



Introduction

Watch the Bible Project's YouTube video on "[Design Patterns](#)." Note: The video's names of "human" and "life" for Adam and Eve refer to their Hebrew meanings, not as if they were fictional characters.

As you are introduced to this concept of "design patterns," what's your initial reaction?

1. "This is an intriguing way to open up new insights I've never had before."
2. "This is a suspicious way that seems contrived and artificial."

What is Typology?

Definition: Typology is a "branch of biblical interpretation in which an element found in the Old Testament prefigures one found in the New Testament."¹

1. *Type:* The initial person, event, institution, or figure in the Old Testament
2. *Antitype:* The fulfillment in the New Testament, usually Jesus

Prophecy vs. Typology: Prophecy and typology are related in that they both find a future, ultimate fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus. They overlap with typological prophecy (see last session). To simplify the difference, prophecy deals with a *statement* that is fully fulfilled in Jesus, while typology deals with an *event or person* that is fully fulfilled in Jesus.

Similarities & Differences: A type and antitype will always possess similarities and differences. There will be a heightening in how the event is fully fulfilled in Jesus (similarity). However, since we are dealing with sinful people, there will also be some sort of contrast between the imperfect Old Testament person, event, or institution and the perfect Jesus (difference).

Case Study: The Bronze Serpent

Numbers 21:4-9, John 3:14-15

Demonstrate why the bronze serpent is a type of Christ.

¹ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "Type, Typology," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 2109.

Case Study: The Second Adam

Genesis 3:1-15, Romans 5:12-19

Demonstrate why Adam is a type of Christ.

When Typology Gets Complicated ...

Luke 24:25-27

A big debate in biblical studies is to what extent we should find Christ in the Old Testament.² Should we find him only when the New Testament explicitly quotes a fulfillment, when the New Testament alludes to something in the Old Testament, or when the New Testament is silent on the matter?

Advocate for one of the following. Be prepared to explain why:

1. We should find Christ in the Old Testament only when the New Testament directly makes that connection. Anything else is an allegorical interpretation of the Bible.
2. We should find Christ in the Old Testament when the New Testament directly makes that connection or when the New Testament indirectly alludes to a connection. However, we need to cautiously state how certain we can be of those allusions.
3. We should find Christ in the Old Testament even when the New Testament makes no explicit connection. After all, Jesus says that all Scripture finds its fulfillment in him.

² For a summary, see *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 2110, “In working with types, the safest procedure is to limit them to those expressly mentioned in the Bible (cf. 1 Cor 4:6 NIV). On the other hand, it is argued that such an approach limits the legitimate use of types, for some obvious types are not mentioned in the NT. Further, the types given in the NT are examples which demonstrate how to find others in the OT.” For the first position, see David Kuske, *Biblical Interpretation* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1995), 99, “No one has the right to subjectively add anything to what Scripture says, and so, no one has the authority to declare something a type or symbol unless the Holy Spirit led a biblical author to clearly label it as such.” For the other positions, see Dennis Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2009), Kindle edition, location 937 of 10427. “Does expanding the parameters of possible typology tempt the preacher to draw forced and unconvincing lines of contact between Old Testament texts and Christ, sometimes on the basis of incidental and external details rather than in terms of the passage’s central spiritual truth in its literary and historical contexts?” Despite his cautions, Johnson advocates for the third position above, because the New Testament apostles found Christ as the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament, even in ways we would not think of now. Thus the New Testament needs to be the ultimate context to consider, and we need to follow the apostles’ lead.

Let's use specific examples. Give some reasons why a person should rightfully be suspicious of the first interpretation but rightfully is not suspicious of the second interpretation:

1. Rahab's red cord that the Israelite spies gave her to protect her family from the destruction of Jericho (Joshua 2:17-20) prefigures the blood of Jesus that saves us from the destruction of sin.
2. The entrance into the Promised Land of Canaan under Joshua after the wandering in the wilderness (Joshua 1:1-5) prefigures the entrance into the Promised Land of heaven after we have wandered through life.

Conclusion: Putting It Into Practice

Genesis 22:1-18

One of the most debated examples of typology in the Old Testament is the account of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. Study the questions below yourself. Then we will discuss as a group.

1. What was the purpose of God's test of Abraham's faith?
2. There is a slight allusion between Genesis 22:2 and Romans 8:32. Is that enough to make a legitimate connection?
3. Should you find Christ in Isaac, in the sacrificial ram God provided, or in the repetition of the messianic promise in vs. 17-18? Agree/disagree: "Isaac is a type of Christ."