

SYMBOLS, NUMBERS, & TYPES

“The Typical Principle”

Introduction

1. Definition

A type in Scripture is a figure or representation of something to come, an anticipative figure, a prophetic symbol.

Rom 5:14

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the **figure** of him that was to come.¹

The word “figure” is the Greek word tupos, which Strong’s defines as follows:

NT:5179 **tupos** (too'-pos); from NT:5180; a die (as struck), i.e. (by implication) a stamp or scar; by analogy, a shape, i.e. a statue, (figuratively) style or resemblance; specifically, a sampler (“type”), i.e. a model (for imitation) or instance (for warning): KJV - en- ex-) ample, fashion, figure, form, manner, pattern, print.

Types differ from symbols in several critical ways:

- ❑ A symbol is one thing standing for another with no essential reference to time.
- ❑ A type is one thing prefiguring another and generally has an inherent reference to time.
- ❑ A symbol is designed to highlight certain characteristics or qualities in that which it represents.
- ❑ A type gives an outline of something or someone that exists in a higher dimension or that will come in the future.
- ❑ A symbol is interpreted by comparing the common characteristics between the symbol and that which is symbolized.
- ❑ A type is interpreted by an extended analogy between the type and the anti-type.

2. Why Types?

The biggest difference between types and symbols is that types have an intrinsic time reference contained in them. For instance, the lamb is a symbol for Jesus Christ but the Passover sacrifice was a type of the crucifixion. The action of sacrificing the Passover lamb spoke prophetically of what Messiah would do.

Types are extremely important in Scripture because they are means that God uses to prove that He is God.

Isa 44:6-7

6 "This is what the LORD says-- Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.

¹ All Scripture references are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

7 Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come-- yes, let him foretell what will come. NIV

Isa 46:9-10

9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Prophecy proves God is God. He alone knows the future. Types are actual historic items, whether persons, offices, institutions, or events, which have prophetic import.

3. The Importance of Types

God takes types very seriously. By His Spirit He led people to do or make certain things. He then led others by His Spirit to record these as a prefiguring of what He was going to do or reveal. We know the importance that God places on types because He has recorded for us in Scripture the account of one who spoiled and ordained type and the consequence he suffered.

A. The struck Rock

Ex 17:5-6

5 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.

6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

The Lord commanded Moses to strike the rock in Horeb and he did. Who was the rock?

1 Cor 10:4

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

So Moses striking the rock was a type of what?

John 19:34

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

B. The spoken to Rock

Num 20:7-8

7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt

bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

We learned from 1 Corinthians that the rock was Christ. What was the water? The Holy Spirit. What was the spoken to rock supposed to typify?

Acts 2:32-33, 37-38

32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

All people had to do was speak to the Rock, call on the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, and they would receive the Holy Spirit. This event was to be prefigured by Moses speaking to the rock after having struck it. But what happened.?

Num 20:9-12

9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

Because Moses and Aaron disobeyed, they were not allowed entry into the Land. The forty years were almost over and Moses and Aaron are denied entry right at the threshold of receiving the promise! Now, if this seems unduly harsh to you, it might interest you to know that it kind of surprised Moses too.

Deut 3:24-27

24 "O Sovereign LORD, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works you do?"

25 Let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan--that fine hill country and Lebanon."

26 But because of you the LORD was angry with me and would not listen to me. "That is enough," the LORD said. "Do not speak to me anymore about this matter.

27 Go up to the top of Pisgah and look west and north and south and east. Look at the land with your own eyes, since you are not going to cross this Jordan. NIV

So, in upsetting a type, Moses and Aaron became another type – a type of those who fail to be faithful and lose their inheritance.

I. The Classification of Types

Types appear in Scripture in one of four basic classifications: persons, offices, institutions, or events.

1. Persons

1 Cor 15:44-48

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

Romans 5:14 told us that Adam was a type of Him who was to come, who was Jesus. Here in Corinthians, Paul compares the two in an extended analogy. This section shows clearly that the anti-type is always of greater magnitude and reality than the type.

2. Offices

Heb 5:1-10

1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Though this section contains two typical people, Aaron and Mechisedec, its main thrust is the office of the high priest. The writer shows by extended analogy how Jesus fulfilled the typical import of the office of the high priest.

Again, the anti-type is greater than the type. With men, it is what they did. With Jesus, High Priest is what He is.

3. Institutions

Heb 8:1-5

1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

Here, the earthly institution of tabernacle worship is shown to be but a type of that which exists in heaven. Now this is a type both dimensional and temporally prophetic. Because the tabernacle was a type of God's real dwelling, then it is a type of the Church. But it was also an earthly representation of that which was in heaven.

Think of this, how many dimensions does a shadow have? Two. How many dimensions did the things in the tabernacle have? Three. The Lord calls a three dimensional physical (i.e. material) reality a mere two dimensional shadow when compared with a multi-dimensional spiritual reality!

4. Events

Matt 24:37-42

37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

The event of Noah's flood stands as a type of the final judgment of the earth. Knowing how cataclysmic the flood was, we can well imagine how traumatic the end of the world will be!

II. Qualifications

1. The first step in using the Typical Principle is to correctly discern what elements if any in the passage being considered have typical aspects.
2. The interpreter must then ascertain the points of resemblance between the type and anti-type and draw them out in an extended analogy.
3. General, the Bible directly interprets it's own types as shown above. Often, one New Testament verse provides the key for unlocking full sections of typical Scripture in the Old Testament. For instance, John 1:14 "the Word became flesh and Tabernacled among us," becomes the key to interpret the Tabernacle (and by extension, the Temple) as typical of Christ.
4. Some Old Testament types are discovered and interpreted through the use of clearly defined similar types. For instance, Ephesians 5:31-32 implies that Adam and Eve are to be viewed as a type of Christ and the Church. Understanding this, we can then understand other Old Testament wives (i.e. Rebekah, Rachel, Ruth, etc.) as types of the Bride of Christ.
5. The interpreter must understand that the entirety of the type does not represent the anti-type. For instance, Isaac was a type of Christ. But Isaac also lied, was a respecter of persons, and lacked discernment in his old age.
6. This principle must be used in conjunction with the context group of principles.

III. Examples

1. Person – Joseph

Joseph was a type of Christ. We can see this in several highlights of his life.

First born son:

Gen 30:22-24

22 And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.
23 And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach:
24 And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.

Matt 1:25

And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Hated by brothers:

Gen 37:3-4

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.
4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

John 7:2-8

2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.
3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

4 For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.
5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.
6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.
7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.
8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.

Recognized by brothers:

Gen 45:12

And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.

Zech 12:10

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

All bow the knee:

Gen 41:43

And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Phil 2:10

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

2. Office – Prophet

Deut 18:15-18

15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.

18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

John 7:37-40

37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)
40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.

3. Institution – Tabernacle

Already discussed. See “The Tabernacle of Moses: The Messiah and His Church Proclaimed in Prophetic Structure”

4. Event – Absalom’s Rebellion

Beautiful countenance:

2 Sam 14:25

But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

Ezek 28:17

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

Stole the hearts of Israel:

FOR A FULL TREATMENT OF THE ANALOGY BETWEEN ABSOLOM AND THE DEVIL, SEE “A HISTORY OF THE ENEMY” IN THE TEACHING SERIES *THE TWO WAYS*.