

Introduction to Types

Types

"Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; *"See that you make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain"* (Exodus 25:40). From these verses on there is the continual use of patterns and descriptions that lead us through the unfolding of God's Word to His creation. The pattern shown in the mountain was a shadow of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was a shadow of the Temple. They were a type of the church, and all three provide shadows of heaven. The entire revelation to Moses for worship in the Old Testament presents buildings, furniture, laws, and customs as shadows of some reality God would reveal to later people.

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 standard point of truth in all of these words is "likeness" or "that-is-like-this." A person, place, or event is fashioned to resemble another or described as a feature of another so 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 apparent. We can see this association in (1 Thessalonians 1:6-7) ***"You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia."***

In addition to type, used in (Romans 5:14 NASV) and (Hebrews 11:19 NASV), 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 contains the shape but not the perfect features of the object, yet it represents something that is complete. The Hebrew writer says the law is but a shadow, containing the shape or symbolism of God's grace of which His Son, Jesus Christ, would have all the features and functions under the new covenant, *"For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him"* (John 1:17-18).

The second term is "**parable**," "**symbol**," or "**figure**" (Hebrews 9:9 NASV; 11:19 ASV). The tabernacle, built by Moses in the wilderness from God's blueprint, was only a symbol of that actual place of worship, heaven. *"The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly, both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation"* (Hebrews 9:8-10).

The third term is "**copy**" or "**pattern**," a word that denotes a sketch or draft of something in the future (Hebrews 9:23 NASV). The tabernacle and all of its furnishings served as copies of the true tabernacle, heaven (Hebrews 8:2). Speaking of the blood of bulls and goats, the Hebrew writer said, *"According to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be*

cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these" (Hebrews 9:22-23). Christ's blood now cleanses all believers from sin.

We must be careful not to force types and antitypes into texts where none exist. *"You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you"* (Deuteronomy 4:2). We search for distinctive features of a type and an antitype so the figure is not taken out of context and the Holy Spirit's intention is not distorted. A type needs to possess three characteristics for it to be valid.

First, a type accurately represents the person or thing characterized or predicted. Some features or resemblances are so distinctive that they stand out in the text to the knowledgeable Bible student. This characteristic requires the Bible student to know scripture so well that when those figures and symbols are presented in the Old Testament, they will be recognized immediately.

Second, the type must be given and used by God. In its New Testament description, a reference or allusion to the Old Testament type must be contained within the text. The book of Hebrews contains many examples.

Third, a type anticipates something in the future. This is why we look to the New Testament for the antitype or fulfillment of types found in the Old Testament. We will look at various examples throughout the Bible.