

# **Biblical Theology:**

## **Reading the Bible as One Book**

### **Covenant Life College**

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## **Session 1**

### **Prophecy and Fulfillment**

1. Beginning with Moses, the Old Testament is filled with prophets. The prophet's role was to communicate God's truth through a verbal message.
2. The prophet's role was not primarily to foretell the future—at least not in the sense of crystal ball gazing. His words functioned in a variety of ways:
  - a. To explain: the ways of God to man so that man could understand reality and conform himself to God and his will.
  - b. To warn: when God's people stepped out of God's will and violated his laws without repentance, the prophet would warn God's people that if they did not repent, God would bring upon them the discipline he promised in the Law of Moses.
  - c. To guide: When kings or the nation needed help in deciding what to do in their circumstances, the prophet would give them guidance from God.
  - d. To comfort: When God's people were suffering under affliction—even affliction that they brought upon themselves by inviting God's discipline through their sin—the prophet would remind God's people by speaking words of hope for future restoration.
  - e. To interpret: Historical events need to be interpreted so that we can understand their meaning and know how to respond to them. Sometimes the prophets would act out a prophecy, but always with an interpretation to follow.
  - f. To foretell: God made many promises to us regarding his future work of redemption by delivering his people from the penalty of their sin, from Satan, from human oppression, and from suffering and death.

3. Beyond the specific words of prophecy, the Old Testament history, offices, and institutions formed “types” or “patterns” whose understanding can only be obtained through understanding the words and works of Jesus.
  - a. The New Testament calls these “shadows” or “copies” or “types” or “patterns” (see Rom. 5:14; Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:1-7; 10:1) which unfold through the Old Testament period and result in the revelation of Jesus Christ.
  - b. Hebrews 8:5 uses these words in reference to the tabernacle where Israel approached the presence of God through sacrifice:
    - *They [the priests] serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern [literally type] shown you on the mountain."*
  - c. This word group expresses the idea that God’s work through Israel was true and real but not adequate to achieve his final purposes for mankind.
  - d. A type is not an analogy or an allegory. Both analogy and allegory stress that though there are similarities between the two things compared, they are fundamentally different.
  - e. A type is real and effective, and it is also a pattern or copy. While it does a real work and expresses a spiritual reality, it cannot achieve what the final reality (called an anti-type) can.
  - f. Matthew 5:17—Jesus identifies himself as the fulfillment of these “types.”