



The Christ Foretold

Old Testament Prophecies Fulfilled in the Life of Christ, Lesson 5

Let's Review

There are three types of Old Testament prophecies relating to Christ:

- Typical
- Intermediate
- Direct

✓ **Typical** prophecy is something that refers to all Christians. As a fellow Christian, it also refers to Jesus, but perhaps even more so. Think of an audience sitting in the “splash zone.” They all are going to get wet, but probably the ones in the center front row are going to get really wet.

✓ **Intermediate** prophecy is something that refers to a historical figure and, even more, to Jesus. In a way, history pre-figures Jesus. Think of this as a “spitting image” thing. As the appearances of a great-grandson may be almost identical to great-grandpa Olaf, so the experience of Jesus is almost identical to someone in the Old Testament. And, yes, there is a lot of blood relations involved.

➤ **Direct** prophecy is something that refers to no one except Jesus. It is as though the Holy Spirit made the prophetic writer time travel to the Holy Land of Jesus' day and write what he saw. Think of this as a letter addressed to one and only one individual in the whole country.

We will be spending this week looking at direct prophecy at the end of Jesus' life.

The Role of Matthew

Of all Jesus' disciples, Matthew was perhaps the most Jewish. How to reach his own people with the message that Jesus was the long-expected Savior?

To reach his friends, Matthew thought of something only he could think of—he gave his own going away party. It was the only way his friends, “sinners” and tax-collectors, who had been excommunicated from the synagogues, would ever hear Jesus.

Matthew almost gleefully remembers that day in his Gospel.

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Matthew 9.10-13

The Holy Spirit put it into Matthew's heart to tell the story of Jesus in pretty much chronological order, but, whenever Jesus fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy, quote it! That would mean something to Jews. (It would mean nothing to pagan Greeks because they didn't have the Old Testament).

Thanks to our modern translations, since many Old Testament prophets wrote in poetry, the margins go crazy when Matthew is quoting the Old Testament. Just look for weird indents and you've got the prophecy.

In America, we have something similar to this, that when you successfully quote it, it settles the argument. What is that document?

And Hebrews

While we don't know who the writer of Hebrews was, it is clear he is writing to Hebrew Christians who were thinking they might have made the wrong choice to become Christians. Maybe they should go back to the Judaism they had left.

How to convince the Jewish mindset? Quote the Old Testament to prove your point that Jesus is superior to anything Judaism has to offer!

The One And Only: After Death

Sometimes it is easier to follow the story if from the ending. Let's look at Jesus' life from the end to the beginning as we follow the thread of direct Messianic prophecies.

The first Christians firmly believed the Old Testament specifically predicted events in Jesus' life.

The Set-Up

The Holy Spirit (as Jesus had predicted) had come upon the Twelve. While all "declared the wonder of God" in the foreign languages of the Pentecost pilgrims in Jerusalem, Acts records Peter's sermon to the Jews. Remember, they had crudely objected to the spectacle by saying, "They have had too much wine."

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

*“The Lord said to my Lord:
‘Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.’”*

Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Acts 2.33-36

The Psalm Peter quotes is Psalm 110.1, a psalm of David.

How might the “my Lord” refer to David, especially if it weren’t capitalized? (If only we had some Brits taking this class!)

Then David would have to be currently sitting....

But David is dead and buried. His tomb was still around in Jesus’ day. It could not refer to David. But according to Peter, who did the Psalm refer to?

What even in Jesus’ life did it refer to?

And what was the connection to the Holy Spirit being poured out upon the disciples at Pentecost?

Now let’s wind back the clock fifty days (Pentecost is 50 days after Easter). Again we hear Peter delivering his Pentecost sermon to the Jewish doubters.

You, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him:

*“I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.
Therefore my heart is glad
And my tongue rejoices.
My body will also live in hope,*

*Because you will not abandon me to the grave,
Nor will you let your Holy One see decay.
You have made known to me the paths of life;
You will fill me with joy in your presence.”*

Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

Acts 2.23-30

Again, a psalm of David! Who is the “I”?

So, who will not be abandoned to the grave?

Remember, Hebrew poetry often makes its points by repeating the same idea in different words. How could King David be thought of as “your Holy One.”?

But what is the problem with that interpretation?

Who alone must this psalm of David be referring to?

And to what event in his life?

Continue reading Acts 2.31-32 to see if you are correct.

How did David know all this?

That is the key to direct prophecy—through the Holy Spirit the writer sees what is ahead.

So, Peter’s Pentecost address to the Jews proved to them that the Old Testament predicted Jesus would:

- 1.
- 2.

Do I Have to Be Told?

With intermediate prophecy we needed to be told by the New Testament that these earlier events were uniquely predictive of something in Jesus' life. Although the story was perfectly understandable in its own context, it had more than one meaning (like the allegory of Sarah and Hagar in Galatians).

With direct prophesy we do not need the specific warrant of the New Testament. We simply have to closely interpret the Old Testament prophecy and see if it uniquely points ahead to an event in Jesus' life. Let's face it, if we had enough time, we would have figured out the Holy One not seeing decay.

This explains these blanket assertions (without direct citations) from Jesus.

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in this name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Luke 24.45-47

With this understanding, let's look closely at these Old Testament prophecies.

And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

Zechariah 12.10

The Lord is speaking, so the "I" refers to...

Then who does the "me" refer to?

What did they do to the "me"?

So what is this a prediction of?

Here we can double check our work!

When they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "They will look on the one they have pierced."

John 19.33-34, 37

Lots of dead warriors were pierced. What makes this piercing, putting John's Gospel together with Zechariah's words, unique to Jesus?

It seems sort of a stretch for the onlookers at Jesus' crucifixion to go away weeping.

*When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place,
they beat their breasts and went away.*

Luke 23.48

The One And Only: His Death

Luke also gives us a leg up in noticing direct prophecy when he records Jesus' words in the Upper Room.

*It is written: "And he was numbered with the transgressors:" and I tell you that this
must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.*

Luke 22.37

What is the fulfillment of this prophecy?

But the prophecy Jesus is quoting is from Isaiah 53. Let's take a look at it. It is commonly called "The Suffering Servant" from Isaiah 52.13 (See, my servant will act wisely).

*He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.
Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised,
and we esteemed him not.
Surely he took up our infirmities
and carried our sorrows,
yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
And who can speak of his descendants?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was stricken.
He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,*

nor was any deceit in his mouth.
Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.
After the suffering of his soul,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied.

Isaiah 53.3-11

What does the end of Isaiah's prophecy (double underline) uniquely predict?

How was that fulfilled in Jesus?

The burial of the Suffering Servant (dotted underline) is paradoxical. How?

How can it be understood correctly if we remember "the wages of sin is death"?

How was this uniquely fulfilled in Jesus?

What does the bold dotted line predict about Jesus' life? What makes this unique? Everybody dies.

What does the dashed lines predict about Jesus? Again, what makes this unique to Jesus?

Why did Jesus, the Suffering Servant, have to die (underlined words)?

This portion of Isaiah is called the Old Testament Passion History. There is only one other section like it, a psalm of David. Look up Psalm 22.

What events on Good Friday are reflected in Psalm 22?

v. 1

v. 6

v. 8

v. 14

v. 15

v. 16

v. 18

v. 24

v. 27

Who else, but Jesus? What else, but the power of the Holy Spirit inspiring his Old Testament prophets?

Back to Matthew

But I promised you Matthew!

Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:

*'I will strike the shepherd,
And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'"*

Matthew 26.31

What is Jesus predicting?

It is uniquely pointed to Jesus because it is from Zechariah 13.7. The prior lines read

*"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,
Against the man who is close to me!"
Declares the Lord Almighty.*

Who would be closer to the Lord than Jesus?

And, to wrap up this study confined to the events of Holy Week and following, let's look at Palm Sunday.

This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

*Say to the Daughter of Zion,
"See, your king comes to you,
Gentle and riding on a donkey,
On a colt, the foal of a donkey."*

Matthew 21.4-5

Yup, it's from Zechariah. Zechariah 9.9.

But wait! Why is this uniquely pointed at Jesus? Solomon rode David's donkey at his coronation!

Look closer at Zechariah's words. What is Jesus riding on?

Matthew unravels this one.

"Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them.

Matthew 21.2, 7

Why did the disciples put their cloaks on both donkeys?

Why did they bother to bring the mother donkey in the first place?

--Peter was one of those sent to get the donkey. He remembered it well. Jesus also said, "You will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here (Mark 11.2)."--

What king in his right mind would get on such a juvenile donkey?

Judas and the Thirty Pieces of Silver

Last week we saw that Matthew's words about what happened to Judas' blood money was a little fuzzy. Jeremiah did buy the property (and we assume it was near the Potter's Gate), but the purchase price was not thirty pieces of silver—it was seventeen shekels.

Here's Matthew's words:

So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty silver coins, the price set on him by the people of Israel, and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me.

So many prophecies are being fulfilled now, Matthew doesn't have time to reference them all! But since we've been following along in Zechariah, this passage won't take us by surprise.

The flock detested me. I told them, "If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it." So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.

And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter.

Zechariah 11.8, 12-13

Oh, by the way. The price of a slave in Zechariah's day was thirty pieces of silver.

Explain how it all comes together! Also explain how these passages could only refer to Jesus and the thirty pieces of silver Judas received for the price of betraying Jesus and then threw away.

A Con Game?

The unbelieving world claims Jesus (if he ever existed at all) is a con man. He only set things up to make it look like he was fulfilling Old Testament Scripture. For a delightful look at how stings work, watch “The Sting” with Paul Newman and Robert Redford!

How does the prophecies we’ve gone through in this lesson show how ridiculous that argument is?

If Jesus was acting deliberately to fulfill Scriptures, using that argument would have been powerful motivation to spur his disciples on. But he never let them in on “the secret.” Regarding the donkey colt, John (probably the other one sent to get the donkey) remembers it this way.

At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.

John 12.16

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

John 15.15
