

I. Introduction to Typology

June 4, 2017

Foreword/Preface

Purpose: To introduce the concept of typology within the study of Biblical theology and overview the course.

Key Verse: ¹⁴Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, **who was a type of the one who was to come** (Romans 5:14).

A. Introduction to the Class

1. I plan to teach Hebrews (over 2 years) in area Bible Studies
2. This SS course serves as an “introduction” to that study of Hebrews; it is not a prerequisite to attend the Bible study; nor is it an obligation to attend; however, I hope I whet your appetite to attend!
 - a) Hebrews compares the Old Covenant with the New Covenant, showing that in every way the New Covenant in Jesus is “better”
 - b) The writer of Hebrews presupposes a “typical” or “typological” arrangement between the Old and New Testaments
 - c) Therefore, an understanding of “typology” is essential background to understand Hebrews
3. The study of “typology,” apart from an introduction to Hebrews, is an interesting and rewarding subject
 - a) “The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed” – St. Augustine [“The New is in the Old contained; the Old is in the New explained”]
 - (1) Understand the Old Testament better
 - (2) Understand the New Testament better
 - b) Appreciate Jesus Christ even more as the fulfillment of OT revelation

B. What Is Typology?

1. “Type”
 - a) What it is not: not Type A/B personalities; not blood types; not categories of stuff; not what you do on a keyboard
 - b) Greek τυπος (“typos”); word used in Romans 5:14; 1 Cor. 10:6 (see also Acts 7:44); the Greek word *typos* refers to an image impressed onto something else, for instance wax; it is the word used in Scripture for the imprint of God’s heavenly pattern on the earth (Jordan, p. 49).

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- c) Meaning: “picture,” “symbol,” “sign,” “pattern,” “model,” “example,” “copy,” “shadow” (e.g., see Mt. 12:38-42; Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 8:5; 10:1)
 - d) A “type” points forward to the reality of something else, to a greater fulfillment of the type
2. “Typology”
- a) Typology: “the study of types”
 - b) In Biblical theology, typology consists of studying the Old Testament to see how the various types in the OT foreshadow/prefigure Christ and the gospel of the New Testament
 - c) Every “Type” has an “Antitype” or a fulfillment – related to Christ

Longman: Jesus did not arrive unannounced; His coming was declared *in advance* in the Old Testament, not just in explicit prophecies of the Messiah but by means of the stories of all the events, characters, and circumstances in the Old Testament.... The Old Testament...always pointed in some way to Christ (p. viii).

Poythress: The whole Old Testament finds its focus in Jesus Christ, His death, and His resurrection.... He is the one to whom it points forward, about whom it speaks, and whom it prefigures in symbols (p. 5).

Poythress: Again and again He spoke to them about Christ in symbols and shadows that were appropriate to them and their circumstances rather than immediately to our circumstances. That is why the Old Testament is so remarkably unlike the New Testament in some ways. Yet because the same God and the same Christ are proclaimed in both, they are also remarkably alike in their overall thrust (p. 7).

d) The Allegory of the Cave

DSB: The relationship between type and antitype is a bit like an ancient work by the Greek philosopher Plato, entitled *The Allegory of the Cave*. Imagine, if you will, that you live in a cave. You were born in the cave, you grew up in the cave, you die in the cave. You never, ever leave the cave. But everything that you need is already in the cave. You are happy, satisfied, complete. Nevertheless, you suspect that there is something beyond the cave, which is greater than anything in the cave. You can only approach so far toward the entrance of the cave, but there you can see the most amazing things. There is a bright light outside the cave that shines into it, and upon the wall of the cave, this light casts shadows. For example, you can see a shadow of a beautiful chair. It looks like a chair, it is shaped like a chair, it gives you a very good impression of what the chair looks like. But it is only a shadow. It does not and cannot compare to the real chair outside the cave in the light, casting its shadow on the cave’s wall. Looking at the shadow of the chair on the cave wall, you realize that there is something beyond your cave that is better, more real, more “transcendent” than the shadows in the cave.

DSB: Now, Plato used this allegory to suggest that perhaps there was a greater reality beyond the world in which we live. Like his people in the cave, the good things of this life are only shadows of the “true” and “real” which lie in that other-worldly realm. Alas, for Plato, he could never see that “heavenly” realm which cast its shadows upon the earth. But we can. For in many ways, Plato was right. Waiting for us in heaven is a reality that we cannot describe. Our world is only a shadow compared to the reality of heaven that awaits.

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DSB: I want to use this allegory of the cave as an illustration of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. You see, in many respects, the revealed word and will of God in the Old Testament was like a shadow, compared to the New Testament. In fact, the Bible plainly tells us that this is so. Hebrews 10:1a – “For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of those things.” In the OT, the Israelites had a sacrificial system that pointed to Christ (for example, I Cor. 5:7 “Christ, our Passover Lamb, was sacrificed for us”), but we have the reality of Christ. Christ, the Son of God, the “Sun of Righteousness risen with healing in His wings,” is the glorious light which casts shadows in the Old Testament. We can see more clearly than the Israelites the meaning of their religion, because their worship points forward to Jesus Christ, and we now look back upon it.

e) Connection between Type and Antitype

(1) Resemblance in form or spirit

(2) Clear Scriptural warrant – previous design / preordained

Fairbairn: There are two things which, by general consent, are held to enter into the constitution of a type. It is held, first, that in the character, action, or institution which is denominated the *type*, there must be a resemblance in form or spirit to what answers to it under the Gospel; and secondly, that it must not be *any* character, action, or institution occurring in Old Testament Scripture, but such only as had their ordination of God, and were designed by Him to foreshadow and prepare for the better things of the gospel.... The former must not only resemble the latter, but must have been *designed* to resemble the latter.... The type as well as the antitype must have been pre-ordained.... It is this *previous design* and this *preordained* connection (together, of course, with the resemblance), which constitutes the relation of type and antitype (p. 46).

Fairbairn: A relation so formed ... evidently presupposes and implies two important *facts*. It implies, first, that the realities of the Gospel, which constitute the antitypes, are the ultimate objects which were contemplated by the mind of God, when planning the economy of His successive dispensations. And it implies, secondly, that to prepare the way for the introduction of these ultimate objects, He placed the Church under a course of training, which included instruction by types, or designed and fitting resemblances of what was to come (p. 47).

f) All the OT points to Christ (see Luke 24:27)

Longman: Indeed, among many other things, we will come to a deeper appreciation and comprehension of the most important redemptive act of all, Jesus’ death on the cross. After all, even a cursory reading of the Gospels and Epistles reveals that the significance of Jesus’ death is painted in the colors of the tabernacle, priesthood, festivals, and sacrifices of the Old Testament (p. xi).

3. Biblical Types come in four main different categories:

- a) **People**, e.g.; Adam is a type of Christ in regards to obedience to the law; Joseph is a type of Christ in his suffering and subsequent glory; Moses is a type of Christ as redeemer and lawgiver; Joshua is a type of Christ as a conqueror; David is a type of Christ as king; etc.
- b) **Events**: e.g.: Noah’s flood; the sacrifice of Isaac; the Passover; the crossing of the Red Sea; the conquest of the land; Jonah in the belly of the great fish; etc.

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- c) **Objects**, e.g.: the tabernacle/temple; the bronze altar; the table of showbread; the golden lampstand; the altar of incense; the ark of the covenant; etc.
 - d) **Institutions**, e.g.: the sacrificial system; the priesthood; the festivals; the prophetic office; the kingly office; etc.
4. Biblical Types have an inherent meaning apart from pointing to a fulfillment in the Antitype
- a) Even though the type points to the antitype, the people, events, objects, and institutions that comprise the type are real and have real consequences attached to them, e.g.:
 - (1) People have their own lives, independent from the antitype
 - (2) Events really occurred and had meaning apart from the antitype
 - (3) Objects were real and had use and meaning apart from the antitype
 - (4) Institutions were established and had a significance apart from the antitype

DSB: For example, even though the sacrificial system of the Old Testament has typical fulfillment in Christ, it still had real meaning and significance in its own right. In order to be righteous before God, OT saints had to obey the requirements of the Mosaic Law, which included worshipping via sacrifices offered by the priesthood at the tabernacle/temple at specific times. As such, the “immediate and ostensible design” of the required rituals contained the same kernel of spiritual truth in them as the antitypes to which they pointed.

- b) In this way, Types are different than Symbols, Allegories, Parables, Promises, or Prophecies, all of which also have a function to point to a greater spiritual reality, but in and of themselves contain no actual reality
5. Types are designed to point clearly to the Antitype, but they are not perfect reflections of the Antitype
- a) Jesus the antitype is perfect; all of creation is fallen and sinful
 - b) No one type can perfectly portray all there is to learn about the antitype; therefore, God gives us many different types to learn about different facets of the antitype; e.g.:
 - (1) Five different kinds of sacrifice all teach something different about Jesus’s sacrifice (not to mention the Passover or the Day of Atonement)
 - (2) Seven different pieces of furniture in the tabernacle all teach us various aspects of Jesus’s person and work; etc.
6. Types are similar to, but different than Symbols
- a) Symbols are created objects or things that have a consistent meaning within Scripture that is clearly understood; e.g.:
 - (1) Plants & Trees: often represent people (cp. Judges 9:7-15; Psalm 1:3; Zech. 1:8-11; Jn. 15:5)

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- (2) Olive oil: is used for anointing and for light and often represents the power of the Holy Spirit (cp. Zech. 4:1-6)
 - (3) Incense: often a picture of prayer (cp. Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8; 8:3)
 - (4) Mountains: locations where God meets with man (e.g., Eden is on a mountain; Mount Moriah; Mount Sinai; Mount Zion; the mount of transfiguration; the Temple Mount)
 - (5) Numbers: 7 and 10 are numbers of perfection; 6 is the number of man; 12 is the number of the people of God; 40 is the number of testing; 70 is the number of the nations of men; etc. (cp. Ex. 15:27 – twelve springs of water and 70 palm trees at Elim – a picture of the people of God bringing life to the nations of the world)
- b) The meaning of a symbol consists in the thing that it points to; it has little meaning or reality in and of itself
 - c) Typology can make use of symbols to convey truth, but types are more than just symbols; types have a meaning and reality apart from the symbolism they contain
7. Types are different than Allegories or Parables
- a) Allegories and parables use stories to illustrate spiritual truths (e.g., Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress or the parables of Jesus)
 - b) Allegories and parables have no reality apart from the spiritual truths they point to; that is, they are fictional accounts designed to illustrate a spiritual reality
 - c) Allegories, in particular, can have fanciful meanings/tenuous connections between the illustration and the teaching; great care must be taken not to allegorize a type and read more meaning into the type than is warranted; e.g., Pink's allegorizing of the Gibeonites (enemies of God to be destroyed/a picture of new life in Christ)
 - d) Many liberals mistakenly allegorize parts of the Bible they don't believe are true; e.g., Genesis 1-3 is often considered an allegory – it "contains truth" but it is not a true historical account in and of itself; we need to beware this type of interpretation!
8. Types are different than Promises or Prophecies
- a) Promises and prophecies are declarations by God of future realities, but they are not the realities themselves
 - b) Promises and prophecies inevitably come true, because they are based on God's unchangeable and holy character
 - c) Promise and prophecies can impact people's lives, as they react to them and live out their lives in hope and patience, awaiting for the fulfillment to come
 - d) Types may contain promises and prophecies within them, but those future realities are foreshadowed by the inherent reality of the types themselves rather than just words

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9. Why study Typology? (per Habershon, pp. 16-21)
 - a) It is very clear that God Himself sets great value upon them. It was His Spirit who designed them (cp. Hebrews 8:8; 9:8-9).
 - b) Our Lord thought much of the types (cp. Luke 24:27).
 - c) Not only does Christ speak of the types, but they speak of Him. If we would “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” we cannot do better than study what they tell us of His person and of His work.
 - d) Another reason for valuing this part of God’s Word is the very high place that is accorded to the types by the writers of the New Testament. They are referred to as ‘the Scripture’ (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:4).
 - e) There are many passages in the New Testament which we cannot understand without having become in some measure familiar with the types (e.g., Hebrews, John).
 - f) The types seem to cover the whole range of New Testament teaching. Not only are the Old Testament types unfolded in the New Testament, but the New Testament is enfolded in them.
 - g) This study gives us a sure antidote for the poison of so-called ‘higher criticism.’ If we acknowledged the Divine intention of every detail of the types ... and if we believe there is a lesson in every incident recorded, the attacks of modern criticism will not harm us.

C. Typology in This Class

1. Class Subject
 - a) This class is a brief introduction to typology (not a deep dive)
 - b) The intent is to introduce the concept of typological thinking as we look at the Old Testament
 - c) Hopefully, it will instill a greater appreciation for the OT – after all, we are “whole-Bible Christians”
2. Class Text
 - a) Tremper Longman III’s book, *Immanuel in Our Place: Finding Christ in the Old Testament Worship*
 - b) This text is a good introductory treatment of the topic; while I do not necessarily agree with everything the book says, I have no problem in recommending it to your attention
 - c) Will augment with material from other sources, e.g., Poythress, Fairbairn, etc.

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3. Class Methodology

- a) Look at some basic OT types related to worship (primarily institutions and objects)
- b) Apply the typological teaching to the antitype: Jesus Christ

4. Class Topics

Longman: We will see that God is our heavenly King who establishes His rulership in the midst of His people. As King, He consecrates space, people, certain acts, and times that are especially dedicated to His service (pp. xi-xii).

- a) Sacred Spaces: Where Is God to Be Worshiped? The focus here is on the tabernacle, but we will also look at the Garden of Eden, altars, the temple, and the tabernacle/temple furniture before applying those lessons to Christ
- b) Sacred Acts: How Is God to Be Worshiped? The focus here is on the sacrificial system and the five types of prescribed OT sacrifices, as well as the Passover, which all find their fulfillment in Christ
- c) Sacred People: Who Is to Facilitate the Worship God? The focus here is on the Levitical priests; Jesus Christ is our great high priest (although not a Levite!)
- d) Sacred Times: When Is God to Be Worshiped? The focus here is on the Sabbath and the annual Festivals, with a special consideration of the Day of Atonement; again we find the fulfillment in Christ

5. Reminder of Key Verses

²⁷And **beginning with Moses and all the Prophets**, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself (Lk. 24:27).

¹⁴Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was **a type of the one who was to come** (Rom. 5:14).

⁶Now **these things took place as examples [types] for us**, that we might not desire evil as they did (1 Cor. 10:6),

¹⁶Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷These are **a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ** (Col. 2:16-17).

⁴Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. ⁵They serve **a copy and shadow of the heavenly things**. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything **according to the pattern** that was shown you on the mountain” (Heb. 8:4-6).

¹For since **the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities**, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near” (Heb. 10:1).

Next Week: Read Longman chapters 1&2