PREDICTIVE TEXTS? HOW IS OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY FULFILLED?

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A quick word on what we mean by 'fulfilment'

FULFILMENT IN CHRIST

Luke 24:25-27; 44-47 – 1 Peter 1:11-12 – this tells us something important about the OT.

PROPHECY IS MORE THAN PREDICTION

- Prophecy includes prediction Deut 18:14-22
- Not all prediction is prophecy
- Predictive prophecy brings about the future– Josh 6:26 (Jer 28:15; Lk 1:20)
- Some predictive prophecies are conditional (Isa 38:1-8; Jonah 3:4; Jer 18:7-10; Luke 13:3-4)

A SIMPLISTIC MODEL OF PREDICTIVE PROPHECY

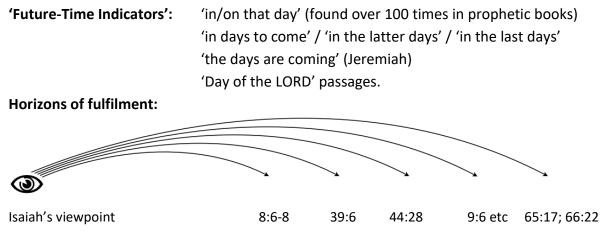
Henry Liddon: 332 distinct prophecies literally fulfilled in Christ. Probability:

A RICH MODEL OF THE FULFILMENT OF SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 1 AND 2

=	Gen 5:1 (John 1:1 = Gen 1:1)
=	Mic 5:2
=	Hos 11:1
=	Jer 31:15
	= =

Example of how Jesus answers the OT's unanswered questions: Exod 34:6,7 – Jn 1:17 – Rm 3:21-26

THE OLD TESTAMENT PREDICTING THE FUTURE



A word on Exile

Multiple Horizons? Isa 61:1, 2; Isaiah 7:14; the 'Abomination of Desolation'

LITERAL OR SYMBOLIC FULFILMENT

Will lions eat straw, or the church's enemies be tamed? Isa 7:14 = Matt 1:20-23 – what is a 'literal' fulfilment of the Immanuel prophecy?

'Reformed' versus 'Dispensational' approach to the fulfilment of prophecy.

METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETING OT ESCHATOLOGY

- 1. Start with the nearest horizon the prophet's own day and situation.
- 2. Consider all possible horizons.
- 3. Consider how the New Testament uses the passage, if it is quoted in the NT, bearing in mind that NT writers may use the same passage differently
- 4. Don't expect scientific precision in OT eschatological prediction.
- 5. All OT eschatology points to something about Christ, even if it is not a 'prediction.'

CONCLUSIONS

- God is wonderfully unpredictable and yet has made himself predictable.
- The written word of Scripture is fulfilled in the person of the living word, Jesus Christ.
- Jesus fulfils not only predictions, but the theological themes of the Old Testament and is the answer to its unanswered questions.
- The OT points to future events which are fulfilled on several historical horizons.
- The question is not <u>whether</u> Scripture is fulfilled in Christ, but <u>how</u> it is fulfilled in Christ.
- The better we know the Old Testament, the more we will understand the richness of the New Testament presentation of Christ.

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

- Our God speaks! the Christian faith is based on his revelation (Heb 1:1-4).
- When God speaks, he acts: his word does not return to him empty (Isa 55:10-11).
- There is a plan and purpose to history, fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.
- We have the Scriptures in our own language in reliable translations.

PRAYER

- that God would speak his life-changing word into our minds and wills.
- for a deeper, richer, fuller understanding of God's word.
- for the work of Bible translation.
- 'Come, Lord Jesus!' (Rev 22:20).