

## Old Testament Prophetic Concepts

### 1. Single Fulfillment

This is when a prophecy is spoken and it is to be fulfilled one time and one time only. An example would be that of Isaiah 14:24-25. This is a specific prophecy about the destruction of Assyria. From studying history, we know that the nation of Assyria was destroyed in 612 BC, their lead role in the world assumed by the Babylonians. Due to this destruction, we recognize this prophecy has a single fulfillment.

### 2. Double Fulfillment

When we speak of double fulfillment of prophecy, we mean that the specific prophecy spoken will be fulfilled twice. Most times, it is first fulfilled in the not distant future, probably sometime around the time it was spoken. Yet, there is also a greater fulfillment that is to come in the distant future. We could also look at an example in the writings of Isaiah 7:14. This prophecy was initially fulfilled through the birth Maher-shalal-hash-baz who was a son of Isaiah born to him by his second wife (Isaiah 8:1-10). This prophecy was fulfilled in a greater way through the birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:18-25). He was the great sign of Emmanuel, God with us in the flesh!

### 3. Cumulative Fulfillment

This means the prophecy will be fulfilled progressively, or increasingly throughout time. We can again look at an example in Isaiah 9:6-7. This is a prophecy concerning the coming increase of God's kingdom. Though we could state that this prophecy was initiated through the birth of Christ (vs. 6), it is being fulfilled more and more throughout history (vs. 7) as the Church grows through the proclamation of the Gospel. The 'mustard seed' of the kingdom of Jesus Christ is growing ever more into the full tree (Matthew 13:31-32).

#### 4. Prophetic Foreshortening

Anthony Hoekema defines this as "events far removed in time and events in the near future are spoken of as if they were very close together." The prophetic perspective is a "foreshortened perspective." According to Delitzsch, it is "the foreshortening of the prophet's horizon whereby future events are seen as near at hand or already present, though in fulfillment they may prove to be centuries removed from the prophet's day." We can look at a mountain range for an illustration of this concept (see diagram on the back). When one stands far away from a mountain range, it seems as if each mountain peak follows one after the other, all with no gap in between them. Yet, as one walks, or drives, through the range, you realize that there are quite large gaps between each particular mountain, maybe even miles. This is the idea behind prophetic foreshortening. We can specifically note this through prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. The prophets specifically spoke of Him as both a suffering servant (Isaiah 52:13-53:12) and a victorious king (Isaiah 11:1-4; Micah 5:2). When these prophecies were first spoken (or penned), the prophets might have imagined them as being fulfilled simultaneously as some point in the future. Yet, as history moved forward, we have seen that there was actually a 'gap' existing between these two prophetic descriptions of the Anointed One. In Christ's first coming, He was mainly a suffering servant, but in His final return He will fully reign as the victorious King.

Additionally, such foreshortening, can involve foreshadowing, or typology ('Type'= shared characteristics that foreshadowed Jesus. 'Anti-type'= the fulfillment and substance of the previous type. I.e., kings, priests, prophets, wisdom, sacrifice, etc.). Jesus' "Olivet Discourse" recorded in Matthew 24-25, engages in prophetic foreshortening with the destruction of the temple in the near future (fulfilled in 70 AD) and His Return when He will fully establish His Kingdom that He initiated as His First Coming through His death, resurrection and ascension into heaven at the Father's right hand. The destruction of the temple with Jerusalem in 70 AD is a type, a foreshadowing, of the Judgment Jesus will bring upon His Return in establishing His eternal New Creation Kingdom.