

Types and Shadows of Christ

By Derrick Stokes

In the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, there are “pictures” or reflections of people who are yet to be born. Differing from visions and dreams, these pictures are actual events or people that were prophetic depictions. This is known as typology. These “shadows” are less than perfect representatives of the actual person. They aren’t narrowed to people and events. Typologies can also be objects and ceremonies. The person being foreshadowed is known as the *antitype*.

God in His sovereignty has chosen to reveal his plan of salvation to His creation before the Word incarnate, Jesus, came to Earth. He did this through a process called progressive revelation. In his Systematic Theology, Charles Hodge states, “*What at first is only obscurely intimated is gradually unfolded in subsequent parts of the sacred volume, until the truth is revealed in its fullness.*”¹ God the Father never left us without a glimmer of hope and He never will.

THE FIRST SACRIFICE

Adam and Eve were the first to witness a shadow of the Savior in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve’s sin brought death into the world. Before the Fall, they were open and unashamed before each other and God. After they disobeyed God, they were ashamed and hid from Him. Then they tried to cover themselves with their own insufficient works (fig leaves). The first death we know of in Scripture was not the murder of their son Abel, it was the sacrifice provided by God. Genesis 3:21 reads, “*And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.*” Adam and Even did not make the sacrifice that covered their sins, God provided the sacrifice.²

While God foretold of the coming Messiah in verse 15, God used the animal skins to foreshadow His Son’s sacrifice.

THE ARK AND THE DOOR

Later on we read the account of Noah and the ark that the Lord told him to build. The world had become so wicked that God said He would wipe out all of mankind. God told Noah to build a large boat that would save people from the coming judgement. When

¹ <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/hodge/theology1.iv.vi.ii.html>

² We can see, perhaps, why God didn’t approve of Cain’s sacrifice which consisted of the crops that he tilled from the ground. Abel’s sacrifice consisted of the firstborn of his flock. (Genesis 4:2:5). Hebrews 11:4 says that Abel’s sacrifice was “better”.

God gives building instructions in the Bible they are usually quite detailed. With the ark, Noah was told what kind of wood to use, the measurements to be used, and how many windows and doors would be on the ark. *“So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks.”* Gen. 6:14-16. Notice, God specified how many doors to build into the ark. One door. Only one way to salvation. The only people that were saved on the ark were Noah and the seven other members of his family. However, the ark was big enough (1,518,000 cubic feet or 569 modern railroad cars) that anyone else who would have sought salvation through the ark would have been saved. But they could have only come through the one door.



Here we have two types, depictions of Christ, within the same picture. The ark was the only way of salvation from the impending flood (judgement). The door was also the only way to escape the flood.

“YOUR ONLY SON, WHOM YOU LOVE”

Next, we have the story of Abraham and his son Isaac. In Genesis 22, God tells Abraham to sacrifice his son, “your only son, whom you love...” The next verse says that Abraham, along with Isaac and two servants went to Mt. Moriah. In verse 4, the Bible says, *“On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.”* As Abraham and his son head up to the mountain, Abraham placed upon Isaac the wood that would be used for the burnt offering. At the top of Mount Moriah, Isaac is bound and laid upon the wood. The moment draws near that he must die. As Abraham is about to kill his only son, God intervenes.

He tells Abraham not to kill Isaac, to look up and notice there is a ram caught in a thorn bush. Abraham then, thankfully, sacrifices the ram instead and takes Isaac back home safely.



Here we can see multiple parallels that mirror the story of Jesus. First Isaac is the only son, the beloved son of his father Abraham. John 3:16 states that Jesus is the only begotten son of God. Next, as Isaac was heading up to be sacrificed, he carried up the very wood he would have to die on in the same manner that Jesus had to carry his cross to the place of his execution. Three days went by from the time Abraham was told he had to sacrifice Isaac to the moment of Isaac's deliverance, when he was received back from death. Likewise, Jesus rose from the dead on the third day.

But something different happened here. We not only have Isaac as a "type" of Jesus, we also see a picture of Christ in the ram caught in the thorn bush. Jesus being our substitute, bearing the price we owe for our sins wearing a crown of thorns. God, beforehand had a ram wondering on the same mountain. God beforehand, had a thorn bush grow that the ram would get caught in. At the right time, God revealed that Abraham's son did not have to die. God, yet again, provided the sacrifice.

BETRAYED FROM AMONG HIS BREATHEREN

Continuing our journey through scripture, the Genesis 37-50 tells the account of a young man named Joseph and his family. Joseph, a shepherd boy, was one of the youngest of twelve brothers. Favored by his father, Jacob, he was given a beautiful coat. Joseph also began to have dreams that his family would one day bow to him. One day his brother's conspired to kill Joseph but instead took his coat and threw him into a dried up well. When a

caravan of Ishmaelites showed up Joseph's brother, Judah, decided to sell him to them as a slave. He was sold for 20 pieces of silver. His brothers told their father he was dead.

While a slave, Joseph was put in charge of the house of Potipher. Joseph was so diligent in his duties that Potipher promoted Joseph to be in charge of everything in the household. One day Potipher's wife attempted to seduce Joseph but he resisted her advances. Well, now as a scorn woman she decides to accuse Joseph of rape, so Potipher has Joseph thrown in jail. While in jail Joseph is confined with two others. One was Pharaoh's baker. The other was Pharaoh's cup-bearer. They begin to have dreams which Joseph interpreted. They were prophetic dreams in which one servant would be restored to his position and the other would be executed.

One day the Pharaoh had a dream that no one could interpret. Joseph's reputation as dream interpreter reached Pharaoh and he had Joseph brought before him. Pharaoh's dream interpreted stated that there would be seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. Joseph advised Pharaoh to save the surplus from the seven years of plenty so there would be more than enough for the seven years of famine. The plan worked and Joseph was promoted. In Genesis 41:40, Pharaoh told Joseph, *"You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you."*

So Joseph was elevated to a position of authority over the whole land. Later, he was even reunited with his family but they didn't recognize him (especially his father who thought he was dead). Because of his new political position, his brothers had to bow before him just as he had envisioned so many years ago. At first he treated them as subjects. Afterward, he treated them as family. He told them, *"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."*³

Joseph was perhaps the most detailed "type" of Jesus in the Old Testament. Now, let's look at all the ways Jesus was foreshadowed in the story of Joseph.

Joseph	Jesus
12 Brothers (Genesis 35:23-26)	12 Disciples (Matthew 10:1-4)
Shepherd boy (37:2)	The Good Shepherd (John 10:11)
Foretold of his future reign (37:6-7)	Foretold of His future Kingdom (Matthew 16:28)
Stripped of his coat (37:23)	Stripped of His robe (Matthew 27:31)
Betrayed by his own (37:12-28)	Betrayed by His own (John 13:18-26)
Brother, Judah, suggested selling Joseph (37:26-27)	Judas (Greek for Judah)
Sold for silver (37:28)	Sold for silver
Cast into a pit- only to come out unhurt later (37:22, 28)	Cast into a grave- only to rise again 3 days later (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
Overcame temptation (39:10)	Overcame temptation (Matthew 4:1-11)
Unjustly sentenced (39:19-20)	Unjustly sentenced ⁴

³ Genesis 50:20

⁴ Jesus was crucified for sins He did not commit. He was punished for the sins of the world that were placed on him. The mob called Jesus a blasphemer because He stated He had the power to heal, the power to forgive sins, and made himself equal with God. His crucifixion would have been just if none of these things were true.

Sentenced with two others- one of which is restored and one is executed (chpt. 40)	Crucified between two others- one of which will join Jesus in heaven (Luke 23:39-43)
Warned of impending doom; made way of preparation (41:29-36)	Warned that those who were “prepared” by believing in Him would not perish (John 3:14-18)
Obedience to God placed him in exalted position (41:37-45)	Was exalted after becoming obedient “even to death” (Philippians 2:8-11)
Was not recognized by family after new position until he revealed himself (42:8)	Was not recognized by some after His resurrection until He revealed himself (John 21:4, Luke 24:13-35)

“WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD, I WILL PASS OVER YOU”

Next, we will cover the Passover. After Joseph and his family entered Egypt, they multiplied and became too numerous for the Pharaoh’s comfort. So he enslaved them. The Hebrews, as they came to be known, were slaves in Egypt for over 400 years. One day, God sent them Moses. He would deliver his people by showing Pharaoh the power of Yahweh. After nine different plagues, Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrews go. The last plague would be the worse of the ten. It would strike the people of Egypt, especially Pharaoh, to their hearts.

God told Pharaoh to tell all the Israelites, *“...each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect... all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs... On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.”* Exodus 12:3-12.

Before the Passover animal sacrifices were the norm for the people of Israel. However, this particular sacrifice called for a more specific approach. This sacrifice was going to do two things:

1. It was going to protect them from death.
2. It ushered in an era in which those that were covered by the blood would be freed from bondage.

The lamb used for this sacrifice was to be without defect. Some translations say “without blemish.” This was to be the precedent set for all animal sacrifices to come afterwards. After the Hebrews exited Egyptian bondage, the law given to them by God said that any animal sacrificed to Him was to be without blemish (Leviticus 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6; 4:3, 23, 28, 32; 5:15, 18). In Exodus 12:46 we read that none of the lamb’s bones were to have been broken. These

sacrifices only sufficed in covering sins, not removing them.⁵ 1500 years later, when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming, he said *“Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world.”* John 1:29.

In this, Jesus became the antitype of the Passover Lamb. He was without sin, making Him “without blemish”. Jesus was brutally beaten, yet not a bone was broken. Crucifixion was an extremely brutal method of execution. The “offenders” would hang there attempting to hold their weight up on the nails in their hands and feet. When their strength was gone they would suffocate and die of asphyxiation. To quicken this process their legs would be broken so they could no longer pick themselves up to gasp for air. Sometimes they wouldn’t die until the following day. The Jews wanted those who were crucified dead so they wouldn’t have to bother with the bodies the next day. So the soldiers broke the legs of those hanging on the crosses. However, Jesus died before they could break His legs.⁶

The work involved after crucifixion require the body be taken down from the cross and buried. It is a crucial thing to note that they wanted the “criminals” dead because the Jews couldn’t work on the Sabbath. But this wasn’t just a regular Sabbath day. Jesus was crucified on the day before the Jews celebrated Passover! John 19:14, *“It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. ‘Here is your king,’ Pilate said to the Jews.”*

“...BECAUSE HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE...”

In the Gospel of Matthew, the angel Gabriel tells Joseph that his betrothed, Mary, had conceived a child through the Holy Spirit. Verse 21 of chapter 1, he tells Joseph, *“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because He will save his people from their sins.”* The importance here is placed on the name of Jesus. Gabriel doesn’t just give any name because it sounds nice. No, he gives a specific name that had a specific meaning. In the cultural context, Joseph would have made the correlation.

Stepping back in time from Jesus’ birth approximately 1500 years, and 40 years after the original Passover, the Israelites are about to enter the Promised Land. God has placed a man named Joshua in charge. *“So the Lord said to Moses, ‘Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him. Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him.’”* Moses would not lead his people into the Promised Land. Joshua would. In Deuteronomy God said that Joshua would lead Israel because he was a mighty warrior.

⁵ Hebrews 10:4

⁶ John 19:31-36

But what does Joshua have to do with Jesus? Their names sound only somewhat similar to us, but in Hebrew their names are exactly the same. Joshua in Hebrew is יהושע: transliterated as “Yehoshua”. Another way to say the name is “Yeshua” (ישוע). Both names mean “Yahweh saves.” The Hebrew language does not have a “J” sound like we do in English. The New Testament was written in Greek making the name of Jesus: Ιησούς. Transliterated, it would be Iésous (pronounced *ee-ay-sooce*). As Scripture was then translated in Latin, it became pronounced *eeyasous* (Iesus). Then to *Jesus* in English.

So, here we see that the angel Gabriel told Joseph basically to name their child after the great Hebrew leader, Joshua. Joshua did save his people and delivered them into the Promised Land, just like Jesus would do centuries later.

Now let’s also look at the relationship with Moses and Joshua and how they foreshadow Christ. Before the Hebrews could enter the Promised Land, Moses gave them the Law. The Law governed how they were to live coming out of Egypt. However, the law was not meant to save anyone. It was a way of right living but it, in no means, washed the heart or saved the soul. The Law was to show us how insufficient we were to be holy on our own. Galatians 3:24 describes the purpose of the law, *“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”* It taught the need for a savior. Moses represented the law. It was not through Moses that the people entered the land promised them by God. It was through Joshua. It is not through the Law that we enter into the Kingdom of God, it is through Jesus. Jesus was the fulfillment of the Law.

All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.⁷ Even one sin has proven to us that we need a savior because James tells us that if we’ve broken one law we have broken them all.⁸ We need God to create in us a pure heart and renew in us a right spirit.⁹ Only those that have been born of the Spirit can see the Kingdom of God, the Promised Land. Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again.¹⁰ Nicodemus wasn’t a thief or a murderer or an adulterer.¹¹ Nicodemus was a religious man. He was a Pharisee. They were the spiritual fathers during Jesus’ time. They were the “good guys”, the best guys even, of the culture. But, Jesus told even him that he needed to be born again. Because Jesus knew that as it is written: *“None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one... There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*¹²

Romans 3:20 says *“For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.”*

⁷ Romans 3:23

⁸ James 2:10

⁹ Psalm 51:10

¹⁰ John 3

¹¹ It should be noted that even if a person hasn’t done these things physically, Jesus said we have done them in the heart (Matthew 5:21-28)

¹² Psalm 14:3, Romans 3:10-18

...BUT GOD...

Because of our sins we “*were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*”¹³

Now this only applies to those of us who have trusted Christ as our savior. God has sent His Son into the world born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, suffered and died on a cross, buried, and rose on the third day. He came to be the sacrifice first depicted in Genesis. The Old Testament has many more types and shadows of Christ than I listed in this paper. Jesus showed us that they all were depictions of Him.¹⁴ If we aren’t trusting in the work He did on the cross then we are depending on our own works to save us. Like Adam and Eve, who tried to cover their guilt with their own works, the works we are dependent on to cover *our* guilt is insufficient. Our works to God are like filthy rags if we haven’t been washed by the blood of Christ.¹⁵ Won’t you repent and trust in Him? He loved you enough that He sacrificed His only Son, whom He loves, that we might become the righteousness of God.¹⁶

ALL THIS IS FROM GOD, WHO
RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF
THROUGH CHRIST AND GAVE US
THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

2 Corinthians 5:19



¹³ Ephesians 2:1-10

¹⁴ Luke 24:44

¹⁵ Isaiah 64:6

¹⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:22