Some ways in which Jesus fulfills the Old Testament

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Bible Version
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Luke 24:27, 44:

> 27 *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*
> 44 *"… everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."*

Many Old Testament promises or themes find fulfillment in Jesus:

- Jesus was the One promised in the Garden — the woman's "seed" who would destroy Satan (Gen 3:15).[1]
- Jesus was the New Adam and New Israel — God's true Son who resisted the devil and obeyed God's law (Lk 3:22, 38; 4:1-13).[2]
- Jesus is the Ark that bears us above the flood of God's wrath; he delivers from condemnation and brings us into new circumstances of life and blessing (1Pet 3:20-21).
- Jesus was the true Israelite, the unique Seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16) through whom the promise of blessing to the nations is fulfilled (Gen 12:3; 22:18; Rom 4:13; Gal 3:8, 14).
- Circumcision, the sign of God's covenant (Gen 17:11), finds fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus:
  Positively, in his perfect obedience.
  Negatively, in his death as he was "cut off" for bearing the sins of his people (Isa 53:8; Dan 9:26).[3]
- Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. Isaac was to be offered as a "burnt offering" — to show Abraham's complete surrender to God (Gen 22:2).[4] Abraham believed that Isaac would return home with him and that God himself would provide a substitute (Gen 22:5, 8). And that's exactly what transpired:

  > *So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide";*
  > *as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."*
  > (Genesis 22:14)

  Abraham rejoiced as he anticipated God's ultimate provision of One who would die in our stead (Jn 8:56).

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[1] For the fulfillment of this promise, see Romans 16:20; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:10.
[2] Whereas Adam and Israel both failed as God's "son" (Gen 5:1-3; Ex 4:22; Hos 6:7; 11:1ff.), Jesus withstood Satan and rendered perfect obedience to God's law (Lk 4:4, 8, 12).
[3] Circumcision signified both consecration to God and the excision of one's sinful nature (cf. Col 2:11).
Note that in the Hebrew, to make a covenant is to "cut" a covenant: *kārat̲ b^{e}rît̲* (*karath berith*). Thus, in Genesis 15:18: "On that day Yahweh cut (*kārat̲*) with Abram a covenant …" (Hebrew text). With the covenant of circumcision, any male not circumcised was deemed to have broken God's covenant and was to be "cut off" (*kārat̲*) from his people (Gen 17:14).
Daniel 9:26 foretells that the Messiah will be "cut off" (*kārat̲*): Jesus was "cut off" on the cross.
In Isaiah 53:8, "cut off" translates a different Hebrew verb.
[4] With burnt offerings, the entire animal was burnt as an expression of the worshiper's devotion and total surrender to Yahweh. As with other sacrifices, the animal's death served as a substitute for that of the worshiper; unlike them however, no part was reserved to be eaten by the priests. See Leviticus 1:3-17; 8:18-21; Psalm 51:19.

- The numerous appearances of "the angel of the LORD" were probably manifestations of the preincarnate Christ. Here are some instances:
  Genesis 16:7ff.; 22:11ff.; Exodus 3:2; Numbers 22:22ff.; Judges 2:1ff.; 6:11ff.; 13:3ff.; 1 Kings 19:7; Zechariah 3:1ff.
- Abraham's remarkable encounter with "the LORD" in Genesis 18 was almost certainly a manifestation of the preincarnate Christ. Yahweh appeared to Abraham as a man — see 18:1, 10, 13, 17, 20, 22, 26, 33.[5]
  Other likely preincarnate appearances of Jesus include the following:
  Jacob's wrestling with God (Gen 32:24-30); Moses' near-fatal encounter on his return to Egypt (Ex 4:24-26); Joshua's encounter with the Commander of Yahweh's army (Jos 5:13-15).
- Yahweh's descent from heaven to converse with Jacob anticipated Jesus' coming to us in his incarnation (Jn 1:51; cf. Gen 28:12-13; 35:13).[6]
- God's redemption of his people from Egypt foreshadowed the work of Jesus who saves us from bondage to sin and death and Satan (Ex 6:6-7; 15:13; Ps 130:7; Mt 1:21; Rom 3:24; Gal 3:13; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14).
- Israel's sojourn in Egypt was recapitulated in Jesus' own experience (Mt 2:15).
- Jesus is the great Prophet and Lawgiver — the promised New Moses (Dt 18:15-19; Ac 3:22-23).
  In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus gives his own authoritative ethical instruction. He also interprets God's law, showing how it governs not just outward conduct but also our very thoughts and attitudes.
  Jesus' teaching, and the New Testament scriptures, represent the final, definitive word to which we must all listen (Lk 9:35; Heb 1:1-2).[7]
- Jesus was the ultimate Passover lamb (Jn 1:29; 1Cor 5:7; cf. Exodus 12).
  The Israelites were to sacrifice a lamb without blemish and mark the top and both sides of the doorframe of their houses with its blood (Ex 12:5-7). When God passed through the land of Egypt to kill the firstborn sons, he would "pass over" those houses with the blood (Ex 12:13, 22-23).
  In this way the Passover lamb substituted for the firstborn sons of Israelite families.[8]
- Jesus was the "spiritual Rock that followed" the Israelites in the desert (1Cor 10:4b).
  The manna from heaven and the water from the rock were miraculous provisions from the One who accompanied them — "spiritual food" and "spiritual drink" (1Cor 10:3-4a; cf. Ex 16:1 – 17:7; Num 20:2-13).
  Note that in the earlier water-from-the-rock incident, Yahweh was actually standing on the rock so as to be identified with it (Ex 17:6). Accordingly, as Moses makes clear, God was the true Rock that supplied their every need — see Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18, 30-31.[9]
  Moreover, God's "angel" also accompanied Israel in the desert and led them into the Promised Land (Ex 14:19; 23:20-23; 32:34; 33:2; Isa 63:9).[10]
- Jesus is the true bread from heaven sent to spiritually nourish and grant eternal life (Jn 6:48-58).
  And he offers "living water" to all who would follow him (Jn 4:10, 14; 7:37-38).

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[5] Three "men" came to Abraham (Gen 18:2), two of whom were angels (Gen 19:1, 15) while the third was Yahweh himself.
[6] See Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), p. 81.
Note also how Genesis 28:13 is rendered in the HCSB, LEB, NABRE, and NRSV: Yahweh was standing "beside" Jacob.
[7] The Jews themselves connected Jesus to the Prophet foretold by Moses. For like Moses, Jesus had miraculously fed them, but they were not interested in him as the definitive revealer of God's word and will (Jn 6:14-15; cf. Dt 18:15-19).
[8] As the final Passover lamb, Jesus on the cross did not have his legs broken (Jn 19:33, 36; cf. Ex 12:46; Num 9:12; Ps 34:20).
[9] Clowney, in *Preaching*, pp. 27-30, makes some intriguing comments concerning Moses being ordered to strike the rock (Ex 17:6). He claims that Yahweh is here submitting to the Israelites' demand for justice, receiving in himself the blows from Moses' rod in the place of his guilty people — that Yahweh is redeeming his people by bearing the judgment himself. For a critique of Clowney's view, see Rev. Robert Rayburn, *Studies in Exodus 17:1-7*: https://www.faithtacoma.org/exodus/2005-08-28-pm.
[10] In Exodus 23:20-23 this angel is closely identified with God himself: God's "name is in him", and to "obey his voice" is to "do all that [God says]." The temple in Jerusalem was to be the place where God would place his "name" (Dt 12:5, 11; cf. 1Kgs 8:16-20). It seems therefore that God is telling Moses that Israel must obey this angel because the very presence of God is within him.

- The Law's sacrifices and priesthood are fulfilled in Jesus (Jn 1:29[11]; 1Pet 1:19; Heb 10:11-12).
  The actions of the high priest on the Day of Atonement anticipated Jesus' ministry (Heb 9:11-12, 24; cf. Leviticus 16).
- The tabernacle and temple, symbolizing God's presence and filled with his glory, found fulfillment in Jesus' incarnation (Jn 1:14). Indeed, Jesus was himself God's new temple (Jn 2:19-21), for only through him can people have access to the Father (Jn 14:6).
  His body, too, would be the place where sin was finally dealt with.
- The actions of Moses and (later) of Phinehas, as they intervened to turn aside God's wrath, foreshadowed Jesus' work on the cross (Ex 32:11-14, 31-32; Num 25:7-8; Ps 106:23, 30-31).
- The lifting up of the bronze snake in the desert anticipated Jesus death on the cross (Jn 3:14-15).
  Those Israelites who had been bitten merely looked to the snake and were healed (Num 21:8-9).
  So too, dying sinners can look to Jesus and receive eternal life.
- Various "sabbaths" given to Israel anticipated the liberative, restorative work of Jesus (Col 2:16-17).
  Weekly Sabbath observance served to remind of God's mighty action in delivering and redeeming the nation from Egyptian bondage (Dt 5:15).
  Sabbatical and Jubilee release/restoration similarly anticipated Jesus' redemptive accomplishments (Lk 4:18-21; cf. Isa 61:1-2; Leviticus 25).
  Jesus, in the gospel, offers people salvation-rest and release from works-righteousness (Mt 11:28-30).
  Through his healings on the Sabbath Day, he showed the commandment's true intent (Mk 2:23 – 3:5).
  Joshua brought Israel into the Promised Land of rest (Dt 12:9; 1Kgs 8:56; Ps 95:11), but Christ brings us true and lasting salvation-rest (Heb 4:1-11).[12]
- As aforementioned, Joshua near Jericho encountered "the commander of the army of the LORD."
  This Commander, who led the armies of heaven, had now come to take charge of Israel (Jos 5:13-15).
  Israel was God's earthly army and agent of wrath against the Canaanites.[13]
  All this foreshadowed Jesus' work of bringing judgment on Satan and his kingdom (Jn 12:31; Rev 19:11ff.).
- The deliverances wrought by various judges foreshadowed Jesus' deliverance of his people from the oppression and bondage of sin and Satan.
  Just as God's Spirit empowered these men for battle (Jdg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29.; 14:6, 19; 15:14), so also did he anoint and equip Jesus for his messianic task (Lk 3:22; 4:1, 14, 18; Ac 10:38).
  But unlike the judges — all of whom died — Jesus lives on and his deliverance is lasting:
  As our heavenly king he rules us both spiritually (via his word and Spirit) and providentially, to ensure that we remain faithful and don't revert to our old ways.
- Boaz, a man of great standing and wealth, foreshadowed Jesus.
  He displayed Yahweh's own "kindness" towards the destitute — to a foreigner who had no claim to such (Ruth 2:20; cf. 2:10, 13).[14]

[11] Jesus is the "the Lamb of God" who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The (lamb) sacrifices of the Law fulfilled in Jesus include the following: the Passover Lamb of Exodus 12, the Sin Offering of Leviticus 4:32-35; 5:6, and the daily Morning and Evening Sacrifices (Ex 29:38-41; Num 28:1-8). But in principle, all atonement sacrifices (including non-lamb ones) are in view.

[12] Fundamentally, the Sabbath is God's invitation for his people to enter into, and enjoy, his own perpetual rest. See Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 31:16-17; Hebrews 4:4-5.

[13] Israel's role as God's agent of wrath was acknowledged by the Canaanite king Adoni-Bezek, in Judges 1:4-7.

[14] In Ruth 2:20, the one who shows "kindness" (Hebrew: *ḥesed*) could be either Yahweh or Boaz; this ambiguity suggests that both are intended, since Boaz embodies God's own kindness and generosity. God's *ḥesed* (Strong's H2617) — his "steadfast love" (ESV) or "lovingkindness" (NASB1995) — is fundamental to his character (e.g., Ex 34:6-7; Ps 103:8, 11, 17).

Acting as their kinsman-redeemer, Boaz purchased the family inheritance in order to support Naomi and Ruth, in accordance with the requirements of the Mosaic Law (Lev 25:25).[15]

All this foreshadowed Jesus' work as our Redeemer, who at great cost to himself delivered his people from spiritual destitution (Col 1:14; 2Cor 8:9).

- As with the judges, David's slaying of Goliath (1 Samuel 17) foreshadowed Jesus' work of deliverance.
  Like them, David was empowered by God's Spirit for battle (1Sam 16:13).
- The promises to David of a lasting dynasty (2Sam 7:11-16) are definitively fulfilled in Jesus.
  Jesus has restored David's throne and inaugurated God's eternal, universal kingdom (Psalm 110; Lk 1:32-33; Ac 2:30-36; Rev 11:15).
- The Psalms anticipate Jesus in several ways:
  Often Jesus is the One speaking in the Psalms, or he is being spoken about.
  David was a "prophet" (Ac 2:30). He wrote about Jesus (Ac 2:25, 31).
  As Peter explains in Acts 2:25ff., what David voiced sometimes transcended his own experience.
  This is also true of David's frequent references to persecution:
  As Yahweh's chosen king David had lots of enemies, but his complaints anticipated the much greater animosity and suffering endured by Jesus. Jesus was hated for no good reason (Jn 15:25 = Ps 35:19; 69:4).
  Therefore, Jesus himself is often the One speaking in the Psalms — speaking through David et. al.
  Paul specifically declares the words of David in Psalm 69 to be the words of Jesus:
  "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." (Romans 15:3, citing Psalm 69:9)
  The author of Hebrews similarly declares the words of Psalm 22:22 to be those of Jesus (Heb 2:12).
  <u>The righteous man</u>, often the "I" of the Psalms, who suffers, who trusts in and cries out to Yahweh, who is saved from death and who is finally vindicated — fundamentally that person is just one man: Jesus.[16]
  Conversely, <u>the wicked</u> who attack Yahweh's chosen king are the rest of mankind — every one of us.[17]
  Psalm 69 anticipates aspects of Jesus' ministry (Jn 2:17 = Ps 69:9) and crucifixion (Mt 27:34 = Ps 69:21).
  Psalm 22 anticipates Jesus' crucifixion (Mt 27:43, 46; Jn 19:24 = Ps 22:1, 8, 18; see also 22:16).
  Psalm 16 is specifically applied to Jesus' resurrection in Acts 2:25-31; 13:35-37.
  Psalms 2 and 110 anticipate Jesus' resurrection and exaltation (Ac 2:34-36; Rom 1:4; Heb 1:5, 13; etc.).
  Psalm 45:1-9 speaks of Jesus' present reign (Heb 1:8-9 = Ps 45:6-7).
  Psalm 72 anticipates Jesus' eternal, universal reign.

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[15] The kinsman-redeemer (Hebrew: *gō'ēl*) was responsible for protecting the interests of needy members of the extended family. This could take the form of: redeeming (buying back) land that a poor relative had sold to someone outside the family (Lev 25:25); avenging a murdered relative (Num 35:19-21); marrying a sister-in-law to raise up children for her deceased husband (Dt 25:5–10); redeeming family members who had been sold into slavery (Lev 25:47–49).
Prior to the giving of the Law, <u>Yahweh</u> is the one who performs the work of a *gō'ēl* in redeeming his people from bondage in Egypt (Ex 6:6; 15:13). Later authors emphasize God's role as redeemer (e.g., Ps 19:14; 103:4, 107:2), also in connection with the nation's future release from Babylonian captivity (e.g., Isa 44:22-24; Jer 31:11; Mic 4:10).
So, Boaz's action as kinsman-redeemer (Ruth 4:14) reflects God's own work. And it anticipates the ultimate act of divine redemption: Jesus' death on the cross. In other words, Boaz is a Christ-type!

[16] Hebrews 5:7 informs us: *In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up <u>prayers and supplications</u>, <u>with loud cries and tears</u>, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence*.
The overwhelming sense of sorrow voiced in a number of Psalms (e.g., in 22, 69, 88) is to be understood as Jesus' own experience. Likewise, the psalmists' restoration after suffering (e.g., in 22:22ff.) is supremely fulfilled in Jesus' resurrection and exaltation. Jesus in his "prayers and supplications" would surely employ the words of the psalmists whose experiences anticipated his own.

[17] This was certainly Paul's understanding: The psalmists' ugly descriptions of the thoughts, words, and deeds of wicked men show what all human beings are like (Romans 3:10-18, which cites from Psalms 14:2-3; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; 36:1).
Indeed, the curses that David utters against his persecutors should rightly fall on us — for our hostility to Jesus and his rule. But thankfully, in his death Jesus himself bore these curses on our behalf.
Note how Peter and Paul apply these curses to those who persist in their hostility to God's chosen King: Psalms 69:25 and 109:8 are applied to Judas in Acts 1:20, and Psalm 69:22-23 is applied to unbelieving Israel in Romans 11:9-10.

- David's military conquests foreshadowed Messiah's gospel "conquest" of the Gentiles — their incorporation into his beneficent kingdom (Rom 15:9 = Ps 18:49; cf. Ac 15:16-17).
- 2 Samuel 21:1-14 and 24:1-25 show David making "atonement" (21:3) for sin that has defiled the land and incurred God's wrath — Saul's sin, and his own sin. David deals with, and turns aside God's wrath against Israel, so that God again accepts prayer on behalf of the land (21:14; 24:25).
  Here too, David's actions anticipate the accomplishments of his greater Son.
- The "perfection" of Solomon's reign — his extensive rule, the people's happiness and safety (1Kgs 4:20, 25), his fame, wisdom and justice (1Kgs 4:29-34), God's presence in their midst in the temple — all these anticipated Jesus' rule and kingdom (e.g., Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-10; Jer 23:5-6; 33:15-16; Eze 37:24-28).
- Further prophecies relating to Jesus as the promised king — the son and heir of David:
  Isaiah 16:5; 32:1; Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23-24; Hosea 3:5; Amos 9:11; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 3:8-9; 6:12-13; 9:9; 12:10; 13:7.
  Amos 9:11 and Micah 5:2, along with Zechariah 9:9, 12:10 and 13:7, are cited in the New Testament as fulfilled in Jesus.
- The prophet Elisha foreshadowed Jesus. He showed compassion towards, and aided those in need:
  His miracles brought life where there was death and curse and barrenness (2Kgs 2:19-22; 4:8-37, 38-41), provision for God's people (2Kgs 4:1-7, 42-44), and healing to a lepper (2Kgs 5:1-14).
  Help came to people insofar as they sought his aid and obeyed his word.
- Jonah's "burial" inside the huge fish and his third-day restoration foreshadowed Jesus' own burial and resurrection (Mt 12:39-40; Jnh 1:17; cf. Lk 24:46).
- Jesus has brought the long-anticipated messianic banquet.
  In Isaiah, God promised to someday invite all the world's nations to a sumptuous feast on Mount Zion, where he would "swallow up" death itself for them (Isa 24:23; 25:6-8).
  Jesus has fulfilled this; he has brought the wine of God's kingdom (Isa 25:6; Jn 2:1-11), and he invites people to participate in the feast via the gospel (Lk 13:28-30; 14:15-24).
  For those who are in Christ, death has been effectively abolished; eternal life is their present possession (Jn 6:50; 8:51; 11:25-26; 1Cor 15:54-55; 2Tim 1:10).
- Jesus was the promised *Immanuel* through whom Israel's enemies would someday be finally defeated (Isa 7:14; 8:9-10; 9:6-7; Mt 1:21-23; Lk 1:71).
- The numerous "barren" women throughout Israel's history — Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Samson's mother, Hannah, Elizabeth — foreshadowed Mary's virginal conception and birth of the Savior.
  Through divine intervention (and despite human disability) these women gave birth to patriarchs, saviors, and prophets.
- Jesus was Yahweh's *Servant* who would definitively deliver and restore God's exiled people (Isaiah 40 – 66).
  The Servant was the one true — the ideal, perfect — Israelite. He is even called "Israel" (Isa 49:3).
  So, in Isaiah 53, Israel the person substitutes for Israel the people:
  He bears the people's sins (53:5-6), and in doing so is himself "cut off" from the land of the living (53:8).
  But his action leads to their acquittal (53:11).

After his suffering, the Servant sees the "light" of life:
He is raised from death and restored to divine favor (53:11, DSS).[18]
Isaiah 52:13-15 (and 53:12) relates the Servant's vindication and exaltation before the nations.
Note that Israel's exile — her expulsion from the land — represented the nation's death.[19]
But the Servant's death/exile on Israel's behalf means that the nation will now be finally restored, not destroyed. His death is the ultimate exile, and his resurrection (in 53:10-12) is the ultimate restoration.
Jesus on the cross was forsaken (exiled) by the Father; and in his resurrection and ascension he was restored. All this so that we might not be forsaken but dwell with God eternally.

- The Old Testament promises of life-imparting water flowing from the temple (in Ezekiel 47:1-12; Joel 3:18; Zechariah 14:8) are fulfilled through Jesus:
  In the gospel, Jesus freely offers himself to thirsty sinners; through the gospel, life and healing come to the nations (Jn 4:10, 14; 7:37-38; Rev 22:1-2, 17; cf. Jer 2:13).

These are perhaps some of the themes that Jesus discussed on that first Resurrection Sunday (Lk 24:27, 44-47).

Further Reading

1. Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture.*
   Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003.

2. Mitchell L. Chase. "A True and Greater Boaz: Typology and Jesus in the Book of Ruth."
   The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology 21.1 (Spring, 2017), pp. 85-96.
   https://equip.sbts.edu/publications/journals/journal-of-theology/sbjt-211-spring-2017/true-greater-boaz-typology-jesus-book-ruth/.

3. Christopher Ash, *The Psalms: A Christ-Centered Commentary*. (4-Volume Set)
   Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024.
   An in-depth examination of all 150 Psalms, showing each psalm's significance to David (and other psalmists), to Jesus during his earthly ministry, and to the Church in every age.
   Volume 1 is a detailed handbook that explains how to interpret the Psalms with Christ at the center.

[18] The Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) text of Isaiah 53:11 reads: "from the labor of his soul, he will see light and he will be satisfied."
The Masoretic text omits the underlined words. Several translations have chosen to follow the DSS variant: CSB, EHV, EXB, NABRE, NCB, NIV, NRSV, and WEB. That "light" was part of the original text is suggested by its presence also in the Septuagint.
See the online article by Jeff A. Benner: *The Great Isaiah Scroll and the Masoretic Text*, https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/dss/great-isaiah-scroll-and-the-masoretic-text.htm.

[19] Moses, in Deuteronomy, anticipates Israel's future exile and portrays it as the nation's death. Disobedience will cause Israel to "perish" or "be destroyed" (Dt 4:26; 6:15; 7:4; 8:19-20; 11:17; 28:20; 45, 48, 51, 61, 63; 30:18).
As Kenneth Turner observes, "The people will continue to exist physically in exile; yet, as a single entity, Israel is said to 'perish' or 'be destroyed.' So, it is not Israel as an historical or socio-religious people, but Israel as Yahweh's elect son and servant (Dt 1:31; 7:6; 14:1) that is put to death. Exile constitutes the death of Israel as a nation in covenant [with Yahweh]."
Kenneth J. Turner, quoted by Jason S. DeRouchie in *Why the Third Day? The Promise of Resurrection in All of Scripture*, https://jasonderouchie.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019-Why-the-Third-Day-Resurrection-DeRouchie.pdf.