

Types and Patterns

In addition to the symbolic language by the spoken word of the Old Testament prophets, there are many prophecies that use types or patterns. These prophecies in the Old Testament use actual people, objects and events to foreshadow people, objects and events to come in the Christian dispensation. Heb 10:1a states, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things." The old law of Moses was a shadow of the new law given by Jesus Christ, but not the very image of it. The old law was a pattern that we can study to learn more about the gospel of Christ. Many objects and events in the Old Testament were shadows or patterns of things to come in the New Testament. Speaking of events that took place in the lives of the people of Israel during the time of Moses, 1Cor. 10:11a states, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition." Events, which took place in the lives of the people of Israel, were examples for us to study and learn more about the better things we now have during the Christian dispensation. By studying people, circumstances and events in the Old Testament, we can learn much about people, circumstances and events in this present Christian dispensation. Because of the importance of understanding this type of prophecy, some examples will be given at this point in order to illustrate what is meant by types and patterns. A common pattern with which most are familiar is that Moses was a type of Christ. Many of the actual events that took place in the life of Moses were pictures of things to take place in the life of Christ. The following table illustrates some of those types and patterns in the lives of Moses and Christ.

Moses

1. Pharaoh declared that all male children would be killed at the time of Moses' birth.
2. Moses led his people out of physical bondage in Egypt.
3. God gave the Ten Commandments, old law, through Moses.
4. Israel followed the words spoken by Moses.
5. Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.
6. Moses built the Tabernacle.

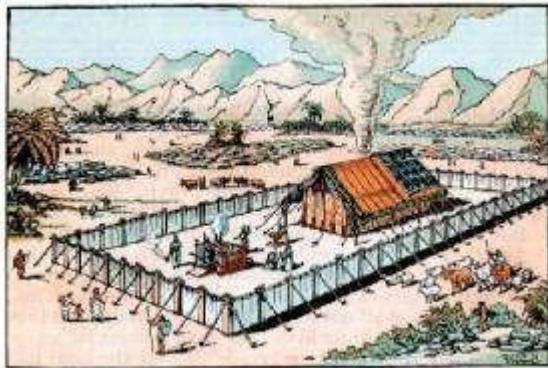
Christ

1. Herod declared that all male children would be killed at the time of Christ's birth.
2. Christ led his people out of the spiritual bondage of sin.
3. God gave the gospel, new law, through Jesus Christ.
4. Christians follow the words spoken by Christ.
5. Christ gave the gospel on spiritual Mount Zion.
6. Christ built the True Tabernacle.

Many other comparisons could be made between the lives of Moses and Christ, but these should be sufficient to show that Moses was an Old Testament likeness of Jesus Christ. Several of these types will be discussed in future sections of this study. These types and patterns were understood and used by the writers in the New Testament. For example, Peter used the fourth illustration given above as he quoted from Deuteronomy 18:15 in Acts 3:22. He stated, "*For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.*"

Peter recognized that Moses was a likeness of Christ and used this pattern to explain that Christians today should listen to the words of Christ just as Israel of old listened to Moses.

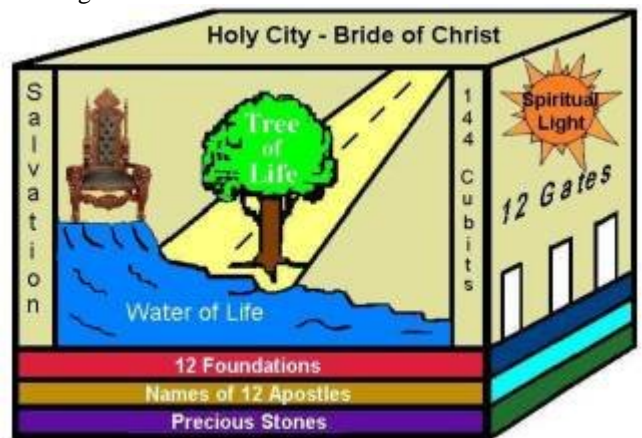
Example number six given above is that Moses was instructed to build the tabernacle which was a likeness of Christ building the true tabernacle. Moses was responsible to build the physical tabernacle that the Israelites carried with them in the

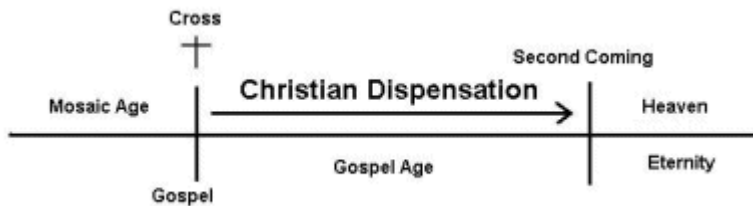


wilderness. Christ built a spiritual tabernacle, the church, which Christians dwell in today. Speaking of our high priest, Jesus Christ, Hebrews 8:1-2 states, "*Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.*"

Moses was the man who pitched or built the first tabernacle. Man did not pitch the second or true tabernacle, the church. It was built by Jesus Christ himself. This Old Testament tabernacle also contained items that were patterns of worship in the church today. Some of these will also be discussed later. It is only when we see these relationships that we truly understand the meaning of the tabernacle. The point is that the physical tabernacle in the time of Moses was a pattern of the spiritual tabernacle to be built by Jesus Christ, which is the church.

This brings us to another important concept to understand about Old Testament prophecy: the use of literal, physical events in the Old Testament as patterns of spiritual events in the New Testament. As discussed above, the church is a spiritual institution,





and we can learn much about it by studying the physical Old Testament pattern, the tabernacle. These spiritual concepts are items that cannot be seen or touched. Speaking to Christians, the writer in Heb. 12:18 says, "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched." This is referring to Mount Sinai where Moses received the Ten Commandments. Mount Sinai was a physical mountain that the Israelites could see and touch.

Man has two parts to his total being



Spiritual & Physical
Soul & Body

Then Heb. 12:22 explains, "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Verse 23 then calls Mount Zion the "general assembly and church of the firstborn." The church is a "heavenly" institution that cannot be seen or touched. It is a spiritual institution. Spiritual entities are described in the Bible by using physical objects that we can see and feel. The only way man can understand the spiritual things of the Christian dispensation is to have them explained in physical terms. This compares to the parables Jesus used to teach his disciples. As Jesus spoke in parables, he taught valuable lessons about the church and how Christians should live on this earth by using common examples of everyday life situations. Physical situations and events were used to teach spiritual lessons. One main difference in the parables and the patterns of the Old Testament is that the parables were not necessarily actual events. As stated before, most of them were commonly known and understood everyday situations. In contrast the Old Testament types and patterns used actual people and events to teach lessons about spiritual matters which were to come in the Christian dispensation.

In order to understand how these prophecies work that use physical events to describe spiritual events, we must keep in mind that man has two parts to his total being. He has the flesh, which is the physical part of his being, and he has a spirit, which is his soul or the spiritual part of his being. As discussed above the law of Moses was a shadow of the law of Christ. It was a law of the flesh (Rom. 7:5-7), which dealt with the physical lives of man. It proved that man was weak in the flesh and could not live righteously under a law directed at the physical part of his being. In other words, he could not gain spiritual life for his soul because he was weak in the flesh. In order to gain salvation for his soul, man needed a Savior and a law that provided forgiveness of the sins he committed in the flesh. The gospel of Christ provides that forgiveness and allows us to have spiritual life for our souls (Rom. 8:2). It is a law that deals with the spiritual part of man. The events that took place in the lives of the people in Old Testament times were physical. They dealt with the fleshly part of man. They were physical types or patterns of the law of Christ that deals with the spiritual part of man and allows us to have salvation for our souls

When we obey the gospel of Christ, we obtain spiritual life. An illustration of this is given in Rom. 8:1 which states, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Notice the terms "flesh" and "spirit". This is a contrast between the physical part of man and his spiritual part. Those who are in Christ Jesus are not condemned because they are walking in the ways of the spirit and not the flesh. This is also a contrast between the law of Moses and Christ. The law of Moses is called a law of the "flesh," but the law of Christ is a law of the "spirit." This flesh will pass away but our soul will live on forever if we walk after the spiritual ways of the Lord. Rom 8:13 says, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." In this world in which we live, it is only natural to think in terms of material or physical things. We have a physical body with certain needs that must be met. But, we also have a spiritual soul. This spiritual part of our being also has spiritual needs that must be met. Jesus gave us a spiritual institution, the church, and Christians dwell spiritually in this institution today. Christians have a spiritual life today in addition to our physical life (John 5:24). We must understand that many things in prophecy deal with this spiritual life which Christians live.

As we proceed through this study, we hope to show many examples of Old Testament events that were patterns of things to come in the Christian age. They were written for our learning that we might better understand the spiritual kingdom of God in which we dwell today. This is the main thrust of this study. We want to look at happenings recorded in the Old Testament and relate them to events of a spiritual nature in the church today. As we study these patterns for the church, we should be able to learn more about God's plan for his people. This should help us to better understand the true nature of the church.