

CHAPTER 6

TYPOLOGY

Overview of the Word “Type” (τύπος) in the New Testament

John 20:25 – The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

The print of the nails were visible marks that identified Christ as the crucified one

Acts 7:43 – You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, images which you made to worship; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.”

This word denotes idolatrous images.

Acts 7:44 – Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen,

Heb 8:5 – who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See *that* you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”

Here this word denotes the model after which the tabernacle was made.

Acts 23:25 – He wrote a letter in the following manner:

Here this word denotes the form or style of a letter.

Rom 6:17 – But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

The word denotes a kind of doctrine.

Phil 3:17 – Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

The word is used in the sense of an example or pattern of Christian living and character (see also 1 Thess 1:7; 2 Thess 3:9; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7; and 1 Pet 5:3).

All of the above uses of the word type (τύπος *typos*) are proper uses. Yet, they did not give origin to the more technical theological meaning of this word. The following passages use the word in the sense that theology books use it:

Rom 5:14 – Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of him who was to come.

1 Cor 10:6 – Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

1 Cor 10:11 – Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Theological Definition of Types

A type is always something historical that is intended, according to God's purpose, to foreshadow something corresponding to it in the future. It is a person, an institution, office, action, or event in the Old Testament that foreshadowed a truth clearly revealed in the New Testament. The fulfillment of a type is the antitype. For example, Adam is a type of Christ. Conversely, Christ is an antitype of Adam.

“In the science of theology it properly signifies the preordained representative relation which certain persons, events, and institutions of the Old Testament bear to corresponding persons, events, and institutions in the New.” (Milton Terry)

Distinction between Types and Symbols

Types and symbols are figures of thought in which material objects are made to convey spiritual ideas to the mind. However, they differ from each other in that a symbol may represent a thing in the past, present, or future. A type, on the other hand, is always point to the future. A type is fulfilled in the New Testament whereas a symbol usually point to something that has already been accomplished and does not have a prophetic value.

Two examples of symbols:

The rainbow is a symbol God's covenant mercy and faithfulness

Gen 9:13-16 – I set my rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember my covenant which *is* between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to

destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* on the earth.

The bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are a symbol of the body and blood of Christ

Sometime is difficult to differentiate between a symbol and a type. In 1 Kgs 11:29-31 we find a symbolical-typical action taken by Ahijah.

1 Kgs 11:29-31 – Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two *were* alone in the field. Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that *was* on him, and tore it *into* twelve pieces. And he said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you.

The rendering of the garment symbolized a divided nation, but also typified the dividing of the nation that took place under Rehoboam and Jeroboam.

Identifying types

[Here we will follow Terry's outline.]

1. There must be some notable point of resemblance or analogy between the type and the antitype. This does not mean that the type and antitype are completely identical. If that were the case, the Scriptures would be speaking of the same thing

- Adam and Christ (Rom 5:14-20; 1 Cor 15:45-49)

Notice in Paul's description of Adam's typification of Christ that he lists more points of dissimilarity than he does of similarity.

We should always expect to find in the antitype something higher and nobler than in the type because "he who built the house has more honor than the house."

2. There must be evidence that the type was designed and appointed by God to represent the thing typified.

- Experiences of Israel (1 Cor 10:6; v. 11, τυπικῶς *tupikos*)

We cannot go around finding types in places where there is no contextual warrant for them. On the other hand, we should not have an extreme position that would say that only what is explicitly declared type by the New Testament could be considered a type. We must keep in mind that the culmination of God's

revelation is Christ. So, we should expect to see a shadow of Christ in places that are explicitly declared to be typical.

3. The type must prefigure something in the future. It must serve in the divine economy as a shadow of things to come.

- Statement of Col 2:17; Heb 10:1

Col 2:16-17 – So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Heb 10:1 – For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

Types of types

[Following Terry, pp. 338-40]

1. Typical persons

A typical person sustains some character or relation with the history of redemption. Adam is a type of Christ because of his representative character as the first man and federal head of humanity. Elijah is a type of John the Baptist in the spirit and power of his prophetic ministry. Abraham's faith in God's Word and subsequent justification make him a type of all who are justified by faith "apart from the deeds of the law" (Rom 3:28). His offering of Isaac made him a type of all who have working faith.

Here are other important personal types:

- Adam (Rom 5:14, 19; 1 Cor 15:45)
- Melchizedek (Ps 110; Heb 7)
- David (Ps 69)
- Elijah, type of John the Baptist (Matt 11, 17)
- Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, type of future Antichrist (Dan 7, 9, 10-11)

2. Typical institutions

- Sabbath (Heb 4)

- Sacrifices (Col 2)
 - 1 Peter 1:18-19 – knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.
- Passover (John 1; 1 Cor 10)
- Tabernacle (Heb 8)

3. Typical offices

- Prophet (Deut 18)
- Priest (Ps 110)
- King (2 Sam 7)

4. Typical actions or events

- Flood (2 Pet 3)
- Exodus (Matt 2-7)
- Manna, rock, water in the wilderness (John 6; 1 Cor 10)
- Bronze serpent (John 3)
- Jonah and great fish (Matt 12)
- Restoration from Babylon (Rev 18)