

BIBLICAL TYPOLOGY

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:14-15

What is Biblical Typology?

Biblical Typology is a method of biblical interpretation whereby an element found in the Old Testament is seen to prefigure one found in the New Testament. The initial one is called the type and the fulfillment is designated the antitype. Either type or antitype may be a person, thing, or event, but often the type is messianic and frequently related to the idea of salvation. The use of Biblical typology was more prevalent in previous centuries, although, even now, it is by no means ignored as a hermeneutic.

In our study of Numbers 21, we discussed several 'Types', a major one being the snake on the pole. After the people sinned and spoke out against God and Moses, the Lord sent serpents to bite the people. (The consequence also speaks to God's wrath against sin) When they repented, God instructed Moses to lift a serpent on a pole so that anyone who looked upon the serpent would be healed. God disciplined His people while simultaneously showing that evil MUST be punished. Since He is a Good God, He must be committed to eradicating evil from His presence. His Holiness will not stand for anything less than perfection. It was Righteous for God to punish his people, as Christ had not yet come to take the punishment, therefore this moment was designed to parallel our lives with Christ's coming. Now that Jesus sacrificed Himself for us, we can find peace with God knowing that we are no longer at war with Him as the wrath we deserved was already poured out on Christ!

Read Numbers 22 Together. What typology do you see here?

Discussion Questions

1. As we discussed Biblical typology found in Numbers 21, and fulfillment referenced in John 3, where else do we see a 'type' of Christ in the Old Testament?
2. The Canaanites were embodied by wickedness of all kinds and served many false gods that were involved in money, sex, or power. How do we see this reflected in our culture today? How can we make a difference while being in the world, yet not of the world?
3. God disciplines those whom He Loves. While the story here in Number 21 serves as a great example of this, where else can you find this principle in scripture? How has God used His discipline in your life to shape and encourage you?
4. Many people believe that the God of the Old Testament is wrathful and the God of the New Testament is loving and forgiving. Yet scripture shows that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Heb 13:8) How is this possible? How do you respond to the apparent genocide of the Canaanites in the Old Testament?
5. As we draw closer to Christmas Day where we will celebrate the birth of Christ, how do we recognize the true value of the peace offered to mankind in Luke 2:13-14?