



Bible Doctrines III - Survey

Typology

I. INTRODUCTION TO TYPOLOGY

A. The Defining of Typology

1. Typology

- a. Depending upon the one presenting a study of typology, the scope of study can vary from broad (including parables, allegories, numerology, the study of colors, the symbolism of materials, colors, and animals) to very narrow.
- b. In our study, we are going to take the narrow view and focus solely on the study of types in scripture.
- c. In a basic sense, typology is the study of how a person, place, thing, or event pictures some future person, place, thing, or event and it is one of the scripturally sound and enjoyable ways to study scripture.
- d. To be clear, God Himself points out typology in scripture (John 3:14-15; Hebrews 9:8-12; Hebrews 10:1).

2. Types

- a. A *type*, on the other hand, is a divinely designed object lesson or picture that anticipates a later truth known as the *antitype*.
- b. A type will in some, but not all, characteristics picture another person or thing. If it were perfect, it would not be a type.

B. The Component Parts of Typology

1. Type

- a. As it pertains to typology, the type is the person, place, thing, or event that looks forward to a future person, place, thing, or event.
- b. The type was, in its original and historical sense, both literal and independent of any future application.

2. Antitype—The person, place, thing, or event to which the type looks

C. The Validation of Typology

1. The Father's care for typology

- a. When God gave the details of the law, He was not only giving details of the law, but also of Christ (Hebrews 10:1).
- b. When God gave the details of the tabernacle, He was also giving details of a heavenly temple (Hebrews 8:5).

2. The Son's care for typology

- a. On the road to Emmaus, the Lord began at Moses and expounded unto the disciples those things concerning Himself (Luke 24:27).



- b. Christ often used typology or imagery when describing Himself (Matthew 9:12; Matthew 25:6; John 1:29; John 3:14; John 6:50; John 10:9, 11; John 12:38; John 15:1; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:22; Hebrews 9:16; Revelation 5:5).
- 3. The typology often spoke of Christ
 - a. When one individual loves another, he desires to know all that he can about that person. When that love is deep enough in the absence of the loved one, the one who loves might study a picture the one loved in order to get a better understanding of his or her features.
 - b. The types or pictures in scripture often point to Christ.
 - (1) The type may demonstrate Christ's work, His person, or both; yet it will ultimately yield some great truth concerning our Saviour.
 - (2) God included these types and figures in scripture for a forward glimpse to those who lived at the time the type was given, and for a backward look for those of us alive later.
 - (3) If one truly loves the Saviour, he will take the time to study these types and learn their intended lessons.

D. The Dangers Involved in Typology

- 1. Though typology is useful, it is not without its own set of dangers.
- 2. One of the most common danger is attributing a type in scripture to which the Bible never alludes.
- 3. Another temptation, perhaps not as common, is to elevate the actual type to the status of the antitype (that which is being pictured).
 - a. For instance, the Israelites had no idea that the serpent was a future type of Christ's sacrifice and burned incense to it.
 - b. At this, Hezekiah was greatly distraught and broke the serpent in pieces calling it "Nehushtan" which basically means brassen thing (2 Kings 18:4).
- 4. Furthermore, typology should never be used to teach a doctrinal or literal truth unless the scripture offers a literal text to support it.
- 5. Additionally, types point to something future; yet, they are not prophecy.

E. The Perspectives on Typology

- 1. Bible students disagree on how far to develop types.
 - a. Some only use types that are identified as such in scripture.
 - b. Others find typology in every detail of an Old Testament passage. Some of this typology can become quite speculative.
 - c. One way to help in safely identifying types is to classify types according to clarity.
- 2. Though Bible students will still disagree on how to classify the various types, the very act of classifying will help us put varying weights to different interpretations.