



Introduction

We will examine how the early church understood typology and biblical interpretation.

"In the Old Testament, the New is concealed; in the New the Old is revealed." Augustine

Early Church Fathers

Letter of Barnabas

Was the earliest extrabiblical appeal for typology using historical allegory. This letter used allegory to argue that only Christians had a true understanding of the OT scriptures

- Barnabas 8:7, "Now to us indeed it is manifest that these things so befell for this reason, but to them they were dark, because they heard not the voice of the Lord."
- Barnabas 9:7, "For the scripture saith; *And Abraham circumcised of his household eighteen males and three hundred*. What then was the knowledge given unto him? Understand ye that He saith *the eighteen* first, and then after an interval *three hundred* In the eighteen 'I' stands for ten, 'H' for eight. Here thou hast JESUS (IHSOYS). And because the cross in the 'T' was to have grace, He saith also *three hundred*. So He revealeth Jesus in the two letters, and in the remaining one the cross."

Irenaeus

Used typology to defend Christianity against the gnostics in his treatise "Against Heresy". One major flaw in his exegesis is his strong connection of recapitulation between Adam and Christ.

- "A type and image (of a thing) is sometimes different from the truth, according to its materiality and substance; but according to the habit and lineament it ought to keep a similitude, and to show by things present, things which are not present."

Two Schools

Catechetical School at Alexandria (~100 AD - 381 AD) (*Fairbairn, Typology of Scripture ch. 1*)

Biblical interpretation Teachings

- Historical Allegorical method

Contributions to this method

- Greek allegorical interpretations influenced Jews and church Fathers of Alexandria
- Many Jewish sects claimed Messiah would, literally, fulfill the prophecies (a physical king that would conquer enemies)

Downfall

- Rulings of Council of Constantinople caused violent riots in Alexandria, which closed the school

Famous theologians

- Clement of Alexandria
- Philo
- Origen



Exegetical School at Antioche (~200 AD - 553 AD) (*Fairbairn, Typology of Scripture ch. 1*)

Biblical interpretation Teachings

- Literal historical method

Contributions to this method

- Contended with the Gnostics and their view that Christ was not physical

Downfall

- Heretics of this school anathematized by Council of Ephesus & 2nd Council of Constantinople which closed the school

Famous theologians

- John Chrysostom
- Eusebius
- Arius
- Nestorius

Next 1000 years

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) (*Lusk, The Metaphor is the Message*)

Claimed that all interpretation must first be founded upon the historical literal sense.

- Four-fold sense of scripture
 - a. Literal
 - b. Spiritual
 - 1. typological
 - 2. moral
 - 3. eschatological

His view of infused grace diminished the role of the OT and pushed the true meaning of the Old into the New.

Uses

- Consider our presuppositions when approaching the Word of God so that we do not impose our own ideas upon the text
- Though God's word has been mishandled, He has given us the means to learn from those who came before us.
- God's word has unity in both Testaments and real historical purpose