

Types and Antitypes

Definition of “type”—you can check dictionaries and other resources and find similar but varying definitions.

Suggestion: A “Divine” (i.e. God intended) type is a person, event, or thing in the OT *designated by God to foreshadow*—thus “prophetic”—something in the NT (the antitype). A “type” points to *Divine intent* for a person, event, or thing, to foreshadow a future person, event, or thing. You are encouraged to “test” whether this definition harmonizes with the clear type/antitype examples in the Scriptures and other pertinent Scripture statements.

Interpreting types

1. We can only be sure it is a Divine “type” when the Holy Spirit so indicates. **1Pt 1:10-12**.
 - a. *Subjectively* assigning “type” to other things (persons, places, events, institutions, etc.) is arbitrary, subjective, and opens the door to fanciful conclusions not able to be substantiated (see examples below). This practice can undermine building our understanding and faith on the *objective* foundation of the revealed word of God—the “Scriptures” (**2Tim 3:16-17**)
 - b. If Divine types are prophetic (and if not, we can no confidence of their accuracy or meaning), how should we view assumed types based only on personal views? Compare prophecy: **Jer 23:16,25-32; Ezk 13:2-3,7**.
2. Beware of assigning meaning to every detail of a type. e.g...
 - a. **Rom 5:14** - Adam/Christ. Note in the context the similarities and *dissimilarities* in the type and antitype.
 - b. **Heb 8:5-6, 9:8-9** (read **vv1-14,23-24**) - Tabernacle and priesthood/Christ, our “high priest” and His ministry
 - c. Q: How do you know God *intended* a type/antitype correlation between these things?
3. Certain things in OT called a “shadow” does not justify assigning “type” to any detail for which we can arbitrarily find a resemblance in the NT.
 - a. The analogy itself of a “shadow” does not imply the delineation of specific things without further information. One may see a “shadow” of someone coming around the corner and see them holding something that looks like a cane, but when they turn the corner it is discovered it is an umbrella with a curved handle like a cane.
 - b. E.g., **Col 2:16-17** - In context, “things which are a shadow” refer to food, drink, festival, new moon, Sabbath day, v16. These “things,” taken collectively, are a “shadow,” not that each one specifically foreshadowed something specific under the NT. To extend application beyond the context is assumption, and opens the door to whatever the imagination can come up through arbitrary resemblances (see example below)
 - c. Paul’s point was that the Colossians should not let the gnostic, Judaizing teachers persuade them they needed to practice these things to be complete in Christ, **1:28; 2:2-10**.

E.g., John Gill, English Baptist pastor (1697-1771) “**Which are a shadow of things to come**,... By Christ, and under the Gospel dispensation; that is, they were types, figures, and representations of spiritual and evangelical things: the **DIFFERENT “MEATS AND DRINKS”**, **clean and unclean, allowed or forbidden by the law, were emblems of the two people, the Jews and Gentiles, the one clean, the other unclean**; but since these are become one in Christ, the distinction of meats is ceased, these shadows are gone; and **also of the different food of regenerate and unregenerate souls**, the latter feeding on impure food, the ashes and husks of sensual lusts, or their own works, the former on the milk and meat in the Gospel, the wholesome words of Christ; and **likewise the clean meat was a shadow of Christ himself**, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed. The “holy days”, or “feasts” of the Jews, the feasts of tabernacles, of the passover and Pentecost, were types of Christ; **THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES**, though it was in remembrance of the Israelites dwelling in tents and booths when they came out of Egypt, yet was **also a representation of the people of God dwelling in the earthly houses of their tabernacles here on earth; and particularly of Christ’s dwelling, or tabernacling in human nature**, and who likewise was born at the time of this feast; See Gill on John 1:14. ... The feast of **PENTECOST**, or the feast of harvest and firstfruits, **was a shadow of the firstfruits of the Spirit**, which Christ having received, gave to his disciples on that day; **and of the harvest of souls to be gathered under the Gospel dispensation**, of which the conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost was an earnest and pledge. The “**NEW MOON**” **was typical of the church, which is fair as the moon, and receives all her light from Christ the sun** of righteousness; and of the renewed state of the church under the Gospel dispensation, when the old things of the law are passed away, and all things relating to church order, ordinances, and discipline, are become new. The “**SABBATHS**” were also shadows of future things; **THE GRAND SABBATHAL YEAR, OR THE FIFTIETH YEAR SABBATH**, or jubilee, in which liberty was proclaimed throughout the land, a general release of debts, and restoration of inheritances, **prefigured the liberty we have by Christ from sin**, Satan, and the law, the payment of all our debts by Christ, and the right we have through him to the heavenly and incorruptible inheritance. The **SEVENTH YEAR SABBATH**, in which there was no tilling of the land, no ploughing, sowing, nor reaping, **was an emblem of salvation through Christ by free grace, and not by the works of men**; and the **SEVENTH DAY SABBATH was a type of that spiritual rest we have in Christ now, and of that eternal rest we shall have with him in heaven hereafter**: now these were but shadows, not real things; or did not contain the truth and substance of the things themselves, of which they were shadows; and though they were representations of divine and spiritual things, yet dark ones, they had not so much as the very image of the things; they were but shadows, and like them fleeting and passing away, and now are gone:” [CAPS mine; bold mine (except for 1st phrase, “Which are a shadow of things to come”)]

(See other side)

Examples of arbitrary, subjective assigning of “types” to persons, events, and things

Rahab

“The Fathers generally (miro consensu, *Jacobson*) consider the **deliverance of Rahab as typical of salvation**, and the **scarlet line hung out at her window as typical of the blood of Jesus**, in the same way as the ark of Noah and the blood of the paschal lamb were; a view which is borne out by the analogy of the deliverances, and by the language of Heb 11:31 (*τοῖς ἀπεισθησασιν*, “the disobedient”), compared with 1Pe 3:20 (*ἀπεισθησασιν ποτε*). Clement (*ad Corinth. xii.*) is the first to do so. **He says that by the symbol of the scarlet line it was “made manifest that there shall be redemption through the blood of the Lord to all who believe and trust in God,”** and adds, that Rahab in this was a prophetess as well as a believer, a sentiment in which he is followed by Origen (*in lib. Jes., Hom. iii.*). Justin Martyr in like manner ... and in a like spirit **Irenaeus draws from the story of Rahab the conversion of the Gentiles, and the admission of publicans and harlots into the kingdom of heaven** through the symbol of the scarlet line,... Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine (who, like Jerome and Cyril, takes Ps 87:4 to refer to Rahab the harlot), and Theodoret, all follow in the same track ...” *Smith’s Dict.*, vol 3, p2664 [bold mine]

Let’s see how far can we go with this kind of reasoning, i.e., subjectively attributing “type” to things from the story of Rahab to which there is some kind of similarity in the NT...?

- As her house was the *only* one in the city where there was safety, is that not **typical that there is but one church** that provides salvation?
- Her house was a **type of the church**, for only in it was safety (2:18-19).
- Were not those who left that house (2:19) **typical of apostates today who spiritually die if they leave the “house”**?
- Is not her covering them with stalks of flax (2:6) **typical of baptism** being immersion and providing safety from the devil’s efforts to destroy us?
- And is escaping on a rope through the window (2:15) **typical of God providing a way of escape from temptation (1Co 10:13)**...?
- Her house was spared, (2:18-19; 6:17). Does that not **foreshadow (a “type”?) the church will be spared** when God destroys the world of the ungodly.
- She and her family had to “gather into the house” to be saved; anyone outside of it would be destroyed, (2:18-19). Can we not see that as a **“type” that it is not enough to believe in God, one must be gathered into the church to be saved**?
- Rahab was a harlot, and she lied, yet God’s grace was extended to her when the city was destroyed. Surely this a **“type” that God extends His grace in Christ to imperfect people**, is it not?

Prove these assumed allegories, or types, are *wrong*...! While the second part of these analogies is *true*, the question is whether the *Holy Spirit intended* them to be typical of these future events—“types.” Of this we have no evidence other than our own conjectures.

Scape goat into the wilderness

One of the two goats serving as a sin offering for the people was let go into the wilderness (Lev 16:5,8-10,22), which **prefigures Christ, our sin offering, going into the wilderness to be tempted** (Mt 4:1f). And since which goat this would be was **determined by lot (Lev 16:8,9), this foreshadowed the soldiers casting lots for the garment of Jesus** when he died as a sin offering (Jn 19:24). *Prove it not so!* Evidence: Arbitrary assumption.

Candlestick/Lampstand in the tabernacle

Robert Milligan, prominent preacher in the Restoration Movement (1814-1875), biography by J.W. McGarvey in the back of his commentary on Hebrews 9:2—“This makes candlestick **was a type of the Church of Christ**” as God’s means for dispensing the light of the gospel. Then, he says it is **“the oil, not the candlestick, that produced” the light and makes that the “appropriate symbol of the Holy Spirit.”** [bold mine]

Tabernacle/Incarnation

“This mystery of the tabernacle was fully understood by the learned Nachmanides, who, in few words, but pregnant, expresseth himself to this purpose: ‘The mystery of the tabernacle was this, that it was to be a place for the shechinah, or habitation of Divinity, to be fixed in;’ **and this, no doubt, as a special type of God’s future dwelling in Christ’s human nature**, which was the TRUE SHECHINAH:...” **Adam Clarke’s commentary on Ex 25:23**

Elisha

“Elisha was a type of Christ in 40 ways” - Steve Rudd

Joseph

“75 similarities of Joseph as a type of Christ” Steve Rudd

Water from Jesus side

“the water which flowed out of Jesus’ side was a **symbolic reference to the Holy Spirit**” NET Bible on Jn 19:34. [boldmine]