

# OUTLINE STUDIES IN THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

by

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## CHAPTER TWO

### SCRIPTURE TYPES

Another matter which seems to require mention is the *Typology* of the Bible. Inadequate and erroneous views alike are entertained on the subject. Some find types everywhere in the Old Testament, especially in the Pentateuch, others next to none. It is firmly believed that the teaching of Scripture on the subject is neither meager nor obscure. Only briefest notes are subjoined.

That there are types in the Old Testament no one would venture to deny. The New Testament justifies the assertion. It takes up a large number of persons and events of former dispensations, and treats them as being prefigurations and prophecies of the future. One who has not looked with some care into the subject will be astonished to discover how largely the New Testament writers find pre-intimations and adumbrations of Christ in the Scriptures of the Old. Care must be had, however, in the pursuit of such a study, for we are not inspired.

Let this two-fold caution be our guide:

- (1) Not to seek for types everywhere;
- (2) Never to press the typical teaching to such an extent as to imperil the historical character of the Bible.

Let it be remembered that exposition is not imposition, nor is it interpretation to draw out what we have first read in.

Our word *type* is derived from the Greek term *tupos*, which occurs sixteen times in the New Testament. It is variously translated, e. g., twice *print*, John 20:25; twice *figure*, Acts 7:43; Romans 5:14; once, *fashion*, Acts 7:44; once *manner*, Acts 23:25; once *form*, Romans 6:17; twice *pattern*, Titus 2:7; Hebrews 8:5; and seven times *example*, I Corinthians 10:6, 11; Philippians 3:17; I Thessalonians 1:7; II Thessalonians 3:9; 1 Timothy 4:12; I Peter 5:3.

It is clear from these texts that the inspired writers use the word *type* with some degree of latitude of application. Nevertheless, we observe that one general idea is common to them all, one thought predominates; viz, likeness.

A person, event, or thing is so appointed or fashioned as that it resembles another;

- The one is made to answer to the other in some essential particulars;
- The one matches the other in some prominent feature.
- The two things thus related receive the names of type and anti-type; and the link which binds them together is this correspondence, or resemblance, of the one with the other.

Types are a set of pictures, or object-lessons by which God would teach His people about His grace and saving power. The Mosaic system was a sort of kindergarten school; and yet some of the deepest things of revelation are found in these ancient types. An old writer has said,

“God in the types of the last dispensation was teaching His children their letters. In this dispensation He is teaching them to put these letters together, and they find that the letters, arrange them as they will, spell Christ, and nothing but Christ.”

In creation God uses one thing for many purposes. One simple instrument meets many ends. For how many ends does water serve! And the atmosphere:—it supplies the lungs, supports fire, conveys sound, diffuses odors, gives rain, wafts ships, fulfills besides one does not know how many other purposes. And God’s Word is like His work, is His work, and like creation, it, too, is inexhaustible.

How large a place the Ark of the Covenant filled in Israel!

- It was the central piece of the tabernacle;
- At it God gave communications to His servants;
- At it propitiation was made or completed;
- It led the people;
- It parted the waters of the Jordan.

And yet what a type of good things to come the ark was.

So also was the high priest, who, notwithstanding the varied service he rendered the people, was, in all that he did and in his very office and dress, an eminent type of Christ. Whatever God touches, be it a mighty sun or an insect’s wing, a great prophecy or a little type, He perfects, for the place and the end for which He designed it.

## **I. WHAT ARE THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF TYPES?**

A type to be such must possess three qualities.

1. *It must be a true picture of the thing it represents or typifies.* Hence a type is a draft or image of some great feature of redemption.

2. *The type must be of divine appointment.* The type is designed in its original institution to resemble its antitype. Both are preordained as constituent parts of the scheme of redemption.

As centuries often lie between the type and its accomplishment in the antitype, of course infinite wisdom alone could institute and ordain the one to be the picture of the other. Only God can make types.

3. *A type always prefigures something future.*

In all Scripture types there is prophecy. Prediction and type differ in form rather than in nature. This fact distinguishes between a symbol and a type: a symbol may represent a thing of the present or past as well as one of the future—e. g., the symbols in the Lord's Supper. A type always looks toward the future. Another thing in the study of types should be borne in mind, viz., that a thing in itself evil, can never be the type of good.

## II. CLASSIFICATION OF TYPES

They may be distributed under three heads:

1. *Personal types*; by Which are meant those personages of Scripture whose lives illustrate some truth or principle of redemption. Such are Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Jonah, etc.
2. *Historical*: in which are included the great historical events that under the guidance of Providence became striking foreshadowings of good things to come: e. g., the deliverance from Egypt, wilderness journey, conflict for Canaan, etc.
3. *Ritual*: such as the altar, sacrifices, priesthood, tabernacle, etc. There are typical persons, places, times, things, actions, in the Old Testament Scriptures, and a reverent study of them leads into acquaintance with the fullness and blessedness of the Word.

## III. CHARACTERISTIC DIFFERENCES IN THE TYPES OF CERTAIN BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

1. *Those of Genesis are mainly personal and historical.* It is the book of beginnings—of sin and judgment; of mercy and forgiveness. Accordingly, here are types which connect with the person and work of the Deliverer: e. g. Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Joseph (see Romans 5:14; Romans 4:1-25; Galatians 3:6-14; Hebrews 7:7).
2. *The types of Exodus have other features.* They bring out more especially the precious doctrine of redemption by blood, and its blessed consequences. The Passover, appointment of the priesthood and the tabernacle, are the proof of it. The blood of the paschal lamb lay at the foundation of Israel's relation with God, and it prefigured, at the same time, that great redemption which Christ in due time was to accomplish: Exodus 15:13, 16, 17; I Corinthians 5:7.
3. *Those of Leviticus differ from the preceding.* Here we find types that contemplate access to God; restoration to the divine favor when sin has come in to interrupt communion, and holiness of person and walk.

Of course, the ritual of Leviticus has to do with sin, but it is the sin of a people who have been redeemed from bondage, and separated unto God; and this fact invests the types of the book with a peculiar character.

4. *Those of Numbers are suggestive of the wilderness life and pilgrim journey of the people of God.*

5. *In the types of Joshua we encounter another phase of the general subject.* These relate to the possession of the promised inheritance, and the soldier life, as we may call it, of the saints. Joshua should be studied in connection with the Epistle to the Ephesians. The two books match each other as type and antitype. Furthermore, the types of Genesis are mainly intended for the instruction of the individual believer; while those of the books that follow contemplate a corporate body of worshipers.

#### **IV. HOW MUCH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IS TO BE REGARDED AS TYPICAL?**

Two extremes are to be avoided.

*First, the extravagance of the Church Fathers, as Origen, Jerome and Ambrose (revived in our day by Andrew Jukes).* They sought for types in every incident and transaction recorded in Scripture, Even the most simple circumstance was believed to hide in itself the most recondite truth. Mystery and mysticism were seen everywhere, in the cords and pegs of the Tabernacle, in the fruits of the field, in the yield of herds, in the death of One, and marriage of another. The serious objection to this system is, that it wrests Scripture out of the sphere of the natural and locates it in that of the arbitrary and fanciful: it ignores the historical facts and tends to destroy the validity of the record.

*Second, the undue contraction of the typical element.* Prof. Moses Stuart expresses the view as follows: "Just so much of the Old Testament is to be accounted typical as the New Testament affirms to be so, and no more." This opinion assumes that the New Testament writers have exhausted the types of the Old, whereas these examples of the typical bearing of the Old Testament are obviously but samples taken from the storehouse where many more are found. If they are not, then nothing is more arbitrary than the New Testament use of types, for there is nothing to distinguish these from a multitude of others in the Old Testament to which the typical element so manifestly belongs. The view assumes that divine authority alone can determine the reality and import of types—a view that applies with equal force against prophecy. Besides, it unwarrantably separates the two Testaments, and discards a large portion of the Old. Wherever the three characteristic features already mentioned are found in any event, transaction or person of the Old Testament there is a type.

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