

# Bite Size Bible Study

## Prophecy Part 2 #261

By Lee Logue

### Biblical Typology

If you are familiar with the term Topology, it is probably in terms of mathematics. However, Biblical typology is a method of studying Scripture where people, events, or things in the Old Testament (called *types*) act as patterns that foreshadow greater realities or fulfillments in the New Testament (called *antitypes*). This is a belief that God is guiding history to create a consistent, meaningful pattern centered on Jesus the Messiah.

Many Christians read the Old Testament as a story pointing to Jesus. There are passages that point forward directly; others that are fulfilled through pattern, typology, repeated themes, or the way that Jesus embodies Israel's story.

Understanding typological prophecy helps us understand the overarching theme of scripture by using both testaments. It helps in reducing the error of seeing separated stories and events and thus reducing scripture to an Anthology.

The prophet Isaiah was given a glimpse of what the Messiah would be like and recorded it for the benefit of Israel and us.

### The Suffering and Glory of the Servant

*See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him, his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness so he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him.*

*For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.*

*Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.*

*Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our 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 its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.*

*By oppression and judgment, he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people, he was punished. 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 an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.*

*After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.*

*Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.*

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Isaiah wrote these words sometime between 740 and 680 BC in anticipation of events more than 100 years after his death. They are intended to bring comfort to the Israelites in Babylonian captivity (597-538 BC)—yet they won't receive their fulfillment until nearly 600 years after that!

Luke wrote the following after Jesus' death and resurrection.

*Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.*

*"How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So, he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.*

*This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:*

*"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.*

<sup>33</sup> *In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.*

*Who can speak of his descendants?*

*For his life was taken from the earth."*<sup>1b</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?"* <sup>35</sup> *Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. Acts 8:30-35*

"The Old Testament is thus the firm foundation for all of redemptive history; it provides the framework for understanding Jesus, which is why the New Testament authors took such great pains to quote, allude to, echo and interpret the Old Testament in their writings. These authors recognized that Jesus' birth and ministry confirmed his identity as the Davidic Messiah in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy."

Here are a couple of other prophecies about Jesus

### Example of Jonah

The story of Jonah and the fish in the Old Testament offers an example of typology. In the Old Testament Book of Jonah, Jonah told his shipmates to throw him overboard, explaining that God's wrath would pass if Jonah were sacrificed, and that the sea would become calm. Jonah then spent three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish before it spat him up onto dry land.

Typological interpretation of this story holds that it prefigures Christ's burial and resurrection. The stomach of the fish represented Christ's tomb; as Jonah exited from the fish after three days and three nights, so did Christ rise from His tomb on the third day. In the New Testament, Jesus invokes Jonah in the manner of a type: *"As the crowds increased, Jesus said, 'This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah'"* Luke 11:29–32.

### Joseph

Genesis Chapters 37–50 have the story of Joseph in Egypt, and Joseph is commonly cited as a Christ type.

Joseph is a very special son to his father. From his father's perspective, Joseph dies and then comes back to life as the second in command of Egypt. Joseph's brothers deceive their father by dipping his coat in the blood of a sacrificed goat (Genesis 37:31). Later, Joseph's father finds that Joseph is alive and is a ruler of

Egypt who saves them from a great famine. Other parallels between Joseph and Jesus include:

- Both are rejected by their own people.
- Both became servants.
- Both were betrayed for silver.
- Both were falsely accused and face false witnesses.
- Both attained stations at the "right hand" of the respective thrones (Joseph at Pharaoh's throne and Christ at the throne of God).
- Joseph was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh, and Jesus was about the same age, according to the Bible, when he began his ministry.
- Both provided for the salvation of Gentiles. Joseph provided a physical salvation in preparing for the famine, while Christ provided the deeper spiritual salvation.
- Joseph married an Egyptian wife, bringing her into the Abrahamic lineage; Christ's relationship with the church is also described in marriage terms in the New Testament by including the Gentiles.
- A direct parallel with Joseph ruling over all of Egypt, and that only Pharaoh would be greater in the throne (Genesis 41:40) is repeated in 1 Corinthians 15:27 with regards to Jesus.
- Both suffered greatly, and through patience and humbleness were exalted greatly by God, who gave in abundance all things over time.

### Reflection and Application

- What did Isaiah's prophecy mean in its original setting?
- How has the New Testament connected this to Jesus?
- What kind of fulfillment seems to be happening?
- How is this different than predictive prophecy?
- How does this deepen your understanding of Jesus?
- What is risky about reading either Testament without the other?
- Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are deeply connected to Israel's Scriptures, but is the fulfillment complete or are there other layers of meaning?