



Types & Shadows

For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come,
 and not the very image of the things...
 Heb 10:1

A type is not an especially easy thing to define. Scofield defines it this way:

A type is a divinely purposed illustration of some truth. It may be: (1) a person (Rom 5:14); (2) an event (1 Cor 10:11); (3) a thing (Heb 10:19-20); (4) an institution (Heb 9:11-12); or, (5) a ceremonial (1 Cor 5:7). Types occur most frequently in the Pentateuch, but are found, more sparingly, elsewhere. The antitype, or fulfillment of the type, is found generally in the NT.

Two warnings are necessary: (1) nothing may be insisted upon as a type without explicit NT authority; and (2) all types not so authenticated must be recognized as having only the authority of analogy, of spiritual congruity.

The OT saints could not understand how a reigning Messiah could also suffer the ignominious death described by Isaiah and others. Neither did they understand the significance of such a death. They had the Law of Moses, but did not realize that it was but a shadow of a greater Sacrifice yet to come. Today, in the light shed by the Cross, we can understand much more clearly what the Jewish sacrifices foreshadowed. If you stand in the shadow of a thing and look at the thing, you cannot see the details of it. It is indistinct and dark. But if you move to the other side of the thing and see the lighted side, that which casts the shadow, the details become immediately clear and your questions and curiosities are answered. Such is the case with much of the Old Testament. Standing in the shadow of the Cross, their understanding was very limited. Now, with the light of the Gospel of God's grace shining in its full brightness upon it, we can see it more clearly. The Law of Moses was a shadow of the Cross, a type, a prefiguring, as we shall see shortly.

Oftentimes a thing is described in the OT, be it a person or an event, a thing or an institution or ceremony which rightly is described therein, but which also illustrates some NT truth, often dealing with some aspect of the person or work of Christ, but occasionally foreshadowing some other NT truth. Eve, bride of Adam, for example, is used in the Scriptures as a type of the Church, the bride of Christ. Adam, the first man, is used as a type of Christ, the "second man." The marriage relationship is often used to foreshadow the relationship between Christ and His bride, the Church. The Passover Lamb is used in the Scriptures as a type of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. That is, there will be aspects of each of these which are used specifically in the NT to illustrate an important truth, so that the OT example becomes a foreshadowing of a NT truth. Many of the rituals and ceremonies under the Mosaic system of sacrifices and feasts portray some aspect of the work of Christ. The unleavened bread, for example, typifies the sinlessness of Christ, whereas the leavened meal represents the sin that remains in the believer. Indeed, the ritual sacrifices ordained are referred to as a shadow of the greater sacrifice made at Calvary.

It would be entirely possible to attach some spiritual significance to most any passage of the OT, making it seem to represent almost anything else. Therefore does Scofield well say that a type must have a clear and explicit NT authentication. For example, the marriage relationship is authenticated as a type of the relationship between Christ and the Church by the passage in Eph 5:22-32, which concludes in the following manner:

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph 5:32)

This is the last verse of a passage wherein Paul lays out the ground rules for the love of a husband toward his wife and the submission of a wife to her husband, indicating that Christ loves the Church, His bride, perfectly, and that the Church ought rightly to be in perfect submission to Christ. Therefore, Paul authenticates the marriage relationship as a type of the relationship between Christ and the Church. Everywhere, then, that the marriage relationship is discussed in the Scriptures, there will also be a spiritual application to the relationship between Christ and His bride. If Christ loves the Church, then husbands ought also to love their wives, and if the Church is to be submissive to Christ, then wives must be in submission to their husbands.

In addition to explicitly authorized types, there are examples of foreshadowing found in the Scripture which are not as explicitly authorized, yet which are clear. While these do not have the authority of types, they do have the authority of spiritual congruity. Gold often signifies deity, whereas silver often depicts some aspect of redemption. Bronze is often associated with judgment, while earthen vessels are often associated with Christ in His humanity.

At the same time, there is yet a third example of allegorical interpretation that is acknowledged in the Scriptures. That is the symbol. A symbol is similar to a type insofar as the Scriptures must themselves interpret the symbol. Wherever a person assumes a thing to be symbolic of something else in the Bible, the Bible must itself interpret the symbol or it cannot be accepted as symbolic.

We should point out forthrightly that many expositors of the Scriptures have done much damage to sound exegesis and exposition by according symbolic or typical authority to things which the Bible does not authorize. One must be very careful to avoid this. Not everything in the Bible is a type. Not everything is symbolic. Not everything foreshadows something else. Many teach that, because the Bible contains allegory, that the whole must be allegorical. But such an assumption is no more valid for the Bible than it is for any other book. The fact that a book contains symbolism does not necessarily mean that the entire book is itself a symbol. It is far better to assume that, where the Bible does not apply symbolism to a thing, then that thing is to be interpreted literally. This is especially so because a literal interpretation of the Bible makes perfect sense. Perhaps it would be better to say a "normal" interpretation is to be preferred. That is, the same rules apply to Biblical interpretation as apply to other books. God chose this medium through which to reveal Himself to man, and clearly intends for us to use the same common sense in its interpretation as we would with any other written communication.

While there are many types of study Bibles on the market, the Scofield Study Bible has been the standard by which others are judged for nearly a century, being first issued in 1909. It is universally regarded as conservative by theologians around the world, and is used as a teaching and preaching tool in more seminaries and churches than any other Bible. Scofield details one hundred twenty-eight types, shadows and symbols in his Bible. In order to fully study the types listed, you will need to refer to the excellent notes in the Scofield Bible. The table below lists those examples, with both Scripture note references and antitype or symbol references.

Type, Shadow or Symbol	Type, Shadow or Symbol Of:	Scofield Note & Verse Reference	Antitype, Shadow or Symbol Reference
Woman	The Church	Gen 2:23	Eph 5:25-32; 2 Cor 11:2-3 Cp. Jn 3:28-29; Rev 19:7-8
Coats of Skin	Christ	Gen 3:21	1 Cor 1:30 See Rev 19:8 (note)
Cain	Earthly Man	Gen 4:1	2 Pet 2
Abel	Spiritual Man	Gen 4:2	Heb 9:22; 11:4
Lamb	Christ	Gen 4:4	Jn 1:29;
Adam	Christ (contrasting)	Gen 5:1	Lk 3:38 See also Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:21-22
Enoch	Raptured Church	Gen 5:22	Heb 11:5 cp 1 Th 4:13-18
Ark	Christ (as refuge)	Gen 6:14	Heb 11:7
Flood	Baptism	Gen 7:10	1 Pet 3:19-21
Melchizedek	Christ	Gen 14:18	Ps 110:4; Heb 5:5-6; 6:20 Heb 7:23-24
Hagar	The Law	Gen 16:3	Gal 4:24-25

Sarah	Grace	Gen 21:3	Cp Gen 15:19; Gal 4:22:31
Isaac	Church	Gen 21:3	Gal 4:28
Isaac	Church (as Son)	Gen 21:3	Gen 22:1-10
Isaac	Christ (as Groom)	Gen 21:3	Gen 24: Mt 16:18 (note)
Isaac	New Man	Gen 21:3	Gal 4:29
Isaac	Christ	Gen 22:9	Phil 2:5-8
Abraham	Father (Offering a Son)	Gen 22:9	Rom 8:32; Jn 3:16
Ram	Christ	Gen 22:9	Heb 10:5-10
Abraham	King	Gen 24:1(<i>note</i>)	Mt 22:2
Unnamed Servant	Holy Spirit	Gen 24:1(<i>note</i>)	Jn 16:13-14
Rebekah	Church	Gen 24:1 (<i>note</i>)	Gen 24:16; 2 Cor 11:2; Gal 5:25-32
Isaac	Bridegroom	Gen 24:1 (<i>note</i>)	1 Pet 1:8; Gen 24:63; 1 Th 4:14-17
Abraham	Justification by faith	Gen 25:8	Rom 4; Gal 3; Jas 2:21
Esau	Man of the Earth	Gen 25:25	Heb 12:16-17
Drink Offering	Christ	Gen 35:14	Cp. Ps 22:14; Isa 53:12
Joseph	Christ (<i>Analogy</i>)	37:2 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Mt 3:17; Jn 15:24-25; Mt 26:3-4; Mt 21:37-39; Mt 27:37-37; Acts 15:14
Asenath	Church (<i>Analogy</i>)	Gen 41:45 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Jn 1:10-12; Acts 15:14; Eph 5:31-32
Benjamin	Christ (<i>Shadow</i>)	Gen 43:34 (<i>note</i>)	Cp. Gen 35:18 <i>note</i> ; see notes @ Gen 1:26; 1 Sam 8:7; Zech 12:8
Moses	Christ	Ex 2:2 (<i>great note!</i>)	Isa 61:1-2; Lk 4:18-19; 2 Cor 1:10; 1 Th 1:10

Serpent	Satan (Symbol)	Ex 7:12	Heb 2:14; Rev 12:9
Passover	Christ	Ex 12:11 (<i>great note!</i>)	Jn 1:29; 1 Cor 5:6-7; 1 Pet 1:18-19
Manna	Christ	Ex 16:35 (<i>great note!</i>)	Jn 6:49-51
Rock	Life thru the Spirit	Ex 17:6	1 Cor 10:4; Eph 2:1-6
Gold	Deity (Analogy)	Ex 25:1 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Ex 26:19 note; see Heb 9:1-24 ¬es; Ex 30:11-16 notes; Ex 38:27; Num 21:6-9
Silver	Redemption (Analogy)	Ex 25:1 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Ex 26:19 note; see Heb 9:1-24 ¬es; Ex 30:11-16 notes; Ex 38:27; Num 21:6-9
Bronze	Judgment (Analogy)	Ex 25:1 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Ex 26:19 note; see Heb 9:1-24 ¬es; Ex 30:11-16 notes; Ex 38:27; Num 21:6-9
Blue	Heavenly (Analogy)	Ex 25:1 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Ex 26:19 note; see Heb 9:1-24 ¬es; Ex 30:11-16 notes; Ex 38:27; Num 21:6-9
Purple	Royalty (Analogy)	Ex 25:1 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Ex 26:19 note; see Heb 9:1-24 ¬es; Ex 30:11-16 notes; Ex 38:27; Num 21:6-9
Scarlet	Sacrifice (Analogy)	Ex 25:1 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Ex 26:19 note; see Heb 9:1-24 ¬es; Ex 30:11-16 notes; Ex 38:27; Num 21:6-9
Tabernacle	Church	Ex 25:9 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Eph 2:19-22
Tabernacle	Believer	Ex 25:9 (<i>esp. note</i>)	2 Cor 6:16
Tabernacle	The Heavenuies	Ex 25:9 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Heb 9:23-24
Tabernacle (Wood & Gold)	Christ -humanity & deity	Ex 25:9 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Ex 26:15 note

Tabernacle (Ark Contents)	Christ	Ex 25:9 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Ex 25:16; Ex 16:33; Num 17:10; Heb 9:4
Tabernacle (Mercy Seat)	God's Throne	Ex 25:9 (<i>esp. note</i>)	Ezek 1:5 note
Brazen Altar	Cross (Place of Sacrifice)	Lev 1-5	Eph 2:14-16; Col 1:19-22
Showbread	Christ	Ex 25:30	1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6; Jn 12:24-33
Lampstand	Christ	Ex 25:31	Jn 1:4-9; 8:12; 9:5 Rev 1:4
Fine Linen	Righteousness	Ex 26:1 (<i>note</i>)	Rev 19:8
Linen - Blue	Jesus' Heavenly Origin	Ex 26:1 (<i>note</i>)	See blue above
Linen - Purple	His Royalty	Ex 26:1 (<i>note</i>)	See purple above
Linen - Scarlet	His Sacrifice	Ex 26:1 (<i>note</i>)	See scarlet above
Acacia Wood	Christ's Humanity	Ex 26:15 (<i>great note!</i>)	Isa 53:2
Silver	Redemption	Ex 26:15	Ex 30:16; 1 Pet 1:18-19
Veil	Christ's Body (torn for us)	Ex 26:31 (<i>great note!</i>)	Heb 10:20
Bronze Altar	Cross	Ex 27:1	Heb 9:14
Wood	Christ's Humanity	Ex 27:1	Cp. Heb 10:5-7
Bronze	Judgment	Ex 27:2	Cp. Num 21:9 (<i>note</i>); Jn 3:14 w/ Jn 12:31-33
Linen	Personal Righteousness (<i>Symbol</i>)	Ex 27:9	Lk 10: 25-28
Oil	Holy Spirit	Ex 27:20	Zech 4:2-6 (<i>note</i>); Cp. Jn 3:3-4 w/ Heb 1:9; Eph 2:8; Cp. 1 Cor 2:14-15; 2 Cor 3:18;13:14; Phil 2:1
Aaron	Christ	Ex 28:1	Heb 7, 9

Aaron's Sons	Believers	Ex 28:1	Rev 1:6; Cp. 1 Pet 2:9 & note
Washing	Regeneration (<i>Symbol</i>)	Ex 29:4	Ti 3:5; Jn 3:5-6
Laver	Cleansing	Ex 29:4	1 Jn 1:9
Pomegranates	Fruitfulness	Ex 28:31-35	Jn 15:16
Altar of Incense	Christ our Intercessor	Ex 30:1	Jn 17:1-26; Heb 7:25; Heb 13:15; Rev 8:3-4
Laver	Cleansing	Ex 30:18	Eph 5:25-27; Cp. Jn 13:2-10
Anointing Oil	Holy Spirit (Imparted for Service)	Ex 30:31	Acts 1:8
Burnt Offering	Christ	Lev 1:3	Heb 9:11-14; 10:5-7; Cp. Ps 40:6-8; Phil 2:8
Laying on Hands	Faith	Lev 1:4	Rom 4:5; 6:3-11
Fire	God's Holiness	Lev 1:8	Heb 12:29
Sweet Aroma Offering	Christ	Lev 1:9	Lev 1:9 note
Grain Offering	Christ	Lev 2:1	Lev 2:1 note
Peace Offering	Christ's Work	Lev 3:1	Col 1:20; Eph 2:17; Eph 2:14
Sin Offering	Christ (Made Sin for Us)	Lev 4:3	2 Cor 5:21
Trespass Offering	Injury Caused by Sin	Lev 5:6	Ps 51:4
High Priest	Christ	Lev 8:12	Heb 1:9
Leprosy	Sin (<i>Symbol</i>)	Lev 13:2	1 Cor 11:31
Leprosy (Healing of)	Gospel (<i>Shadow</i>)	Lev 14:3	Lev 14:3 note

Earthen Vessel	Christ's Humanity	Lev 14:5	Rom 8:2; 1 pet 3:18
The Two Goats	Christ's Work	Lev 16:5	Lev 16:5 note
Passover	Christ	Lev 23:5	1 Cor 5:7
Unleavend Bread	Communion W/ Christ	Lev 23:6	1 Cor 5:6-8; 2 Cor 7:1; Gal 5:7-9
First Fruits	Resurrection	Lev 23:10	1 Cor 15:23; 1 Th 4:13-18
Feast of Weeks	Spirit's Descent	Lev 23:16	1 Cor 10:16-17; 12:12-30
Wave Loaves	Church	Lev 23:17	Acts 2:1-4; 1 Cor 12:12-13, 20
Feast of Trumpets	Israel's Regathering	Lev 23:24	Isa 18:3; 27:13; Joel 2:1--3:21
Kinsman Redeemer	Christ	Lev 25:49	Ruth 2:1; 3:10--18; 4:1-10
The Nazarite	Christ	Num 6:2	Ps 104:15; Phil 3:1; 4:4,10; 1 Cor 11:14; Jn 1:18; 6:38; Mt 122:46-50
Sabbath & Canaan	Rest in Christ	Num 15:1	Heb 3--4
Blue Thread	Separation (Symbol)	Num 15:38	Num 15:38 note
Aaron's Rod	Resurrected Christ (Symbol)	Num 17:8	Num 17:8 note
Red Heifer	Christ's Sacrifice	Num 19:2	Heb 9:12-14
Water	Spirit & Word	Num 19:2	Jn 7:37-39; Eph 5:26
Bronze Serpent	Christ	Num 21:9	Jn 3:14-15; 2 Cor 5:21
Reubenites and Gadites	Carnal Christians (Symbols)	Num 32:1	2 Tim 4:10; Cp. Gen 11:31
Cities of Refuge	Shelter in Christ	Num 35:6	Rom 8:1, 33; Heb 6:17-20; Cp. Ps 46:1, 142:5

Horn	Strength, Pride, Power (Symbol)	Deut 33:17	Deut 33:17; Ps 75:4-5; Dan 8:20-21
Joshua	Christ	Josh 1:1	Heb 2:10; Jn 1:17; Rom 8:3-4; 10:4-5; Gal 3:23-25; Rom 8:37; 2 Cor 1:10; 2:14; 1 Jn 2:1-2; Eph 1:11, 14; 4:7-11
Rahab	Salvation by Faith	Josh 2:1	Heb 11:31
Scarlet Thread	Safety thru Sacrifice (Symbol)	Josh 2:21	Heb 9:19-22
Passing Over Jordan	Death with Christ (Symbol)	Josh 3:1	Rom 6:3-4, 6-11; Eph 2:5-6; Col 3:1-3
Ruth	Redemption by Christ	Ruth 4:5	Heb 2:14-15; Rom 3:24 note
Mountain	Kingdom (Symbol)	Isa 2:2	Dan 2:35, 44-45; Rev 17:9-11; 13:1 note
Wine Press	Divine Judgment (Symbol)	Lam 1:15	Isa 63:3; Rev 14:19-20, 19:15
The Vine	Unregenerate Man (esp. sinful Israel) (Symbol)	Ezek 15:2	Isa 5; 15; Jn 15
Sea	Masses of Humanity (Symbol)	Dan 7:2	Isa 60:5; Mt 13:47; Lk 21:25; Rev 13:1
Horns	Kingdoms (Symbol)	Dan 7:8	Rev 17:12
Beasts	Kingdoms (Symbol)	Dan 7:26	Dan 7:15, 23; Rev 13:1
Marriage	God's Relationship to Man	Hos 2:2	2 Cor 11:1-2; Jn 3:29; Rev 19:7; Eph 5:25-32
Chewing Locusts	Day of the Lord (Symbol)	Joel 1:4	Joel 1:13-14; 2:1-11
Plumb Line	Judgment (Symbol)	Amos 7:8	Cp. Isa 28:17; 34:11; Lam 2:8

Altar	Mercy thru Judgment (Symbol)	Amos 9:1	Jn 12:31-33
Jonah	Christ in the Tomb	Jonah (heading)	Mt 12:39-40
Sheol	The Grave	Hab 2:5	2 Sam 22:6; Ps 18:5; 116:3; Isa 14:9-17; Ezek 32:21; Jon 2:2
Signet	Royal Authority (Symbol)	Hag 2:23	Hag 2:23 note
Measuring Line	Preparation (Symbol)	Zech 2:1	Ezek 40:3,5; Cp. Mt 24:29-20
Lampstand	God's Witness (Symbol)	Zech 4:2	Rev 1:12, 13, 20; 2:1, 5
Two Olive Trees	Two Phases of God's Government (Symbol)	Zech 4:2	Acts 2:4 note
Scroll	Word of God (Symbol)	Zech 5:1	Ezra 6:2; Jer 36:2, 4, 6; Ezek 3:1-3
Four Chariots	Four Heavenly Spirits (Symbol)	Zech 6:1	Lk 1:19; Heb 1:14
Crowning of Joshua	Crowning of Jesus (Symbol)	Zech 6:11	Mt 16:27; 24:30; 25:31; Heb 7:1-3
Leaven	Evil or False Doctrine	Mt 13:33	Ex 12:15, 19; 13:7; Lev 2:11; Dt 16:4; Mt 16:6; Mk 8:15; Lk 12:1; 1 Cor 5:6-9; Gal 5:9

While we desired to give a full explanation of each type and symbol, it would require at least a couple of volumes to provide that much information. It is possible that, as this web site nears completion, we will have time to revisit this article and add that commentary. In the interim, we strongly urge those who are interested in types, shadows and symbols to acquire a Scofield Study Bible and to use the table above as a convenient listing so that you may study the material more fully on your own.



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