



Progressive Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy

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William Furiioso ~ At Christ's Table ~ ACTpublications 2022 ~ <https://www.AtChristsTable.org>

Introduction

There are various schools of thought with regards to fulfillment of biblical prophecies:

- **Preterist View**: Biblical prophecies have been fulfilled in the past – usually not long after the prophecy was delivered. (“Full Preterists believe *all* prophecies have been fulfilled. “Partial” Preterists believe *most* prophecies have been fulfilled.)
- **Futurist View**: The majority of biblical prophecies will be fulfilled in the future.
- **Historicist View**: Biblical prophecies are historical records, the fulfillments of which unfold throughout the course of history.
- **Spiritual (aka “Idealist” or “Symbolic” View)**: Biblical prophecies speak of transcendent spiritual realities which are repeatedly being played throughout history like a drama involving God, Satan, God’s angels, Fallen angels, the Church, and the World System.

These four are the major schools of thought for most Evangelical theologians and Christians.¹ Those adherents of a more “liberal”

¹ For a more in-depth treatment of these four views, see my article, [“The Gospel of the Lion & The Lamb”](#).

theology purport a “Literary-Analytical” approach which is based on the false assumption that prophecies are, in fact, not divinely inspired, but merely humanly inspired. Therefore, any supposed intended meaning of the Holy Spirit and the prophet can be disregarded. And the meaning of various prophecies is determined by identifying the various human sources and the supposed historical agendas they hoped to accomplish through disseminating the prophecies.

Typological Fulfillment

Biblical Typology is Holy Spirit-inspired symbolism² “signifying”³ something in the Old Testament which is more clearly revealed in the New Testament.⁴ We can define a “type” as a *prophetic symbol*, because all types are representations of something yet future. More specifically, a type in Scripture is a person or thing in the Old Testament that foreshadows a person or thing in the New Testament.⁵ Some biblical prophecies are Old Testament types which have fulfillments in the New Testament.

² A symbol is something that represents something else. Hebrews 9:8-9.

³ Revelation 1:1. Greek: *semaino*, Strong’s # 4591, “signify” (NKJV)

⁴ Colossians 2:17

⁵ The word, “allegory”, is also used by the apostle, Paul in Galatians 4:24, Greek: *allegoreo*, Strong’s # 238.

Progressive Fulfillments

I propose there can be multiple fulfillments of some biblical prophecies: Some can have both a “figurative” meaning, as well as a literal meaning. And some can have both an early fulfillment and an End Time fulfillment. **I believe that some biblical prophecies have been fulfilled, are being fulfilled, will be fulfilled.** With this perspective – namely a “**Progressive Fulfillment**” perspective – one can see truth in each of the four major views of prophetic interpretation – Preterist, Historicist, Futurist, and Spiritual.

Following, I’d like to give two examples of Progressive Fulfillment of biblical prophecy – namely, Joel’s Prophecy and Malachi’s Prophecy:

Joel’s Prophecy

The apostle Peter clearly explained that what took place on the Day of Pentecost was a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy:

¹⁴“But Peter, taking his stand with the other eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: “Men of Judea and all you who live

in Jerusalem, know this, and pay attention to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you assume, since it is only the third hour of the day; ¹⁶ but **this is what has been spoken through the prophet Joel:**

¹⁷ ‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says,
‘That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;
And your sons and your daughters will prophesy,
And your young men will see visions,
And your old men will have dreams;

¹⁸ And even on My male and female servants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days,
And they will prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will display wonders in the sky above
And signs on the earth below,
Blood, fire, and vapor of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will be turned into darkness
And the moon into blood,
Before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes.

²¹ And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved.’

³⁸ Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” Acts 2:14-21, 38-39

In Acts 2:17 and 20 we see:

- *A Proclamation of the Coming Day of the Lord*

In Acts 2:38 we see:

- *A Call to Repentance*

In Acts 2:17-18, 21, 38-39 we see:

- *A Promised Restoration with a Fulfillment of a Covenant Blessing*

But was this a *complete fulfillment* of Joel's prophecy?

On the Day of Pentecost, we do *not* see the signs in nature mentioned in Acts 2:19-20. Could those verses be a reference to "the Day of the Lord" in the sense of His "coming" to Jerusalem in the form of the Roman armies and their destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 A.D.? Possibly, but other scripture passages indicate it is much more likely a clear reference to the *Final* Day of the Lord, For example, Zephaniah 1:14-18:

¹⁴ "The great day of the Lord is near,
Near and coming very quickly;
Listen, the day of the Lord!
In it the warrior cries out bitterly.

¹⁵ That day is a day of anger,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of destruction and desolation,

**A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,**
¹⁶ A day of trumpet and battle cry
Against the fortified cities
And the high corner towers.
¹⁷ I will bring distress on mankind
So that they will walk like those who are blind,
Because they have sinned against the Lord;
And their blood will be poured out like dust,
And their flesh like dung.
¹⁸ Neither their silver nor their gold
Will be able to save them
**On the day of the Lord's anger;
And all the earth will be devoured
By the fire of His jealousy,
For He will make a complete end,
Indeed a horrifying one,
Of all the inhabitants of the earth."**

Another example is Luke 21:25-28:

²⁵ "There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶ people fainting from fear and the expectation of the things that are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ But when these things begin to take place, straighten up

and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

So, we can anticipate another, more complete, progressive fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy in the future.

Malachi’s Prophecy

It is a historical fact that what Malachi prophesied Of Elijah and the Christ **was fulfilled in the first century by John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth.** This is what Luke wrote concerning was John the Baptist:

¹⁶ And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers back to their children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Luke 1:16-17

Jesus of Nazareth confirmed John the Baptist as the prophetic fulfillment of this:

¹⁴ “And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come. ¹⁵ He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Matthew 11:14-15

And a little later in Matthew’s gospel Jesus said:

¹¹ “Elijah (John the Baptist) is coming and will restore all things, ¹² but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also, the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” ¹³ Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.”

Matthew 17:11-13

In verse 11, Jesus confirmed that John the Baptist and Himself had been sent to affect a restoration in Israel. And in verse 13, Matthew tells us that the disciples believed that John the Baptist’s coming was a fulfillment of that prophecy.⁶

So, in Luke 1:17 and Matthew 11:14 we see:

- *A Reference to the Coming Day of the Lord*

In Luke 1:16 and Matthew 17:12 we see:

- *A Reference to a Need for Repentance*

⁶ It is true that, initially, Peter, James, and John did think Elijah had “come” when he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration. But Jesus did not confirm this as a fulfillment of the prophecy. Elijah’s “coming” on the mount did not “turn the hearts” of any Jewish people except possibly Peter, James, and John.

In Matthew 17:11 we see:

- *A Reference to a Restoration*

The ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth brought an end to the Old Covenant. Then through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit - the promised Covenant Blessing - the New Covenant was inaugurated on the Day of Pentecost. Both John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth successfully carried out what God had sent them to do and effected a restoration in Israel. But the fact is, this visitation was embraced by relatively few people in Israel. Jesus also points out that John the Baptist and He were largely rejected:

“...‘but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also, the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.”

Matthew 17:12-13

And in Mark’s record we see Jesus also posing a question:

“And He said to them, “Elijah does come **first**, and he restores all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?” Mark 9:12

I believe that through this question Jesus indicates that while there was a fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy, there is a future fulfillment of this prophecy in which something – or someone - will come (again) *“in the spirit and power of Elijah”* for another, progressive fulfillment of the prophecy – namely, a more complete restoration.

Having said this, I must also say: The restoration brought through John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth did not win EVERY Jew in Israel – in fact, relatively few. Never-the-less, the work of God's Spirit is **perfect** and **complete**.⁷ It does not need validation by great numbers of people. What God does is one thing. Humanity's response is another thing. The scriptures indicate that, whether Gentile or Jew, only a Remnant will be saved.⁸ If there is another John the Baptist / Elijah ministry preceding and preparing the way for the return of Christ in the future, it may – or may not – effect “a great harvest of souls”. *“Many are called, but few are chosen.”*⁹ Even after *“the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom as a testimony to all the nations”*,¹⁰ we have no idea about how large the Remnant will

⁷ Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Samuel 22:31; Psalm 18:30

⁸ Isaiah 6:13, 10:20-22; Romans 9:28-29, 11:26.

⁹ Matthew 22:14

¹⁰ Matthew 24:14

be.¹¹ Never-the-less, I believe we can look for more “times of refreshing” and “the period of restoration” before the Day of the Lord – the 2nd Coming of Christ.



“Progressive Fulfillments of Biblical Prophecy” is an excerpt from the book *“Heroic”*, which is also available in [paperback](#) format.



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“Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.”

1 Corinthians 2:13

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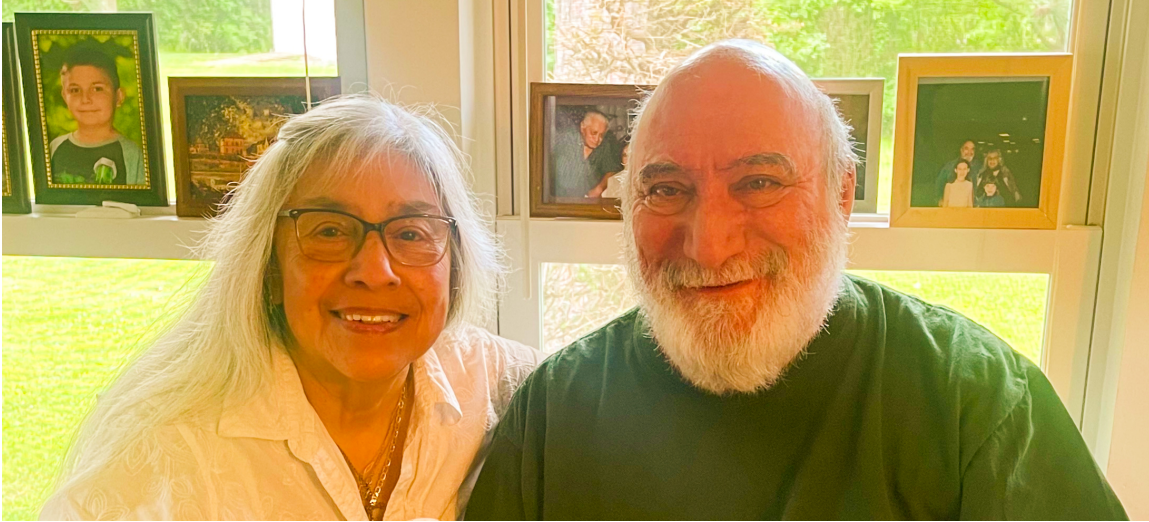
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¹¹ Cf. “Who has believed our report?.... They did not all believe the gospel.” Isaiah 52:1; John 12:38; Romans 10:16.

Bill & Frances Furioso
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, discipled many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... www.AtChristsTable.org

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