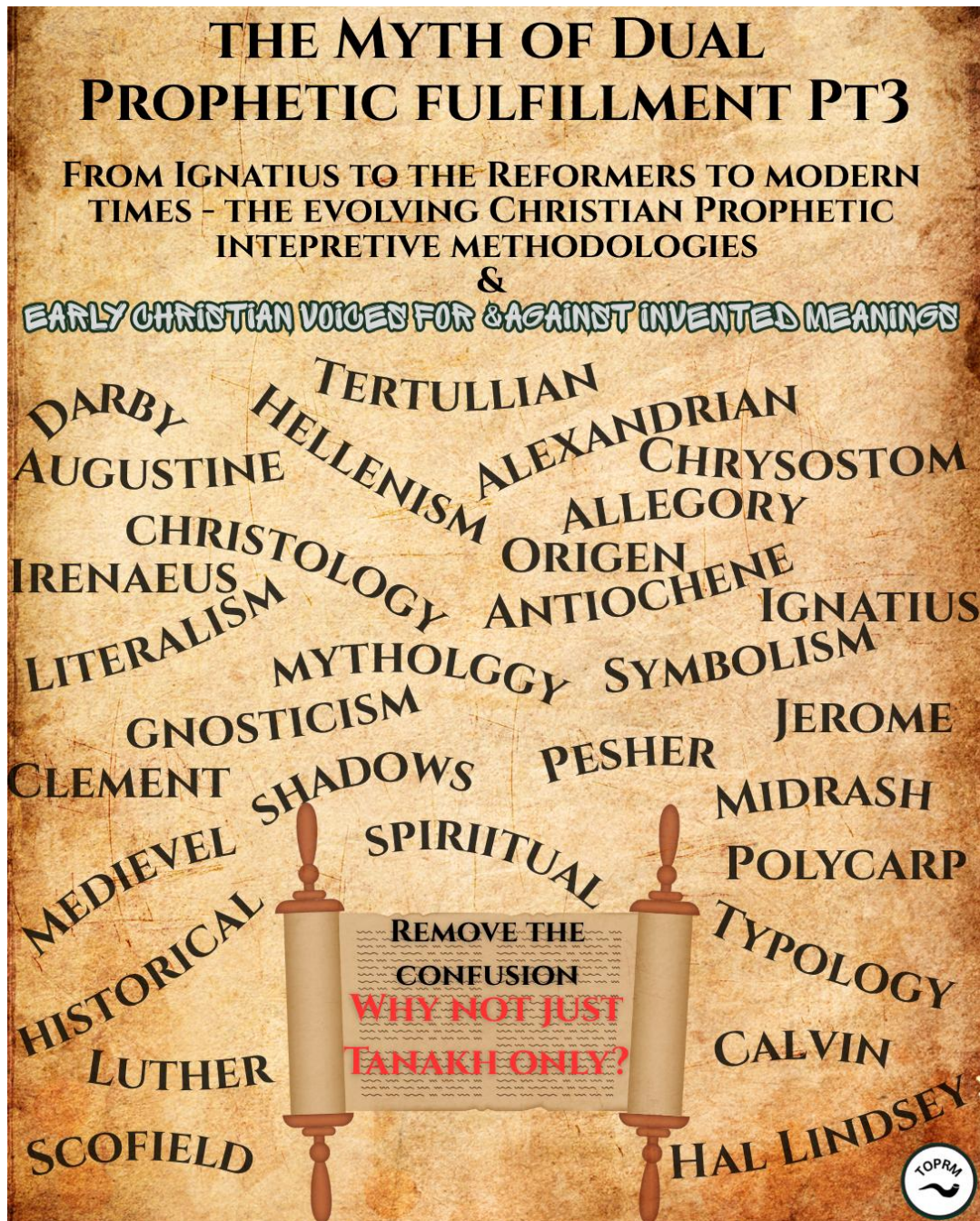




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THE MYTH OF DUAL PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT — PART 3

Early Christian Voices For & Against Invented Meanings

“One Meaning, Not Two: How the Earliest Christians Read Prophecy”

Author’s disclaimer: Although this study cites early Christian writers—from Ignatius and Polycarp to Irenaeus, Jerome, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin—we do so **only** for the historical value of their comments on prophetic interpretation. We are a **Tanakh-only, Scriptural restorationist group**, and we do **not** subscribe to Christianity’s theological systems, doctrines, nor to the Christological claims held by these men. Their value in this study is limited to one point: they provide historical evidence that **dual fulfillment was unknown, unpracticed, and unaccepted** in their time. Citing them does not imply agreement with their theology or to the whole of Christianity’s either; it simply demonstrates that even within their own traditions—traditions we do not follow—**no one taught dual fulfillment**.

Our attempt in this multipart teaching is to show that the historical and documented evidence is that thru the use of Christianity’s own fathers of their faith to prove that the dual prophetic fulfillment doctrine was not taught or accepted until the mid-20th century. In other words, we are using Christianity to disprove the Christian doctrine of dual fulfillment. This refutation is also found even within modern Christian Scholarly Academics.

This is new research of which there is very little to nothing written on and therefore our research is in its infancy and therefore we admit there is much missing or untold information and possible errors in documentation that we have not yet discovered for or against our thesis. We bring our research forward to the public for your own review and private study to prove to yourselves the legitimacy of this work.

In Part 2, we traced the historical development and evolution of the idea of “dual fulfillment doctrine.” We saw that:

- Judaism never taught it
- Early Christianity never taught it
- The medieval Church did not teach it
- The Reformers even rejected multiple meanings, pausing the evolution of the doctrine
- Post-Reformation Christianity took a step back toward the medieval interpretation
- Dispensationalism (1800s) systematized the idea
- And only in the **mid-20th century** did dual fulfillment become mainstream in Christian prophecy teaching

Part 3 might seem like we are just retelling Part 2, and it is true there will always be overlap between each chapter, but Part 3 asks a deeper question: **How did the earliest Christian interpreters understand prophecy? Did they believe a verse could have two literal fulfillments?**

To answer that, we must first clear up a major modern confusion:

Many Christians, Messianic and Hebraic Roots, confuse early Christian typology or symbolic application with dual fulfillment although the former eventually evolved and led to the latter.

They see the New Testament apply a verse from Tanakh to Jesus (Yahshua) or to a NT event and assume: “Ah! That must be a second fulfillment.” But our research shows that the ancient world just did not think this way. Before we examine the early Christian witnesses, we must define the interpretive methods modern Christians constantly blend together and that blending creates unintentional confusion. That confusion influences and diverts modern day Christians to see dual fulfillment in the NT writers and men who wrote nearest the time when the NT went from oral stories to being written down. But once that confusion of mixed prophetic application is removed, one should see that rather than dual fulfillment, the earliest Christian writers were either teaching typology or symbolic interpretation and or one single fulfillment which is admittedly centered in Jesus or NT occurrences. See part two of this teaching for typology, proof texts, peshet and midrashic interpretative methods employed by the NT writers and those of early Christianity. .

We will also see later that during Antiochene school of thought and into the thoughts of the Western Fathers and the Reformers that there were those of Christianity that actually found some common ground with Judaism and a Tanakh only worldview of a single fulfillment and that being in the original timeline of the prophets when the prophecies were spoken.

Interpretive Methods

There are several differing methods used in NT theological interpretation. Scholars would call them “schools of thought.” Only one of them is modern. Only one of them is foreign to the ancient world. Only one of them is the doctrine we are dismantling. We will first examine the more ancient to early Christian methods. Judaism and a Tanakh only interpretation are only briefly included due to the simple reason that they are not Christian. See parts one and two of this multipart teaching for a brief Tanakh only interpretative explanation. We are instead examining the Christian historical evolution of the doctrine. Our method in part three of disproving dual fulfillment is to simply allow Christians to disprove their own doctrine. Using the voices of the early Christians to dismantle the voices of modern Christians pertaining to this latest prophetic interpretive method. Surprisingly, the strongest adherents to this newest prophetic interpretive method, seem to have no awareness that what they believe, has never been the historical posture of their faith.

The first category of NT theological interpretive methods must be acknowledged for clarity. As we saw in Part One of this teaching, one of the methods that the New Testament writers often employed was to assume what is known as a *Christological single fulfillment*—meaning they treat Jesus as the one true and exclusive fulfillment of the prophets, even when the original context in the Tanakh clearly refers to events in the prophet’s own time. This is not dual fulfillment, because it does not claim two literal fulfillments. It is not typology, because it does not treat the text as a symbolic pattern. And it is not the Jewish single-fulfillment method, which anchors meaning in the original historical setting. It is a unique New Testament phenomenon in which prophetic passages are re-read through a Christ-centered lens. This distinction must be made so that readers do not confuse the NT’s Christological re-reading with the later Christian doctrine of dual fulfillment and our other interpretive methods now under discussion.

Although later Christian interpretation developed into identifiable “schools” such as Alexandria (allegorical, multi-layered readings) and Antioch (literal-historical, single meaning), the earliest post-apostolic voices do not belong to either movement. Ignatius, but especially Polycarp and Irenaeus are examples that stand much closer to the interpretive instinct of the New Testament writers themselves. The use of Scripture by Polycarp and Irenaeus reflects a simple, unified, Christological reading in which prophecy possesses one intention and one fulfillment that is in their Christ or an event in the NT, not multiple layers of fulfillments. They neither allegorize like the school of Alexandria (as we shall see) nor literalize like Antioch (seen later); instead, they preserve the apostolic pattern of a single prophetic meaning which according to them was realized only in their Christ. In this sense, they represent the continuation of what is believed to be the NT’s own interpretive posture rather than the later interpretive schools. This is only so if we are to take it for granted that the NT writers did not embellish the oral stories and or that no later interpolations or redactions with the text had taken place.

Consequentially and conspiratorially speaking, we cannot take anything for granted concerning this topic and New Testament textual criticism. But this latter statement we will set to the side in this teaching only to periodically bring it up to the ponderance of the reader. For now, we will remain in the academics of the historicity of the established scholarly and investigative evidence.

Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35–110 CE) One Christological Meaning

Ignatius of Antioch was born around 35 CE, only a few years after the execution of the alleged historical Jesus, although a small minority of modern scholars date him a bit later in the first century. This places him inside the living memory of the apostolic era, yet long before the New Testament existed as a written collection or canon. Growing up in Antioch, the first major Gentile assembly, Ignatius inherited a form of Christianity shaped almost entirely by **oral teachings** and the social life of early Greek-speaking Christians. His theological development occurred before Paul’s letters, the Gospels, or any other New Testament writings were widely being circulated.

Ignatius lived during the lifetime of the apostles, but there is no evidence he ever met them or received apostolic teaching directly. Ignatius lived in Antioch, but there is no historical evidence that Ignatius ever met Paul or sat under his teaching. The tradition that he was taught by apostles is late thinking and unreliable although it does exist.

As a **Hellenistic Gentile**, Ignatius was shaped far more by **Greek philosophical beliefs** than by Jewish Scripture or Jewish interpretive methods. Antioch was a major center of Greek education, and the persuasive teaching styles of the philosophy of stoicism, and Ignatius' writings reflect this environment. His writing emphasis leaned toward Gnosticism and mythology with heroic godmen martyrdom, which were already within the Greek minds and all parallel Greek stoic philosophy, not the Torah-rooted worldview of the Jerusalem apostles and of the Tanakh. He does not interpret Scripture like a Jew, instead he expresses the earliest form of **Hellenistic Christianity**, where Greek philosophical ideas blended with the oral stories of Jesus. This same blending unknowingly is very much imbedded in all of modern Christianity, as Paul is the true originator of the Christian religion more so than their Christ, although their Christ is where it centers. Without Paul, we believe it would be safe to say that there would be no Christianity as it is known to be in modern times.

When Ignatius finally wrote his seven letters near the end of his life (c. 107–110 CE), most of the New Testament writings were already in early circulation and but still no canon. Yet **Ignatius never directly quotes any New Testament book**, never names a NT author, and never treats any Christian writing as Scripture. Scholars, including the Anchor Bible Dictionary, remain unsure whether Ignatius ever read any of the NT writings at all.

His letters contain **loose parallels and paraphrased ideas as if of the NT**, and yet no formal quotations, and no sign that the written Christian texts shaped his theology. His beliefs remained rooted in the **pre-NT cannon, oral, Hellenistic form of Christianity** he had received in his youth.

Ignatius did write one of his letters to Polycarp, but this does not imply he knew the New Testament writings. Polycarp himself did not possess a New Testament as we know it, and the NT canon did not yet exist. Knowing Polycarp personally does not mean Ignatius had read Matthew, Paul, John, or any other NT writings.. Nothing in Ignatius' letter to Polycarp suggests he had ever read a Gospel or Epistle.

Ignatius and Polycarp knew each other, but they did not share the exact same worldview. Polycarp preserved the Christianity of the Johannine tradition, while Ignatius expressed a more Hellenistic, mystical, and proto-Gnostic form of early Gentile Christianity. Their relationship was as if they were colleagues but not theologically, and Polycarp did not adopt Ignatius' views nor Ignatius his.

This fits the broader historical reality: **none of the early post-apostolic leaders—Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Clement, or their contemporaries—possessed a New Testament or showed clear knowledge of one.** Their Christianity was shaped by oral stories, social memory, and the philosophical environment of the Greco-Roman world, not by a fixed written canon.

This also explains why early Christian writings differ so sharply from Jewish Scripture. **Jewish scribes preserved the Torah with extreme precision**, reproducing even accidental ink blots to avoid altering the sacred text.

In contrast, **Greco-Roman scribes freely edited, blended, paraphrased, and reshaped texts**, including early Christian writings. They had no inherited fear of altering sacred text, and they operated within a literary culture where “improving” a document was normal.

This cultural difference helps explain why the New Testament contains Greek philosophical categories, contradictions, blending of Greek and pagan understandings, and missing Jewish idioms. This was briefly touched upon in part one of this teaching wherein we hinted that the writers of the NT text either embellished the original oral stories in their writings or that the NT texts were tampered with sometime afterward all to enhance a narrative of which the historical Jesus (Yahshua) may have not held.

Ignatius therefore stands as a first-generation post-apostolic witness whose theology was formed independently of the New Testament and deeply shaped by Hellenistic thought. He represents the earliest stage of Gentile Christian interpretation—oral, Greek, philosophical, and notably **absent** of later interpretive systems such as dual fulfillment, Alexandrian allegory, or Antiochene literalism. His life and writings show how **loose the connection was between the events of the New Testament and the leaders who shaped Christianity in the generations immediately afterward.**

Ignatius of Antioch is essential because:

- He is **first century**
- He is **pre-Alexandrian**
- He is **pre-Antiochene**
- He is **pre-allegory**
- He is **pre-organized theology**
- He is **pre-Reformation**
- He is **pre-dispensationalism**
- **He is pre-New Testament canon**

Ignatius gives us the earliest Gentile Christian voice outside the New Testament. This is why we are devoting so much time to him in this teaching. His witness is crucial because it shows the **raw, earliest Gentile Christian instinct about prophecy** — and that instinct is **not dual fulfillment**.

Ignatius wrote his seven authentic letters while being transported to Rome for execution (c. 107–110 CE). These letters reflect:

- a **Hellenistic Gentile worldview**, not a Jewish-Christian one
- a **Greek philosophical mindset** shaped by Stoic ethics and civic virtue
- **oral Jesus tradition**, not written NT texts
- **mythological and cosmic imagery** (Anchor Bible Dictionary)
- **no evidence of dual fulfillment**
- **no formal quotations** of the New Testament
- **no Jewish interpretive methods**
- **no Tanakh exegesis**

Ignatius' theology was formed **decades before** the NT existed and was shaped by **Greek philosophical categories**, not by Jewish Scripture or apostolic exegesis.

According to his writings in Philadelphians 8:2 (c. 107–110 CE)

Ignatius reports that some Jews told him: “If I do not find it in the ancient archives, I will not believe the Gospel.” (*Philadelphians* 8:2)

If Ignatius believed in dual fulfillment, he would have answered: “The verse had a fulfillment then, and a second fulfillment now.”

But he does **not** say this. Instead, he answers: “To me, Jesus Christ is the ancient archives; His cross, and death, and resurrection are the inviolable archives.” (*Philadelphians* 8:2)

What this means:

Ignatius believed:

- The Tanakh has **one meaning**
- That meaning is **Christ**
- The OT is not a book with two fulfillments
- Earlier events are **shadows**, not second fulfillments
- Christ is the **single interpretive center**

This is **not** Jewish typology. This is **Hellenistic Christ-centered reinterpretation** — the same pattern seen in early Gentile Christianity.

Ignatius's form of Typology: The Prophets “Anticipated Christ”

Ignatius repeatedly describes the prophets as **anticipating** or **prefiguring** Christ. In *Magnesians* 9:2, he writes: “The prophets... lived according to Jesus Christ. They were His disciples in the Spirit.”

What this means:

Ignatius believed:

- The prophets were not predicting two events
- They were pointing to **one reality — Christ**
- Their historical context was a **shadow**
- **Christ was the substance**

This is **not** a later school of Alexandrian allegory. It is **simple, single-meaning Christological reading**, typical of early Gentile Christianity that had blended Hellenistic philosophy.

Ignatius's Interpretation: Christ as the Meaning of Scripture

Ignatius's interpretive method can be summarized in one sentence: **Christ is the meaning of Scripture and primarily how they relate to the NT writings.**

He does **not** say as an example:

- “The prophets spoke of Ahaz AND Jesus.”
- “The prophets spoke of Israel AND Jesus.”
- “The prophets spoke of the exile AND Jesus.”

He says:

- “The prophets spoke of Jesus.”
- “Christ is the archives.”
- “Christ is the meaning.”

This is **not** Jewish exegesis. It is **Hellenistic Christological reinterpretation.**

Ignatius uses the phrase “according to Jesus Christ” repeatedly in his writings:

- *Ephesians 19:1*
- *Magesians 8:2*
- *Trallians 9:2*
- *Philadelphians 5:1*

All written c. 107–110 CE. In every case, the meaning is **singular**, not dual.

Why Ignatius Matters: Ignatius is the earliest Christian voice we have outside the NT. His testimony is devastating to the idea of dual fulfillment.

- ✓ Ignatius believed in one Christological meaning
- ✓ Ignatius used single-meaning typology, not dual fulfillment
- ✓ Ignatius never taught two literal fulfillments
- ✓ Ignatius predates all interpretive schools
- ✓ Ignatius shows the earliest Gentile instinct was one meaning
- ✓ Ignatius's writings contain zero evidence of dual fulfillment
- ✓ Ignatius did not know the NT canon
- ✓ Scholars believe that he probably never met any of the Apostles
- ✓ Scholars are unsure he ever read any NT writings (Anchor Bible Dictionary)

If the earliest Christian writer outside the NT did not teach dual fulfillment, then dual fulfillment is not an apostolic doctrine. Although not dual fulfillment in the modern sense, we can easily see how it could evolve from it.

Books dealing with Ignatius from our Ministry library

Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew*

Cybil Charles Richardson, *The Christianity of Ignatius of Antioch*

MacKinley Helm, *After Pentecost/A History of Christian Ideas and Institutions from Peter and Paul to Ignatius of Antioch*

Thomas A. Robinson, *Ignatius of Antioch and the Parting of the Ways-Early Jewish Christian Relations*

The Anchor Bible Dictionary, 1992 1st edition 6 volumes

Documentation of Ignatius' Hellenistic worldview and Greek philosophical influence

- **Allen Brent, *Ignatius of Antioch and the Second Sophistic*** Demonstrates that Ignatius' theology is shaped by **Greek rhetoric, Stoic ethics, and Hellenistic civic philosophy**, not Jewish apostolic tradition.
- **William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch (Hermeneia Commentary)*** Shows Ignatius' worldview is **Hellenistic**, his Christology uses **Greek metaphysics**, and his letters reflect **Greek rhetorical culture** rather than Jewish interpretive methods.
- **Anchor Bible Dictionary, "Ignatius of Antioch"** Notes Ignatius' **Hellenistic background**, his use of **mythological and cosmic imagery**, and his alignment with **Greek philosophical categories** rather than Jewish scriptural tradition.

Ignatius did not quote the New Testament; scholars unsure he ever read it

- **Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers (Loeb Classical Library)*** States that Ignatius uses **allusions and paraphrases**, but **no direct quotations** of NT writings and shows **no evidence** of treating any NT text as Scripture.
- **J.B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*** Concludes that Ignatius' letters show **no textual dependence** on the NT and reflect a **pre-canonical** form of Christianity.
- **Ryan G. McGaha, "The Biblical Christology of Ignatius of Antioch," SBJT (2025)** Notes that it is **"difficult to tell how well a canon of Scripture was developed"** in Ignatius' time and that his references are **allusions, not quotations**.
- **Anchor Bible Dictionary, "Ignatius of Antioch"** Confirms that scholars remain **uncertain whether Ignatius ever read any New Testament writings**, as his letters contain **no formal quotations** and only loose echoes.

Early Christian leaders (Ignatius, Polycarp, etc.) did not possess a New Testament

- **Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*** Shows that early 2nd-century Christian communities relied on **oral tradition**, not written Gospels, and that the NT was **not yet fixed or authoritative**.
- **Raymond E. Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*** Confirms that the NT canon was **not formed** in Ignatius' lifetime and that early leaders operated in a **pre-canonical environment**.
- **Anchor Bible Dictionary, "Polycarp"** Notes that Polycarp himself lived **before the NT canon existed**, and his scriptural references are **mixed, oral, and non-canonical**.

Ignatius shows mythological and proto-Gnostic tendencies

- **Theological Studies Journal**, “**Ignatius of Antioch: Gnostic or Essene?**” Documents Ignatius’ use of **cosmic dualism, mythic imagery, and non-Jewish metaphysics**, aligning him with early **Hellenistic religious thought**.
- **Anchor Bible Dictionary**, “**Ignatius of Antioch**” Highlights Ignatius’ **mythological language, cosmic Christology, and non-Jewish metaphysical categories**, noting similarities to early **proto-Gnostic** patterns.

Jewish scribal precision vs. Greek scribal freedom

- **Emanuel Tov**, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* Explains that Jewish scribes preserved Torah with **extreme precision**, reproducing even accidental marks to avoid altering the sacred text.
- **Harry Gamble**, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* Shows that Greco-Roman scribes freely **edited, harmonized, paraphrased, and reshaped** texts, including early Christian writings — a completely different scribal culture.
- **Anchor Bible Dictionary**, “**Text, NT**” Notes that early Christian scribes operated within **Greco-Roman literary norms**, resulting in **textual variation, harmonization, and theological shaping** in NT manuscripts.

But all of that being stated and documented, Ignatius of Antioch — was the earliest Christian witness outside the New Testament, whose letters survive. His writings give us a window into **how the earliest Gentile Hellenistic Christians read prophecy before any formal interpretive schools existed**. Their beliefs were highly Hellenized.

Polycarp and Irenaeus: The Johannine Line of Interpretation

If Ignatius shows us the earliest Hellenistic Gentile instinct about prophecy, Polycarp and Irenaeus show us the interpretive method of the Apostle John’s own students.

- Ignatius was a **contemporary** of John
- Polycarp was **John’s disciple**
- Irenaeus was **Polycarp’s disciple**

This gives us the closest possible chain to apostolic interpretation:

John → Polycarp → Irenaeus

If dual fulfillment were apostolic, we would expect to find it here. But we do **not**. None of them teach dual fulfillment. None of them interpret prophecy with two literal fulfillments. None of them use the later Alexandrian or Antiochene methods.

Polycarp of Smyrna (c. 69–155 CE): John’s Disciple

Polycarp was:

- Bishop of Smyrna
- A direct student of the Apostle John
- Also a contemporary of Ignatius
- A major source of apostolic teaching

Although only one letter from Polycarp survives, we know he was a disciple of the Apostle John because Irenaeus — who personally knew Polycarp — repeatedly testifies that Polycarp was taught by John and other eyewitnesses of Jesus. Early Christian writers consistently preserve Polycarp’s reputation as a major source of apostolic teaching, even though most of his writings have been lost.

Polycarp’s interpretive method: Scripture Means What It Says

Polycarp’s only surviving letter, *To the Philippians* (c. 110–135 CE), quotes the Tanakh and the New Testament extensively.

But Polycarp:

- Never uses dual fulfillment
- Never assigns two literal meanings to a prophecy
- Never interprets a verse as having two historical fulfillments

Instead, he treats Scripture as having **one meaning**, applied ethically and Christologically.

Documentation:

In *Philippians* 12:1 (c. 110–135 CE), Polycarp writes: “As it is written in the Scriptures... these things are plain to us.”

Polycarp’s emphasis is on:

- The **plain** meaning
- The **ethical moral** meaning
- The **Christ-centered** meaning

But never on **multiple fulfillments**.

Key point: Polycarp, John’s disciple, shows no trace of dual fulfillment.

Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130–202 CE): Polycarp's Disciple

Irenaeus is one of the most important theologians of the second century.

He was:

- A student of Polycarp
- A defender of NT apostolic tradition
- A major opponent of Gnosticism
- A careful interpreter of prophecy

Irenaeus's interpretive method: One Fulfillment in Christ

In *Against Heresies* (c. 180 CE), Irenaeus repeatedly argues that:

- The prophets spoke of **Christ**
- The meaning of prophecy is **singular**
- The fulfillment of prophecy is **Christ alone**
- The OT is a **unified witness** to Christ

Documentation:

In Against Heresies 4.26.1 (c. 180 CE), Irenaeus writes: "All the prophets prophesied of one and the same Christ."

In 4.9.2, he insists: "The Scriptures are perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit."

And in 3.21.4, he argues: "The prophets did not speak of many Christs, but of one Christ."

What this means:

Irenaeus believed:

- **Prophecy has one intended meaning.**
- **That meaning is fulfilled once, not twice.**
- **Its fulfillment is Christ — not a double pattern or dual event.**

Key point: Irenaeus, Polycarp's disciple, explicitly teaches **one fulfillment**, not two.

Why Polycarp and Irenaeus Matter

These two men form the **Johannine interpretive lineage**: John → Polycarp → Irenaeus

If dual fulfillment were apostolic:

- Polycarp would teach it
- Irenaeus would defend it
- The Johannine tradition would preserve it

But instead we find:

- ✓ Polycarp → one plain meaning
- ✓ Irenaeus → one Christological fulfillment
- ✓ No dual fulfillment
- ✓ No two literal fulfillments
- ✓ No two historical events
- ✓ No two authorial intentions

This is devastating to the modern doctrine.

Conclusion: The students of the Apostle John did not teach dual fulfillment. Therefore, dual fulfillment is not apostolic.

The first non-Johannine lineage post-NT interpretive method

***Typology (Ancient Christian, Alexandrian)**

The Alexandrian school of thought (c. 180–250 CE early formation. See part two of this teaching pertaining to the Medieval fourfold sense of prophetic interpretation or application.

Alexandrian Typology Definition: A historical event or person in the Tanakh is a **symbol**, **pattern**, or **shadow** that points to Christ or an event in Christianity's New Testament — but this is **not** a second literal fulfillment. **Typology is symbolic, not a predictive interpretation.**

Key point: Typology = one literal fulfillment (OT/Tanakh) + one symbolic application (NT). It is not dual fulfillment.

The Alexandrian School: One Spiritual Fulfillment

This school is essential for Part 3 because it shows that even the most allegorical Christians — the ones most likely to multiply meanings — **still rejected dual fulfillment**.

The *Alexandrian school* refers to the early Christian interpretive tradition centered in **Alexandria, Egypt**, represented by figures such as **Clement of Alexandria** (c. 150–215 CE) and **Origen** (c. 184–253 CE).

What they believed: The Alexandrians emphasized the **spiritual** or **allegorical** meaning of Scripture. They taught that the literal, historical meaning was often a **shadow, shell, or veil**, and the true meaning was the **spiritual message pointing to Christ**.

Common-language explanation: Alexandria believed prophecy has **one spiritual fulfillment** — Christ — not two literal fulfillments.

Why Alexandria Matters

If any group in early Christianity were going to teach dual fulfillment, it would be the Alexandrians. They loved symbolism. They loved hidden meanings. They loved spiritual interpretation.

But they **never** taught dual fulfillment. They taught **one meaning**, not two.

Clement of Alexandria: Scripture Has Hidden Meanings, Not Multiple Meanings

Clement did not possess a New Testament because no New Testament canon existed in his lifetime. He knew some Christian writings, but he never quotes them as Scripture, never names an author, and never treats any Christian text as authoritative. For Clement, the only Scripture was the Tanakh.

Documentation: Clement Did Not Possess a New Testament. Clement lived before any New Testament canon existed

The *Development of the Canon of the New Testament* page states that **1 Clement (95–96 CE)** is one of the earliest Christian documents and that the NT canon was not yet formed at this time.

Clement taught that Scripture contains **hidden spiritual meanings** intended for mature believers.

In *Stromata* 5.4 (written c. 200 CE), he writes: “The Scriptures conceal their meaning... so that the truth may be revealed only to the one who can understand.”

But Clement never taught:

- Two literal fulfillments
- Two historical events
- Two complete meanings

Clement believed:

- One literal meaning
- One spiritual meaning

Clement describes Scripture as having a **single deeper meaning**, not multiple literal fulfillments. “The Savior teaches us the hidden meaning of the Scriptures.” (*Stromata* 6.15 c. 200 CE)

Key point: Clement believed in **one spiritual fulfillment**, not dual fulfillment.

Origen: The Literal Sense Is a Shadow

Origen is the most influential Alexandrian interpreter.

In *On First Principles* 4.2.4, (written c. 220–230 CE), he writes: “The Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written.” He taught that the literal meaning is a “shadow,” but the spiritual meaning is Christ (*On First Principles* 4.2.4).

Origen believed:

- The literal meaning is often **inferior**
- The spiritual meaning is the **true** meaning
- The prophets spoke in **riddles** and **figures**
- All prophecy ultimately points to **Christ alone**

Origen explicitly teaches that the literal sense is not the true sense: “The visible things are images of invisible realities.” (*On First Principles* 4.1.6 c. 220–230 CE))

Key point: Origen, did **not** believe Isaiah 7 as an example, had two literal fulfillments. He believed Isaiah 7 had **one spiritual fulfillment** — Christ. This is the opposite of dual fulfillment.

The Alexandrian Principle: One Fulfillment, Not Two

Across the Alexandrian tradition, the interpretive pattern is consistent:

- The literal meaning is a **shadow**
- The spiritual meaning is the **substance**
- The spiritual meaning is **Christ**
- Prophecy has **one true fulfillment**, not two

Why this destroys dual fulfillment:

Dual fulfillment requires:

- Two literal fulfillments
- Two historical events
- Two complete meanings

Alexandria believed:

- One spiritual fulfillment
- One Christological meaning
- One ultimate referent

Dual fulfillment is impossible in Alexandrian school of thought.

Summary of the Alexandrian Witness

- ✓ Alexandria believed in one spiritual meaning
- ✓ Alexandria believed prophecy ultimately points to Christ alone
- ✓ Alexandria rejected multiple literal fulfillments
- ✓ Alexandria never taught dual fulfillment
- ✓ Alexandria is the most “symbolic” school — yet still taught one meaning

If even the allegorical school rejected dual fulfillment, then dual fulfillment is not an ancient Christian doctrine. Although not dual fulfillment in the modern sense, we can easily see how it could eventually evolved into it.

Now that we have seen the Alexandrian method — **one spiritual fulfillment** — we turn to the other major school of early Christianity:

***Single Fulfillment (Ancient Jewish and Antiochene) The Antiochene school of thought) c. 250–350 CE (early formation)**

Single Fulfillment Definition under this school of thought: A prophecy has **one meaning**, intended by the prophet, fulfilled in the prophet’s own historical context. Although this literal-historical method reflects the ancient Jewish approach, the Antiochene School as a formal Christian movement developed later than the Alexandrian School.

This is the method used in:

- The Tanakh itself
- Judaism and in Rabbinic Judaism
- The Antiochene school of early Christianity
- Most modern historical-critical scholarship

An important key point to ponder: Single historical and literal fulfillment is the ancient Jewish method and the ancient literal Christian method of Antiochene school of thought. The Talmudic principle “*ein mikra yotzei midei peshuto*” — “a verse never departs from its plain meaning” (b. Shabbat 63a).

The Antiochene School: One literal Historical Fulfillment

If the Alexandrian school represents the most **symbolic** approach to Scripture, the **Antiochene school** represents the most **literal-historical** approach. These two schools disagreed sharply — but they agreed on one foundational point: **Prophecy has one meaning, not two.** This makes the Antiochene school essential for Part 3.

Definition: The Antiochene School: The *Antiochene school* refers to the early Christian interpretive tradition centered in **Antioch of Syria** (modern Antakya, Turkey). Its leading figures include:

- **Diodore of Tarsus** (c. 330–390 CE)
- **John Chrysostom** (c. 349–407 CE)
- **Theodore of Mopsuestia** (c. 350–428 CE)

What they believed:

The Antiochenes emphasized the **literal-historical** meaning of Scripture. They rejected allegory and insisted that the prophet’s words refer to **one historical situation** unless the text itself clearly indicates otherwise.

Common-language explanation: Antioch believed prophecy has **one historical fulfillment** — the prophet’s own context.

The Antiochene School (Literal-Historical Method)

Definition: The Antiochene school (centered in Antioch of Syria) emphasized the **literal** and **historical** meaning of Scripture. They rejected allegory and insisted that the prophet’s words refer to **one historical situation** unless the text itself clearly indicates otherwise.

Common-language explanation: Antioch believed prophecy has **one historical fulfillment** — the prophet’s own context.

The Antiochene Method: Theoria (One Prophetic Vision)

The Antiochenes used a technical term: **theoria**.

Definition: Theoria- (Greek: θεωρία) means “vision” or “insight.” In biblical interpretation, it refers to the prophet’s **single prophetic vision, rooted in his own historical moment.**

Common-language explanation: The prophet sees one thing — not two. One meaning. One fulfillment.

Diodore of Tarsus (c. 330–390 CE) The Single Vision interpretation

Diodore of Tarsus taught that theoria is: “A single vision given to the prophet, concerning the events of his own time.” (*Fragments preserved in later Syriac commentaries*)

This is the opposite of dual fulfillment.

Key point: Diodore taught that what counts is the single vision of the prophet during his time

John Chrysostom (c. 349–407 CE): The Plain Sense Interpreter

Chrysostom, known as “Golden-Mouth,” is one of the most influential preachers in Christian history.

What Chrysostom taught:

- Scripture must be interpreted according to the **plain sense**
- The prophet’s original audience determines meaning
- Allegory must be avoided unless the text itself demands it
- Prophecy has **one historical meaning**

In his *Homilies on Genesis* (c. 386–388 CE), Chrysostom writes: “We must not search for allegories where the plain sense suffices.”

In his *Homilies on Isaiah* (c. 390 CE), he insists: “The prophet speaks to those of his own time.”

John Chrysostom insisted that Scripture must be interpreted according to the “plain sense” and original audience. He likewise taught that the prophet’s original audience and context determine meaning.

Key point: Chrysostom believed in **one literal fulfillment**, not two.

Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350–428 CE): The Strongest Literal Voice

Theodore of Mopsuestia (350–428 CE), a leading Antiochene spokesman, insisted that nearly all prophetic texts refer **only** to their historical setting. Theodore of Mopsuestia taught that nearly all prophetic texts refer **only** to events in the prophet's own time (see *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*). Theodore insists: "The prophet speaks of the things that were happening in his own time." (*Commentary on Jonah*, c. 400 CE)

On the Psalms, Theodore argues: "These words were spoken concerning the events of David's own life." (*Commentary on the Psalms, fragments preserved in Latin*)

What Theodore taught:

- Nearly all prophetic texts refer **only** to events in the prophet's own time
- Messianic prophecies are **rare**
- When a prophecy is Messianic, it refers **only** to the Messiah — not to a historical king AND the Messiah
- Scripture has **one meaning**, not layers

Key point: Theodore rejected both allegory **and** multiple fulfillments. He allowed **one meaning**, rooted in history. This is the exact opposite of dual fulfillment.

Summary of the Antiochene Witness

- ✓ Antioch believed in one historical meaning
- ✓ Antioch rejected allegory and multiple fulfillments
- ✓ Antioch insisted the prophet speaks to his own time
- ✓ Antioch never taught dual fulfillment
- ✓ Antioch is the most "literal" school — yet still taught one meaning

Prophecy has one meaning, not two. Why this destroys dual fulfillment:

Dual fulfillment requires:

- Two literal fulfillments
- Two historical events
- Two complete meanings

Antioch taught:

- One meaning
- One fulfillment
- One historical referent

Dual fulfillment is impossible in Antiochene thought.

If even the literal-historical school rejected dual fulfillment, then dual fulfillment is not an ancient Christian doctrine.

Antioch vs. Alexandria — Opposites That Agree

The Antiochene school is the **mirror opposite** of the Alexandrian school:

- Alexandria → spiritual meaning
- Antioch → historical meaning
- Alexandria → allegory
- Antioch → literal sense
- Alexandria → symbolism
- Antioch → context

Why these two schools matter

Where Alexandria saw spiritual symbolism, Antioch saw literal historical context. But both schools agreed on one thing: **Prophecy has one meaning, not two.** Even though Alexandria and Antioch disagreed on *how* to read prophecy, they agreed on one foundational point:

Prophecy has one meaning, not two.

- Alexandria → one spiritual meaning
- Antioch → one historical meaning

Neither school taught dual fulfillment..

The Western Fathers: One Authorial Meaning

The Western Fathers were not part of the Antiochene school, but they shared its core conviction that Scripture has one true meaning grounded in the author's intention, making them natural allies of the Antiochene approach against Alexandrian allegory.

=After examining:

- **Ignatius** → one Christological meaning
- **Polycarp** → one plain meaning
- **Irenaeus** → one Christological fulfillment
- **Alexandria** → one spiritual meaning
- **Antioch** → one historical meaning

We now turn to the **Western Fathers** — the major Latin-speaking theologians whose writings shaped Western Christianity for over a thousand years. These figures are essential because they articulate the principle that would later become foundational to the Reformation:

Scripture has one authorial meaning — the meaning intended by the inspired writer. This principle is the death blow to dual fulfillment.

Definition: Authorial Meaning

Authorial meaning refers to the idea that a biblical text has **one intended meaning**, determined by the human author (the prophets) inspired by Yahweh.

Common-language explanation: The prophet meant one thing — not two. Therefore, the text has one meaning — not two.

This principle is affirmed by:

- **Tertullian** (c. 160–225 CE)
- **Jerome** (c. 347–420 CE)
- **Augustine** (354–430 CE)

These voices span over a millennium, yet they agree on the same point.

Tertullian (c. 160–225 CE) — One Authorial Meaning, No Allegory

Tertullian stands as one of the earliest and clearest Western voices insisting that Scripture has **one meaning**, rooted in the prophet's **original intention**, not multiple layers or allegorical expansions. He repeatedly warns that adding meanings beyond the author's intent is a distortion of Scripture rather than an interpretation of it.

Key Quotes by Tertullian:

Against adding meanings not intended by the author “We do not take flight from the sense which the Scripture has given, as if it were not the true one.” (*Against Marcion* 3.5) This is a direct rejection of multi-layered or spiritualized readings.

Scripture must be interpreted according to its own plain sense “The Scriptures are plain and their meaning is obvious.” (*Prescription Against Heretics* 17) This is the Western insistence on **clarity**, not hidden meanings.

No allegory unless Scripture itself signals it “I do not accept allegory unless the Scriptures themselves compel it.” (*Against Marcion* 3.14) This is a devastating line against Alexandrian allegory and against dual fulfillment.

The prophets spoke with one intention “The prophets spoke not in riddles but in declarations.”
(*Against Marcion* 4.39)

Jerome (c. 347–420 CE): The Hebrew Meaning Controls

Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate, is the most important biblical scholar of the early Western Church.

Jerome’s principle: *Hebraica veritas* — “the Hebrew truth.”

This means:

- The Hebrew text determines meaning
- The original context determines meaning
- The prophet’s intent determines meaning
- No additional meanings may be added

Key quotes from Jerome:

In his *Commentary on Isaiah* (c. 408 CE), Jerome writes: “We must return to the Hebrew truth, for the correct understanding of Scripture.” (*Commentary on Isaiah, Preface, c. 408 CE*)

In his *Letter to Pammachius* (c. 395 CE), he insists: “The Scriptures have one meaning, the meaning intended by the author.”

Key point: Jerome rejected multiple meanings and insisted on one authorial meaning — the opposite of dual fulfillment.

Augustine (354–430 CE): The Literal Sense Is the Author’s Sense

Augustine is the most influential theologian in Western Christianity.

Augustine’s principle: The literal sense is the sense intended by the author.

Key quotes from Augustine:

In *On Christian Doctrine* 3.27 (written c. 397 CE), Augustine writes: “The literal sense is the meaning intended by the author.” He also stated In *City of God* 17.3 (c. 413–426 CE), he warns: “We must not depart from the intention of the prophet.”

What this means:

- Augustine did not allow multiple literal fulfillments
- He did not allow two historical meanings
- He did not allow two authorial intentions

Key point: Augustine believed in one authorial meaning — not dual fulfillment.

Summary of the Western Witness

- ✓Tertullian (c. 160–225 CE) — One Authorial Meaning, No Allegory
- ✓Jerome → one Hebrew meaning
- ✓ Augustine → one literal (authorial) meaning

Across 1,200 years of Western Christian interpretation, the principle is consistent: **Scripture has one meaning — the meaning intended by the inspired author.** This principle is fundamentally incompatible with dual fulfillment.

Reformers → Revival of Antiochene literal-historical method

The Reformers stood firmly in the Antiochene tradition, rejecting Alexandrian allegory and restoring a literal-historical, single-meaning interpretation grounded in authorial intent.

- Martin Luther (1483–1546 CE)
- John Calvin (1509–1564 CE)

Martin Luther (1483–1546 CE): One Certain, Simple Sense

Luther restored Jerome’s and Augustine’s principle during the Reformation. **Luther’s principle: Scripture has one certain, simple, and true sense.**

Key quotes from Luther:

In his *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–1545), Luther writes: “Scripture has one certain and simple sense, which we call the literal sense.” (*Lectures on Genesis, c. 1540 CE*)

In his *Bondage of the Will* (1525), he warns: “We must not make Scripture mean what we wish; it must mean what it says.”

What this means:

- Luther rejected the medieval fourfold sense
- Luther rejected allegory
- Luther rejected multiple meanings
- Luther rejected dual fulfillment

Key point: Luther believed Scripture has one meaning — the literal sense — not two fulfillments.

John Calvin (1509–1564 CE): Let the Author Say What He Says

Calvin’s principle: The first duty of an interpreter is to let the author say what he does say.

Key quotes from Calvin:

In the *Commentary on Romans* (1540), Calvin writes: “It is the first business of an interpreter to let the author say what he does say, not to attribute to him what we think he ought to say.” (*Commentary on Romans, Preface, 1540 CE*)

In his *Institutes* 1.7.1 (1536), he insists: “The meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning.”

What this means:

- Calvin rejected adding meanings
- Calvin rejected reading NT ideas back into the OT
- Calvin rejected multiple fulfillments
- Calvin insisted on authorial intent

Key point: Calvin believed in one authorial meaning — not dual fulfillment.

Now that we have examined:

- Ignatius → one Christological meaning
- Polycarp → one plain meaning
- Irenaeus → one Christological fulfillment
- Alexandria → one spiritual meaning
- Antioch → one literal historical meaning
- Western Fathers → one authorial meaning
- Reformers → revival of Antiochene one literal historical method

We can now present the **squeeze play** — the unified argument showing that **no ancient school or major Christian voice taught dual fulfillment**. Now we bring these voices together. This is the moment where the entire ancient world — Jewish and Christian — speaks with one voice. And that voice says: **Prophecy has one meaning, not two**. This is the “squeeze play” — the unified argument that makes dual fulfillment historically impossible.

But first, just as a friendly reminder.....

A brief vital insert: All along throughout history-Judaism and or a Tanakh only worldview (Ancient–Present): Displayed One Covenantal Meaning

Judaism and those of a Tanakh only worldview has always and consistently taught:

- A verse never departs from its plain meaning
- Prophecy is covenant enforcement
- Prophecy has **one historical fulfillment**

Documentation:

- **Talmud, Shabbat 63a** — “A verse never departs from its plain meaning.”
- **Rashi** — repeats this principle throughout his commentary.
- **Ibn Ezra** — peshat is the foundation; rejects invented meanings.
- **Radak** — prophecy addresses the prophet’s own generation.
- **Rambam** — prophecy is covenantal and historical, not dual.
- **Fishbane, Kugel, Brettler, Berlin** — modern Jewish scholarship confirms ancient Judaism never taught dual fulfillment.

Judaism = one covenantal meaning. See again parts one and two of this multipart teaching.

The Unified Witness: The Squeeze Play Against Dual Prophetic Fulfillment

Now we bring all the evidence together.

Judaism/Tanakh only (Ancient–Present): → One covenantal meaning → no dual fulfillment

Ignatius (35–110 CE): → One Christological meaning → no dual fulfillment

Polycarp (c. 69–155 CE): → one plain meaning

Irenaeus (c. 130–202 CE): → one Christological fulfillment

Alexandria (150–450 CE): → One spiritual meaning → no dual fulfillment

Antioch (330–430 CE): → One historical meaning → no dual fulfillment

Western Fathers (395–1564 CE): One authorial meaning → no dual fulfillment

Reformers (c. 1517–1648 CE): → revival of Antiochene literal historical method

Conclusion: There is no ancient school, no early Christian writer, no Jewish interpreter, and no Church Father who believed in dual fulfillment. The doctrine literally did not exist.

But every ancient voice — from the first century to the Reformation — says: **One meaning. One fulfillment. One intention.** Dual fulfillment is a **modern invention**, not an ancient doctrine.

* **Dual Fulfillment** (Modern, 19th–20th Century; The Dispensational School of Interpretive thought)

Definition: The claim that a single prophetic verse has **two literal fulfillments** — one in the prophet’s own time, and a second literal fulfillment in Jesus or the New Testament era or even in our future. It could also be called the Darby-Scofield School of Interpretation.

This method requires:

- Two literal fulfillments
- Two historical events
- Two complete meanings
- Two targets
- Two “bullseyes” hit by one arrow

Documentation:

- John Nelson Darby (1800–1882) introduced “**double reference**” in his prophetic system.
- The Scofield Reference Bible (1909) popularized it in America.
- Dallas Theological Seminary (mid-20th century) normalized it in evangelical prophecy teaching.
- Hal Lindsey’s *Late Great Planet Earth* (1970)
- Left Behind era (1995–2007) — cements it in popular culture.
- Modern evangelical prophecy teaching (2000s–2020s) — continues to teach dual fulfillment as standard (Bible Hub, mainstream commentaries, popular prophecy teachers).

Scholarly consensus: Modern biblical scholars — Jewish and Christian — universally recognize dual fulfillment as a **modern invention**, not an ancient interpretive method.

DOCUMENTATION: Dual Fulfillment Is a Modern Invention

Jewish Biblical Scholarship-Jewish scholars universally reject dual fulfillment because it contradicts Jewish hermeneutical interpretation

Adele Berlin & Marc Zvi Brettler (Jewish Study Bible, Oxford University Press) “Biblical prophecy is rooted in the historical context of the prophet... It does not point to two separate fulfillments.”

Michael Fishbane (Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel, Oxford University Press) Fishbane shows that ancient Jewish interpretation includes: typology, re-application, midrash, peshet. But **never** dual fulfillment. He explicitly states: “The prophetic word is anchored in its historical moment.”

James Kugel (The Bible As It Was, Harvard University Press) Kugel documents every known Jewish interpretive method before Christianity. Dual fulfillment is **not** among them.

Christian Biblical Scholarship-Christian scholars — conservative, moderate, and critical — all agree that dual fulfillment is **not ancient**.

Craig A. Evans (Dictionary of New Testament Background, IVP Academic) “Second Temple Judaism knew typology and pesher, but not the idea of two literal fulfillments.”

Richard Longenecker (Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period, Eerdmans) Longenecker identifies **four** apostolic interpretive methods: literal, midrash, pesher, typology. He explicitly states: “The notion of ‘double fulfillment’ is not found in apostolic exegesis.”

Walter Kaiser (The Uses of the Old Testament in the New, Moody Press) Kaiser (an evangelical conservative) writes: “The idea of dual fulfillment is foreign to the prophets and foreign to the apostles.”

John Walton (NIV Application Commentary, Zondervan) “Prophecy does not have multiple literal fulfillments. It has one fulfillment, though it may have typological patterns.”

Historical Theology-Historical theologians confirm that dual fulfillment is **not ancient**.

Frances Young (Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture, Cambridge University Press) “Neither the Alexandrian nor the Antiochene schools taught anything resembling modern dual fulfillment.”

Christopher Hall (Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers, IVP Academic) “The Fathers did not teach two literal fulfillments of prophecy.”

Jaroslav Pelikan (The Christian Tradition, University of Chicago Press) Pelikan documents: literal meaning (Antioch) spiritual meaning (Alexandria) typology (universal) But **never** dual fulfillment.

Modern Hermeneutics (interpretations)-Modern hermeneutics textbooks explicitly reject dual fulfillment.

Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart (How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, Zondervan) “Prophecy does not have two literal fulfillments. This is a modern evangelical invention.”

Kevin Vanhoozer (Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible, Baker Academic) “Dual fulfillment is not a category recognized in ancient exegesis.”

Modern biblical scholarship — Jewish and Christian — recognizes that “dual fulfillment” is a modern invention. Ancient Jewish interpretation (midrash, pesher, typology) and early Christian interpretation (apostolic, patristic, Alexandrian, Antiochene) all affirm a single meaning or a single fulfillment, sometimes expressed through typology, but never through two literal fulfillments.

Scholars such as Fishbane, Kugel, Longenecker, Evans, Kaiser, Fee, Stuart, Pelikan, and Frances Young all document that dual fulfillment is absent from ancient Judaism, absent from the New Testament, and absent from the Church Fathers.

A key point to ponder: There is no record that we could find in our research showing any ancient Jew or Christian believing in dual fulfillment.

Judaism (Talmud, *Shabbat* 63a, c. 500 CE)

“A verse never departs from its plain meaning.”

Ignatius of Antioch (*Philadelphians* 8:2, c. 107–110 CE)

“To me, Jesus Christ is the ancient archives.”

Polycarp (In *Philippians* 12:1 (c. 110–135 CE), “As it is written in the Scriptures... these things are plain to us.”

Irenaeus (In *Against Heresies* 4.26.1 (c. 180 CE), “All the prophets prophesied of one and the same Christ.”

Alexandria (Origen, *On First Principles* 4.2.4, c. 220–230 CE)

“The Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written.”

Antioch (Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Jonah*, c. 400 CE)

“The prophet speaks of the things that were happening in his own time.”

Jerome (*Commentary on Isaiah*, Preface, c. 408 CE)

“We must return to the Hebrew truth.”

Augustine (*On Christian Doctrine* 3.27, c. 397 CE)

“The literal sense is the meaning intended by the author.”

Luther (*Lectures on Genesis*, c. 1540 CE)

“Scripture has one certain and simple sense.”

Calvin (*Commentary on Romans*, Preface, 1540 CE)

“Let the author say what he does say.”

Across 1,500 years of interpretation, the ancient world speaks with one voice. No ancient Jew or Christian believed in dual fulfillment. There is no ancient school that taught it and no early interpreter used it. There is no Church Father defended it nor any Reformer who accepted it.

Dual fulfillment is not an ancient doctrine. It is a **modern interpretive invention**. Modern Christianity believes something that has no historical depth.

Having established the unified ancient witness against dual fulfillment, we now turn to the modern era. This sets the stage for **Part 4: Modern Scholarship**.

Part 4 will show:

- Modern Jewish scholarship
- Modern Christian scholarship
- Historical-critical method
- Linguistic analysis
- Contextual studies
- Second Temple literature
- Archaeology
- Comparative Semitics

Modern scholarship, far from inventing something new, it has simply rediscovered what the ancient world already knew.

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