

“Fulfillment” – Part 2 (Direct Fulfillment)
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This is the second installment of the “Fulfillment” series. Last week’s lesson covered an overview of the topic including a detailed look at Peter’s dispensational declaration in Acts chapter 2. It gave one example of direct prophetic fulfillment. I will provide a second example in this lesson.

A short review of the fulfillment types is in order.

Here is the list of topics that will be covered under the topic of “fulfillment.” This slide is taken from Robby Dean’s lesson 16 of “God’s Plan of the Ages” series.

Direct Fulfillment: Literal prediction and literal direct fulfillment.

Typical Fulfillment: A literal, historical event applied typologically.

Applicational Fulfillment: An historical event is used to draw out an application with reference to a future event.

Summary Fulfillment: No actual event is prophesied, but the fulfillment represents a summation of Old Testament prophecies.

Quoted from Dean’s Lessons 15 & 16 of God’s Plan for the Ages - Dispensations (2014)

This week, the topic is “Direct Fulfillment.”

Last time, the direct fulfillment of Micah 5:2 in Matthew 2:5-6 was covered. Here is a summary statement by Robby Dean to remind us of what that is.

“In Matthew 2:5-6 the scribes and Pharisees are asked by Herod where is the Messiah supposed to be born? And they quoted from Micah 5:2; that it would be in Bethlehem. So Micah 5:2 is a prophecy. It is a literal prophecy speaking about a future event that Bethlehem would be the

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place where "One will go forth from Me to be ruler in Israel." So it is focusing on this future king, The ruler in Israel. "His goings forth are from long ago from the days of eternity." So it is a literal prophecy being literally fulfilled at the birth of Christ.”

A key takeaway from this is that we don't have to guess. The New Testament narrative makes it clear that the scribes and Pharisees agreed that this was a prophecy that had up until that time not been fulfilled. And at that moment, it was apparent that the Magi also understood Micah 5:2 was a prophecy that was being fulfilled as they spoke.

As a reminder, true prophecy was authorized and provided by God. There were false prophets which God warned Israel about.

Moses is addressing the sons of Israel:

Deuteronomy 18:14 For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so.

Deuteronomy 18:5 “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

Deuteronomy 18:16 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,

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let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.’

Deuteronomy 18:17 The Lord said to me, ‘They have spoken well.

Deuteronomy 18:18 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.

Detour: Jesus fulfills this in the Gospel of John:

John 12:49 For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.

John 12:50 I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”

There are other passages in the Gospel of John similar to this, but this is exactly what God said “the” prophet would do. And so He did.

Deuteronomy 18:19 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.

Deuteronomy 18:20 But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or

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**which he speaks in the name of other gods,
that prophet shall die.’**

There have been many false prophets throughout history. Some are documented in the Bible. Some even today claim to be apostles, prophets or even a few crazies who claim to be the Messiah or something similar.

Deuteronomy 18:21 You may say in your heart, ‘How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’

Deuteronomy 18:22 When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

Three points on these verses.

1. It is obvious the people Moses addressed were familiar with the concept of prophecy. Moses was a prophet.
2. The people expressed a need for an intermediary between them and God in Deuteronomy 18:16. God answered their need and gave them prophets.
3. These verses look forward to “the” prophet, Jesus Christ who would also be the Messiah, the ultimate intermediary between all men and God.

Since the prophecy in Micah 5:2 and its fulfillment in Matthew 2:5-6 were covered last time, let us move on to another prophecy which was

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subsequently fulfilled and interpreted by Daniel. I am talking about the 70 years of exile.

Let us start with the passage in Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 25:8 “Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Because you have not obeyed My words,

Jeremiah 25:9 behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them and make them a horror and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation.

Jeremiah 25:10 Moreover, I will take from them the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp.

Notice that the Hebrew doesn’t just say you will be in bad times but instead describes what bad times are. First, it says this in broad terms using the words “destroy,” “horror,” “hissing” and “desolation.” There are specific actions that the Jews from Judah encountered and even now continue to endure. That is at a national level. Then in verse 10, it becomes more personal with joys that they will no longer experience.

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Jeremiah 25:11 This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Seventy years. This is the 70 years of the exile.

Serve the king of Babylon. The key word is “serve.” This word can mean be a slave or serve. I have translated this in the book of Judges, depending upon the context, as “be subject to” as to be subject to a king. In this case, subject to the king of Babylon. Many take the start date of the “serving” or “subjection” to be 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem for the third time. But let us ask a question. When did Judah become “subject” to Nebuchadnezzar? That would be at the first attack and defeat of Jerusalem in 605 BC. That is when Daniel and others were sent to Babylon to serve the king. From that point on, Judah was no longer in control, Nebuchadnezzar was.

Here is Robby Dean’s comment on this date:

“We don't know what will happen here (in the USA), I don't claim to be a prophet, I don't know what will happen but Jeremiah did and he said you have to prepare for it, you're going to be out of the land and God is going to take you out of the land under the fifth cycle of discipline and you'd better prepare for it now. Well, they ignored him; they didn't like that message so they did not prepare for the inevitable, which came in 586 BC. 586 BC began the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity. This number seventy is crucial to understand what happens at the beginning of the chapter and what will happen at the end of the chapter. And the seventy years, it's almost like it has two areas of fulfillment, number one, from 605 BC when the first deportation occurred to 535 BC, that's seventy years, in 535 BC the first group returns.”

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“From 586 BC, that is when the temple is destroyed, to 516 BC which is when they began to rebuild the temple, so you see two aspects of this seventy year Babylonian captivity, but the seventy years that matters is from 605 to 535 and I'll explain that when we get there, but that has to do with the fact that God had prophesied that there would be seventy years under the heel of the Babylonians.” From: <https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/daniel-menuitem/message/2001-daniel-037/read>

Jeremiah 25:12 ‘Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,’ declares the Lord, ‘for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.

When seventy years are completed. Here the “seventy” is repeated. This is confirmation that this will happen and that there is no typo: 70 years!

Jeremiah 25:13 I will bring upon that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book which Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.

Jeremiah 25:14 (For many nations and great kings will make slaves of them, even them; and I will recompense them according to their deeds and according to the work of their hands.)”

That is a literal prophecy. It is specific. It is measurable. It is future to Jeremiah’s prophecy.

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Daniel, some years later, picks up on this prophecy and notes it is going to be fulfilled in his time. He gets to see it’s fulfillment. We have seen something like this before when Samuel anointed Saul and David. He was part of the fulfillment of the prophesy of a king of Israel in Deuteronomy 17. Now Daniel references the Jeremiah prophecy in Daniel chapter 9.

Daniel 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—

Daniel 9:2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

Daniel understands this as a prophesy from the Word of the Lord. The “man” (angel) Gabriel, at the end of Daniel chapter 9, then gives the information on the future using “70 weeks.” But that is another separate prophesy from this one. Daniel understood that the 70 years of exile were almost complete.

The Chronicler as well as Ezra point to the Jeremiah prophesy as being fulfilled in their time.

2 Chronicles 36:22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia—in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah—the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation

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throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,

2 Chronicles 36:23 “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up!’”

Ezra 1:1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying:

Again, we see prophecy given and fulfilled in the Old Testament as chronicled by Old Testament prophets. We don’t have to do much analysis. They tell us.

Let us revisit the “70 years.” Robby Dean has alluded to the fact that there are actually “two” 70 year periods which overlap.

The first period, which Robby thinks is more important but less mentioned in the literature is from 605 BC to 535 BC. The first date is when Nebuchadnezzar first invaded Jerusalem and sent some of the inhabitants to Babylon. At this point, Nebuchadnezzar controls Israel. They are now his subjects. This could fulfill the first part of the Jeremiah 25:11. $605 - 535 = 70$. This involves the people of Judah who

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are now subjects of Nebuchadnezzar. At this point, the temple still stands and Jews can fulfill the mandates of the Law.

But in 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar conquers Jerusalem for the third time during which his army destroys the temple. At that point, the Jews can no longer satisfy the demands of the Law. The sacrifices that have to be accomplished at the temple can no longer be accomplished. There is no temple. And at this point, the vast majority of the people are marched back to Babylon. The Temple foundation is not laid until 516 BC. $586 - 516 = 70$. This involves the worship of Yahweh which is no longer possible. Not until the temple is rebuilt.

But that should also wake up a Jew to the universality of Yahweh’s power. Somewhere in teaching Judges, during the narrative of Gideon, I mentioned that in those days, people thought that individual gods ruled specific portions of land. We saw this spelled out just after the Northern Kingdom of Israel is taken out and that land repopulated with peoples from other lands.

2 Kings 17:24 The king of Assyria brought men from Babylon and from Cuthah and from Avva and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the sons of Israel. So they possessed Samaria and lived in its cities.

2 Kings 17:25 At the beginning of their living there, they did not fear the Lord; therefore the Lord sent lions among them which killed some of them.

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2 Kings 17:26 So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, “The nations whom you have carried away into exile in the cities of Samaria do not know the custom of the god of the land; so he has sent lions among them, and behold, they kill them because they do not know the custom of the god of the land.”

2 Kings 17:27 Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, “Take there one of the priests whom you carried away into exile and let him go and live there; and let him teach them the custom of the god of the land.”

2 Kings 17:28 So one of the priests whom they had carried away into exile from Samaria came and lived at Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the Lord.

This concept, the god of the land, appears to have been prevalent throughout the ancient world. The Jews abandoned Yahweh and worshiped the gods of the land in the book of Judges. That is why Gideon does his two tests. Is the Angel of the Lord a god and is he as strong or stronger than Baal and associated gods? He and his people had lost faith in The God of the Universe, The Almighty Creator.

But now, paraphrasing from Robby Dean, the Jews are learning that even when they are in exile, Yahweh is not just their God, but he is the God of the entire world. He is greater than all the Baal’s and the gods of Babylon. They should have learned that Genesis is a narrative of God as God of the entire universe, including the heavens, the Sun and the stars.

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And this God did not abandon them even though they abandoned Him. He is trying to teach them of His greatness. But few learned that lesson. Have you learned that lesson? God is greater than any of your scrapes that you might get yourself into. God already knows what will happen. But did you take it to the Lord in prayer?

Since we have some time, let us delve into a more difficult prophetic passage, Genesis 3:15.

In Michael Rydelnik’s book, “The Messianic Hope,” he has three chapters that give examples of prophetic fulfillment from the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible, the Torah (the Law or Pentateuch), the Prophets and the Writings. In this instance, I will follow Michael Rydelnik in his study of Genesis 3:15 as a “Messianic Prophecy.” This is commonly called, in conservative circles, the “Evangelium” or the “first gospel.”

The interpretation is not so easy as the previous one. There is no one in the Bible pointing to it and saying it was a prophecy to be fulfilled. Indeed, many commentators, even some conservative ones dispute this as a prophecy. Yet, most conservatives consider it a prophesy of the Messiah. Non-conservatives view it differently. As Michael Rydelnik says, “Concerning Gen 3:15, Gerald Sigal, in his polemic against Christianity, rails, that “there is absolutely no proof to assume that this verse is messianic,” finding a reference to Jesus here to be “exegetically untenable.” It is probable that most colleges and some (?many?) seminaries mirror his thoughts.

But let us follow Michael Rydelnik as he discusses this passage and why he, as well as many conservative theologians see this prophecy fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Quotes are from his book unless specifically identified as different. Let me include the Biblical text so it is at the ready.

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The context is the fall of man. The serpent encouraged the woman to eat of the forbidden fruit. After she ate, she gave it to Adam who ate. Then God confronts them in the garden. He first addresses the serpent:

Genesis 3:14 The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life;

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

There are four main different interpretations of Genesis 3:15. Michael Rydelnik names them:

Naturalistic View

Symbolic View

Sensus Plenior View

Messianic View

I will only summarize the first three of these views. It is more important to concentrate on what many consider the correct view of this passage: the Messianic View. I will spend more time on it than the others.

1. Naturalistic View

Genesis 3:15 is an “etiology.” This means a study of origins. According to Wikipedia it is from Greek: “giving a reason for.” “More completely, etiology is the study of causes, origins, or reasons behind the way that things are,

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or the way they function, or it can refer to the causes themselves.”

So, in this case, the people that hold this view say “It identifies why snakes slither and also why snakes and humanity seem to be in perpetual conflict.” (from Rydelnik).

There are “two main arguments to support the naturalistic interpretation.” He uses Claus Westermann (7 October 1909 – 11 June 2000) as a proponent of this view. He was a German Old Testament Scholar.

Rather than quote technical arguments, I will follow the line of reasoning, explaining from the text.

The first argument deals with the meaning of the word “seed.” This word is in the singular but it can refer to a single “seed” or descendant or to a collection of descendants. Some scholars say it is used only in a collective sense. As a result, the seed in Genesis 3:15 refers to all the descendants, not just one in the future. Therefore, it cannot refer to Jesus Christ and the passage is not Messianic. That is their argument.

The second argument deals with the fact that this passage is a “pronouncement of judgment.” As such, so the argument goes, “it would not contain a promise of victory and hope in the midst of judgment.”

2. Symbolic View

Rydelnik uses John Walton as a proponent of this view. “John H. Walton (born 1952) is an Old Testament scholar and Professor at Wheaton College. He was a professor at

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Moody Bible Institute for 20 years.” [Wikipedia]. Quoting John Walton “In his words, “The verse is depicting a continual, unresolved conflict between humans and the representative of evil.” This view can be characterized as symbolic because “it would have been evident to the Israelite audience that the serpent represented something evil—if the role of Satan was unknown to them.” Thus, according to Walton, the verse is predicting a perpetual struggle, albeit without any hope of victory for humanity (the woman’s seed) over the forces of evil (the symbolic seed of the serpent).”

Walton supports the symbolic view by maintaining the collective sense of the word “see,” arguing that a particular individual redeemer is not in view in the verse. Second, he maintains that the verb translated “strike” should be read comparably, as equal blows. Thus, both the woman’s seed and the serpent’s seed “strike” each other, showing that there is no sense of victory of the woman’s seed. Moreover, the snake described would have been understood as a poisonously deadly one. Therefore, Walton concludes, “Given the repetition of the verb and the potentially mortal nature of both attacks, it becomes difficult to understand the verse as suggesting an eventual outcome to the struggle.”

3. Sensus Plenior View

“Sensus Plenior” means “fuller meaning.” One proponent of this view, Gordon Wenham starts with the Naturalistic View already mentioned. He then says there is a fuller meaning. In this case he says there is a meaning not originally meant by the author that is messianic.

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4. Messianic View

Before we get started with Michael Rydelnik’s reasoning, here are some points based upon Robby Dean (which I edited/paraphrased):

- 1) The serpent can talk. Animals can talk in human language only if empowered from an outside force as when the Holy Spirit causes Balaam's ass to talk.
- 2) The serpent appears to be part of creation which was declared good. Yet, this serpent is evil causing Adam and Even to sin.
- 3) It is the serpent that is "crushed." This occurs much later. A normal serpent would already be dead.
- 4) Romans 16:20 and Revelation 12:9 identify the serpent of old as the "dragon" and as "Satan."
- 5) Readers in the Old Testament would have understood this to "predict a long conflict between good and evil, and not a long conflict between snakes and humanity."
- 6) "God said that there would be enmity between the two. The word used for enmity and hatred is a word that is always used to refer to enmity and animosity between moral agents. That indicates it isn't just a snake because a snake isn't a moral agent."

There are several avenues of reasoning that are used to show this is Messianic: a) historical, b) grammatical c) contextual d) The seed in biblical history. Before explaining some details, Rydelnik has some preliminary points.

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“First, the messianic interpretation fits the broader context of Genesis. As shown above, salvation in the midst of judgment is a common theme in the early chapters of Genesis.”

“A second foundational element is that the serpent must be identified as something other than just a mere snake.”

“Yet a third preliminary consideration is that ancient Jewish interpreters also explained Gen 3:15 messianically.”

A. Historical

From Michael Rydelnik (In a footnote): “A messianic interpretation was offered by the LXX, ancient Jewish Targumim (Pseudo-Jonathan, Neofiti, Onqelos) and the church fathers Justin and Iraenaeus.” And as quoted above, ancient Jewish interpreters explained this verse messianically. This was accepted as the correct interpretation.

The point is that this is not a new observation. The LXX was written at least 100 years before Christ.

B. Grammatical

The issues focus on three words in Genesis 3:15. 1) seed, 2) his 3) crush/bruise.

Seed. The word is in the singular. The grammatical issue is whether this is a true singular or if this is a “collective.” Some demonstrate this noun can refer to a single person or to a collection of descendants. The question is, how should it be taken here? Conservatives take this as “singular.” The singular points to a particular person in the future. A collective could point to the human race.

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His. This is third person singular, but can be taken in a collective sense. Again, conservatives take this as a singular rather than a collective. The LXX backs this up translating this word in the singular, “his” rather than “their.”

Crush/Bruise. At issue for some is whether the bite of the poisonous snake kills the seed of the woman. Rydelnik quotes Desmond Alexander, “Viewed solely within the context of ch.2, it is virtually impossible to sustain a messianic interpretation of 3:15. Considered, however, in the light of Genesis as a whole, a messianic reading of this verse is not only possible but highly probable.” At issue is Jesus’ death is followed by resurrection. Yes, he dies. But God resurrects Him.

C. Contextual

In Genesis 3:14 God curses the snake. But in the following verse God’s curse is against “the evil power that animated it.”

As previously mentioned previously, “enmity” “as used in the Hebrew Bible always refers to enmity between moral agents (persons, not animals.”

Another line of reason in the Bible is the “seed” which I have included as a separate point.

D. The Biblical Seed

The seed is traced throughout the narratives and genealogies. There is an expectation that the Messiah King will come from this seed.

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Here are some quotes from Robby Dean’s lesson on Genesis 3:15. These are excerpts since the exposition is lengthy. Even so, it is a whole page.

“The writer of the Torah (Moses) focuses on the Messiah. It is the focal point that we see in each of the parts of the Torah. It may not always be apparent initially but it doesn't take much analysis to begin to understand and see this.”

“As we go back to the beginning of the Pentateuch and into Genesis we learn that this ruler is initially identified by the term "seed." He is called the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15 and then this seed is meticulously traced throughout the Hebrew Old Testament. That is what all the genealogies are about: tracing the line of the seed so that the seed of the woman can be clearly identified as the Messiah when He arrives.

“By the end of the Torah Moses identifies this one not only as a coming King but also as a prophet who will be like Moses. What distinguished Moses from all the other prophets was that God spoke to Moses face to face.”

“So in conclusion we see that one of the major themes of the Torah is the promise, the lineage and the predictions for the identification of this end-time ruler who will bring glory to God's people Israel. The Torah is messianic. Again and again God is identifying for His people Israel the characteristics of the one who will come in the future so that when He comes they will be able to recognize Him. He is not going to be hidden.”