

## TYPES AND SHADOWS

Don Walker

When the inspired writers of the New Testament compared the two testaments, they spoke of the New Testament as being the very image of the things that cast a shadow of good things to come (Heb. 10:1). In Hebrews 8, the Levitical High Priest and the sanctuary, or tabernacle, were shadows cast by Jesus Christ and His new and better promises (vv. 1-5). The things of the Old Testament were types while Christ and the New Testament items were the antitypes. “Type” and “typology” are defined as a

Branch of biblical interpretation in which an element found in the OT prefigures one found in the NT. The initial one is called the “type” and the fulfillment is designated the “antitype.” Either type or antitype may be a person, thing, or event, but often the type is messianic and frequently refers to salvation.<sup>1</sup>

Because many of the types of the Old Testament point to Jesus the Messiah and those spiritual items that benefit the one who pursues the spiritual, they provide fascinating studies for the serious student who desires to grow in faith.

There are many items in the Old Testament, which are referenced by the inspired writers of the New Testament. As we close a study of the Book of Exodus and enter into the Book of Leviticus, we see the completion of the building of the tabernacle and the establishment of the Levitical system of worship. Moses was told to build the tabernacle according to the pattern and concerning the Levitical Priesthood; they were to be very careful concerning the details. In Hebrews 8:4-6 we see why the details were so important.

For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

There are other clear passages that illustrate this area of study. The Passover lamb described in Exodus 12:1-13 is a type of Christ “Who is our Passover” (1 Cor. 5:7). The rock that provided water for the Israelites in the wilderness (Ex. 17:6) also prefigured Christ (1 Cor. 10:3,4). In fact the Book of Hebrews is saturated with many types, which represent Christ and His covenant.

With the remainder of our space we will consider another type to which Jesus speaks. In Numbers 21 the “people spake against God, and against Moses” (v. 5). Because of their murmuring, God sent fiery serpents which when they bit the people the

---

<sup>1</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 2109–2110.

people died (v. 6). Verse 7 says, "Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people." The prescription was to fashion a serpent out of brass and when the people turned to look upon it, they would live (v. 8). In His discourse with Nicodemus, Jesus said this concerning that very serpent. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14, 15). The serpent served as a type of Christ as it pointed to the fact that Christ would be lifted up on the cross as he offered Himself for our sins. It is a most fascinating type of Christ.

There are a number of other examples that could be given. The scapegoat on the day of Atonement or even Abraham offering Isaac and then Isaac being replaced by the ram that was caught in the thicket all point to the perfect lamb of God Who was offered for our sins. It is our prayer that this brief study may have stirred in each one of us a greater desire to study these types and antitypes as we strive to exalt our Lord and our God. Until next time, let us each study our Bibles much, much more.