

Types & Antitypes In Leviticus

In the Old Testament, types are shadows or symbolisms of people, places, and events that have spiritual significance for us as they reappear in other people, realities, and symbolisms in the New Testament.

A Description Of Types

The word "type" is derived from the Greek term *tupos* and occurs sixteen times in the New Testament. In some texts it is translated as "print," "figure," or "pattern." The one general idea that is common in all of these words is "likeness." A person, place, or event is so fashioned to resemble another or made into an essential feature of another that the two match. The first, the shadow, is called the type; and the second, the reality, is called the antitype. The link that bonds them together is the figure, symbolism, or other similarity that is very obvious.

Three other words are used in the New Testament

to describe Old Testament types. The first is "shadow." Hebrews 10:1 says, "For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come. . . ." A shadow is dim, yet it represents the substance of something that is real. In this case the law is but a shadow of God's grace which He manifested in His Son, Jesus Christ, under the new covenant (John 1:17).

The second term is "parable" or "symbol" (Hebrews 9:9; 11:19). The tabernacle, a blueprint which Moses was shown in the wilderness, was only a symbol of that true place of worship, heaven.

The third term is "copy" or "pattern," a word that denotes a sketch or draft of something in the future (Hebrews 9:23). The tabernacle and all of its furnishings served as copies of the true tabernacle, heaven (Hebrews 8:2).¹

¹James Orr, "Type," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), 5:3029.

One must be careful not to press or twist texts to make types and antitypes where none exist. Pressing the Old Testament to conform to prejudices is both spiritually dangerous and insulting to the Holy Spirit who authored the holy text.

Let us also look at the distinctive features of what makes a type and an antitype, so that the figure presented in God's Word is not taken out of context and the Holy Spirit's intention foiled. A type needs to possess three characteristics in order to be valid.

First, a type is a true picture of the person or thing represented or prefigured. Some features or resemblances are so distinctive that they stand out in the text to the knowledgeable Bible student. This characteristic in itself represents a challenge to the student of God's Word to so know the Word that when those figures and symbols are presented in the Old Testament they cannot help but be recognized.

Second, the type is of divine appointment. In its New Testament description, a reference or allusion to the Old Testament type must be made. A number of these can be seen in the comparisons the Spirit makes with the old covenant in Hebrews—such as the tabernacle, the old and new covenants, and the priesthood.

Third, a type prefigures something in the future. This is basically why one always looks to the New Testament for the fulfillment of those types found in the Old Testament.²

Types in the Pentateuch

Each book of the Bible must be treated individually for its contents, historical settings, and value to the Bible student. This is not to say that a general theme and message does not run throughout the whole of Scripture, because it does. That theme or message is Jesus Christ and man's need for salvation (Genesis 3:15). However, because the Old Testament itself is classified and divided into sections and stories, we can also expect many of the types and later antitypes to also be varied according to the contents of the historical message the Spirit wished to convey. Some of the different types can be found in the books of the Pentateuch.

Genesis: Salvational and Dispensational Types

Several Old Testament people are salvational types. In Genesis three have their antitype in Jesus Christ. The first one is Adam (Genesis 1:26; 2:7; Romans 5:12-14; 1 Corinthians 15:45-47). The Holy Spirit makes many comparisons between the two. Second, Noah is a type of Christ. Both were preachers of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5; Mark 1:38). Both saved the world from total destruction (Genesis 6:8; John 3:16), and both represented the judgment of God against sin and wickedness (Matthew 24:37-39). Third, Joseph is a type of Christ (Genesis 37:50). At least ten characteristics between Joseph and Christ are given in these scriptural comparisons. Both were betrayed by their brethren (Gen-

esis 37:28; John 1:11). Both were sold for the price of a slave (Genesis 37:38; Matthew 26:11-16). Both became servants (Genesis 39:1; Philippians 2:5-8). Both were victorious over temptation (Genesis 39:7-13; Matthew 4:1-11). Both were exalted (Genesis 41:37-45; Philippians 21:9-11). Both became preservers of life or saviors (Genesis 41:53-57; John 6:35, 48-51). Both were highly favored by their fathers (Genesis 37:3; Matthew 17:5). Both were later reconciled to their brothers (Genesis 45:3; 1 Corinthians 15:5-8; cf. James 1:1; Jude 1). The fathers of both grieved and suffered a temporary loss of their sons (Joseph to Egypt and Jesus to the cross and the grave). Both sons were restored to their fathers (Genesis 46:29; Mark 16:19).

Some dispensational types are also found in Genesis. First is the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3, 15; Galatians 3:16). That seed whose type is found in many or all of those in the bloodline finds its ultimate fulfillment in the promise God made and completed centuries later in Christ. Second is Sarah and Hagar (Genesis 17:18; Galatians 4:24-31). Here, as in previous examples, the Holy Spirit expressly commented on the Old Testament/New Testament relationship symbolized by the two figures. He declared that they represent significant changes in the Old and New Covenants under which God's people operated. The command is for us to apply the allegories made by Paul so that we might appreciate the covenant changes brought about for us in Christ. Christ intended to set us free and for us to remain free under those changes (Galatians 5:1).

Exodus: Redemptive Types

Just as the story line and historical references in Exodus focus on the same theme as Genesis, different people and events than those found in Genesis appear. The types in Exodus also differ in character from those found in Genesis, for they are redemptive types.

The first example is Moses as a type of Christ (Deuteronomy 18:18; Acts 3:22, 23). The ruling powers attempted to kill both

²Ibid.

infants. God delivered both infants from death through His providence. (Both were infants in Egypt.) Both were called from kings' palaces to be servants. Both were shepherds of God's people. Both were lawgivers of God's Word. Both left riches of a kingdom. Both came for deliverance of God's people. Both came with signs and miracles. Both were mediators of a covenant of God. Second, we can look at the Passover (Exodus 12; 1 Corinthians 5:7). Third, Egypt and Canaan also represent the redemptive type. Egypt throughout Scripture always represents slavery and bondage, whereas, Canaan, the promised land, represents salvation and divine protection.

Numbers: The Wilderness

In Numbers we see that Israel was called upon to learn how to obey God during the time they had to spend in the wilderness. The stubbornness and rebellion of the slaves in Egypt needed to be cleansed from their minds. The many trials and errors of the Israelites are highlighted in the book of Numbers and called to our attention in the New Testament (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:1-12). The Gospels highlight for us Jesus' wilderness experiences (cf. Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; Mark 1:12,13). Each of the Gospel accounts seen in its total perspective gives us a parallel to the wilderness experience of temptation and obedience and God's gracious provision to Israel. The writer of Hebrews summed up Jesus' experiences when he said, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). The text says "things" which seems to indicate that the Spirit has more in mind than just the cruelties suffered at His arrest and crucifixion.

We also see God's provision to Israel as pilgrims through a hostile land. First Corinthians 12:2 reveals that His gracious provisions were actually provided by Christ. He gave water, as the rock, also manna and quail as Israel needed them. Likewise, Peter declared that as we walk in this hostile world, we should consider our sojourn as a pilgrim and a stranger (1 Peter 2:11). Paul also en-

courages us when he says, "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Leviticus: Rituals and Cleansing

In Leviticus, the types presented arise from the theme of access to God by His chosen people, Israel. The Old Testament priests provided mediation and were the peacemakers and offerers to God for man. Jesus, who is our High Priest today, is the offerer, the offering, the mediator, the peacemaker, and all that a sinner needs in approaching God.

Conclusion

Many of the lessons in this series will focus on Christ and various types that He portrays as seen in Leviticus, especially as seen in the various offerings the people made before God through the mediation and service of the Levitical priesthood. It is my hope that each of us can more fully appreciate the work of God through Jesus Christ in this study of Leviticus.

The Ten Best Old Testament Doctrines For Evangelistic Use¹

1. *God*—spirituality, eternity, holiness, power, love
2. *Creation*—how, why, when, how sustained, to what end?
3. *Man*—origin, nature, highest good, present state, remedy
4. *Sin*—origin in the universe and in human race, nature, results, remedy
5. *Atonement*—meaning, need, method, results, application
6. *Salvation*—needed, foreshadowed, predicted, applied
7. *Faith*—what it is, why it must be, what it does (cf. Heb. 11)
8. *Backsliding*—what it is, why, results, how to prevent, how to recover from illustrations
9. *Grace* (in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament)—define, illustrate, apply
10. *Judgment*—why, how, principles of, how to escape, illustrations of in the Old Testament

¹Faris D. Whitesell, *Evangelistic Preaching and the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), 103, 4. Used by permission.