Jesus, there are various Old Testament predictions and expectations that await future fulfillment with Jesus’ return to earth. On several occasions Jesus himself referred to Old Testament prophecies that still needed to be fulfilled in the future, after His first advent. Below we note several of these.

## **Saints Shining in the Kingdom**

In Matthew 13:41-43, with His Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, Jesus predicted that His people (the wheat) would coexist with the Devil's people (the tares) until Jesus returned with His angels to separate them. He quoted Daniel 12:3 about God's people shining in the kingdom to make His point:

The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. 13:41-43a).

Thus, Jesus placed the fulfillment of Daniel 12:3 and its prediction of the righteousness shining in the kingdom of God after a time of tribulation in the future with His return to earth.

## **The Coming Elijah**

With the last two verses of the Old Testament, Malachi predicted the coming of Elijah in connection with the Day of the Lord and the restoring of all things:

“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse” (Malachi 4:5–6).

Fast forward to Jesus' time. While noting the great significance of John the Baptist's historical role, Jesus looked forward to a coming Elijah figure who would be part of the coming restoration of all things:

And His [Jesus'] disciples asked Him, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” And He answered and said, “Elijah is coming and will restore all things” (Matt. 17:10-11).

This shows that Jesus expected a coming person to completely fulfill the prediction of Elijah arriving in connection with the Day of the Lord according to Malachi 4:5–6.

## **The AD 70 Destruction of Jerusalem**

Daniel 9:26a predicted that Jerusalem and the temple (i.e. sanctuary) would be destroyed after the cutting off of the Messiah:

Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.

With Luke 21:2-24 Jesus predicted the coming destruction of Jerusalem and Temple that would occur in AD 70 in fulfillment of Daniel 9:26:

“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. . . . because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.”

When Jesus offered these words the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple were about thirty-seven years away. This is another example of Jesus expecting the coming fulfillment of a predicted event in the Old Testament after His first coming.

## **The Abomination of Desolation**

With His Olivet Discourse Jesus predicted a coming Abomination of Desolation in line with Daniel 9:27 that would impact Jerusalem and the Temple by the coming Antichrist:

“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)” (Matt. 24:15).

This abomination of desolation is still future from our standpoint but shows again that Jesus expected literal fulfillment of an event that was still future from His current standpoint in the first century.

## **Worst Tribulation in History**

Daniel 12:1b foretold a coming time period that would be the worst in history:

And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

Relying about the truth of Daniel 12:1, Jesus predicted a “great tribulation” that would be the worst time in human history:

“For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.” (Matt. 24:21)

### **Cosmic Signs**

Jesus also foretold coming cosmic signs in fulfillment of Isaiah 13:10 and Joel 2:31:

“But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken” (Matt. 24:29).

### **Son of Man Coming on Clouds**

With Matthew 24:30, Jesus relied upon the prophecy of Daniel 7:13-14 concerning the Son of Man coming on clouds, and Zechariah 12:10 about the repentance of the tribes of Israel at the Messiah’s return to earth:

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. (Matt. 24:30)

### **Gathering of Israel with a Trumpet**

Isaiah 27:12-13 predicted a coming regathering of Israel after Tribulation in connection with a trumpet blast:

In that day the Lord will start His threshing from the flowing stream of the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt, and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel. It will come about also in that day that a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem (emphases added).

Jesus says this will occur after the Tribulation that is described in Matthew 24:

And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other (Matt. 24:31).

### **Messiah to Rule the Nations**

Psalm 2:8-9 states that God's Son, the Messiah, will rule the nations with a rod of iron. Jesus quoted Psalm 2:8-9 in Revelation 2:26-27 when discussing how He will share His reign over the nations with the church:

He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father.

Revelation 19:15 places Jesus' kingdom reign over the nations at the time of His second coming. Even in the 90s AD, Jesus expected a future fulfillment of Psalm 2 in which He will reign over the nations with a rod of iron.

More examples could be given, but these examples show that Jesus expected future fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies that were not fulfilled at the time of His first coming.

### **Conclusion**

Widespread agreement exists that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament, but not all agree on what "fulfillment" specifically means. In this work we have strived to offer specific answers to what fulfillment of the Old Testament in Jesus means. We have argued that Jesus is the means for the accomplishing of all Old Testament prophecies, promises, and covenants. This occurs in the following five ways:

1. *Jesus Accomplishes the Specific Details of Messianic Prophecies*
2. *Jesus Completes Messianic Hope Expectations*
3. *Jesus' Corresponds to Events in the History of Israel and David*
4. *Jesus Is the Substance of the Mosaic Covenant and its Ceremonies and Feasts*
5. *Jesus Guarantees the Future Fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecies*



What we do not see with the biblical evidence is the idea that Jesus transforms, dissolves, or makes Old Testament promises vanish. The “means” view is more honoring to Jesus and keeps the integrity of God’s promises to complete what He promised.