

Dr. Matthew S. Harmon, The Bible's Use of the Bible, Session 3, Typological Patterns

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This is Dr. Matthew S. Harman and his teaching in the series, The Bible's Use of the Bible. This is session 3, Typological Patterns.

Welcome to session three in our course on The Bible's Use of the Bible.

And we are continuing to draw material from the book, How to Study the Bible's Use of the Bible, Seven Hermeneutical Choices. And this particular session is based on chapter six in dealing with the issue of typological patterns. And in the book, we frame this as a choice between backward-looking versus forward-looking typological patterns.

And I'll explain in a moment what I mean by that, but that's a significant debate within the scholarly context. But first, we have to explain what do we mean by typology or typological patterns. Here is my working definition.

Typological patterns refer to intentional scriptural shaping to draw selective, expectational analogies between persons, events, institutions, procedures, oracles, or a combination of these within the historical framework of progressive revelation. Now, you may have read that and looked at that and thought, is that in English? Because that's a complex definition. So I'm going to break it down kind of phrase by phrase, almost to help you understand what I mean by the different pieces of this definition.

So, we said that typological patterns refer to intentional scriptural shaping. What do we mean by that? Intentional scriptural shaping means that the author of the receptor text depicts the person, event, institution, and so on in a particular way to draw out the points of analogy between the donor and the receptor text. So that the author of the receptor text, the later biblical text, is describing a person, an event, an institution, etc., intentionally in a specific way so that you as the reader will recognize that there is an analogy to an earlier biblical person, event, or institution.

This is not accidental or coincidental analogy. This is intentional on the part of the author. Next, selective, expectational analogies.

What we mean by this is that the author of the receptor text only draws upon selected details from that original donor text. So if they're trying to draw a connection between, as we'll see later, say Christ and Adam, when Paul does this in Romans 5, he doesn't give you every single detail about Adam and then say, oh, it actually refers to Christ as well. He's selective.

Only specific elements of the analogy are highlighted. And so that's what's in view there. And the term expectational reminds us that it's not just a literary thing in view.

This is not just a clever literary tool that, when understood rightly, the donor text, the original text, is in some way anticipating something or someone later within redemptive history. So that's the key point about expectation. Now, next part of the definition.

Persons, events, institutions, procedures, oracles, or a combination of these. These are simply different kinds of types. These are things that are in the biblical narrative that can be seen as anticipating later and greater realities.

And we'll see some examples of that as we go. Historical framework. Typology is rooted in history.

In other words, this is not some sort of loose philosophical connection between texts where we might see, if you ever have the opportunity to read the Jewish writer Philo, who wrote during the first century, basically around the time the New Testament was being written. And you see him interpreting Genesis, for example. And he's drawing all of these allegorical connections of how certain events or people refer to these truths of the soul, of how it's the struggle of the soul for virtue over vice and those sorts of things.

And you think that is completely foreign to what Moses is talking about here. So, typology is rooted in history. And then, lastly, from our definition, progressive revelation.

It's getting at this idea that there's escalation or heightening between the type and the anti-type. So that when we think about the original person, for example, like if we think of Moses, and we understand that Moses is a type or an anticipation of Christ. So Moses is the type.

Christ is the anti-type, which, by the way, is just an unfortunate way to refer to that. It's just the way it is because anti-type sounds negative. But it's really just saying there's the original or the shadow, and then there's the substance or the final realization of that reality.

So the idea, though, is that the anti-type, the fulfillment, is in some way greater or surpasses the original type. So to give an example here, one of the events that's used as a type in scripture is the Exodus. So there's the original Exodus of God bringing Israel out of Egypt, out of their slavery to the Egyptians, and taking them into the promised land.

And the later prophets come along, prophets like Isaiah and others, and inspired by God, they see the future redemption of God's people as a new Exodus. And it's going to be an even greater Exodus than delivering Israel from Egypt. And they talk about it in ways that indicate the later reality, this new Exodus, will be even greater than the original Exodus.

So there's an escalation, a heightening, an intensification of that. So those are some of the key elements of typology. What we need to discuss now is really where we began this discussion of forward- or backward-looking typology.

And what we mean by this is that there's this debate within scholarship of whether typology is forward-looking only or backward-looking only. What do we mean by that? Forward-looking typology refers to types that are prospective, that are looking forward within their original context. In other words, there's something in the way it's presented that directly

invites you to expect a future figure or person or event that is going to be greater. And so one representative of this particular view is a scholar named James Hamilton.

In his book on typology, he writes, When the biblical authors composed their writings, they intended to signal to their audiences the presence of promise-shaped patterns. Old Testament authors intended to draw attention to the recurring sequence of events, and they did so with a view to the future. Now what Hamilton is indicating here is that all typology is forward-looking.

In other words, you have to be able to see in the original text, in the originating text, the donor text, that there is some element that is pointing forward. And so a good example of this would be Deuteronomy chapter 18, where Yahweh says, I will raise up for them a prophet like you, talking about Moses, from among their fellow Israelites. And I will put my words in his mouth; he will tell them everything I command him.

So the wording of how that's expressed is inviting you to immediately look forward. That is saying, Moses is a type, is a pattern, is a type of prophet. And there's going to come one later who is going to be like Moses.

And as the Old Testament develops, we see that he's not only going to be like Moses, he's going to be greater. So scholars like James Hamilton would say, all typology is forward-looking. It has to be able to demonstrate in the donor text how there's something looking forward.

Other scholars say, no, no, no, typology is backward-looking. In other words, you can only see types in retrospect. That only when the anti-type or the fulfillment comes, can you recognize that the original was actually a type.

And so a scholar who reflects this view is Richard Hayes. He writes, the discernment of a figural correspondence- that's his phrase for typology essentially- is necessarily retrospective rather than prospective. In other words, it is necessarily backward-looking rather than forward-looking.

Because the two poles of a figure are events within the flowing stream of time, the correspondence can be discerned only after the second event has occurred and imparted a new significance to the first. In other words, you can't know that something's a type until you see the anti-type. And then you can look back and go, oh, that was intended to be a type.

And, in my view, a good example of this kind of typology is what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 5:7. He writes, get rid of the old yeast so that you may be a new unleavened batch. As you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

Now I don't think that there's anything in Exodus 11 and 12 that tells you, hey, this actually refers to a person who's going to come and be the sacrifice for God's people. I think you can only see that in light of later revelation. And so that would be an example of backward-looking or retrospective typology.

So which is it? Is it forward-looking? Is it backward-looking? And the answer is yes. There are both types. We don't need to choose between one or the other.

Scripture shows us examples of both types of typology, whether it's forward-looking or backward-looking. And so I want to give you several examples now of how typology is used and works in Scripture. Let's start with what I would say is one of the clearest.

And let's go with Romans chapter 5. Romans chapter 5. We'll start at verse 12 and read all the way through verse 21. Paul writes, But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, how much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for many? And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin.

For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. So that as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness, leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

There's a lot in there, but I think this passage helps us to see the connection between Adam and Christ. And in fact, if you look back again at verse 14, the ESV translates the last phrase as, Who was a type of the one who was to come? Who was a pattern of the one to come? Here's a chart that helps us see the analogies between Adam and Christ. And I want you to notice that although some of these are in essence the same, some of them are based on a contrast.

So sin and death entered the world through Adam and spread to all people, and many died through Adam's trespass. With Christ, God's grace and the gift that came by that grace overflow to the many through Christ. With Adam, the judgment that followed Adam's sin brought condemnation.

With Christ, the gift of God's grace followed many trespasses and brought justification. Because of Adam's trespass, death reigned through him. And then Paul says, how much more do those who receive God's abundant grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through Christ? Hear that language of how much more; that's escalation, that's intensification.

Adam's trespass resulted in condemnation for all people. Christ's righteous act resulted in justification and life for all. Through Adam's disobedience, the many were made sinners.

Through Christ's obedience, the many will be made righteous. So you see, that's a contrast there. The law was brought in so sin might increase.

Yet where sin increased, grace increased all the more. And lastly, sin reigned in death. Grace reigns through righteousness leading to eternal life through Christ.

So you see, Paul has intentionally described Christ and Adam in specific ways to draw your attention to how there are points of analogy between them. And he's done so selectively. And he's also shown you how Christ as the anti-type surpasses and is greater than the original in that.

So I think that's one of the clearer examples there. And I wanted to start with that one before we move on to one that maybe immediately is not as evident, but I think is absolutely there. Turn with me to Matthew chapter 4, verses 1 through 11.

This is the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. Matthew chapter 4 verse 1. Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting 40 days and 40 nights, he was hungry.

And the tempter came and said to him, If you are the son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread. But he answered, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. And the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, If you are the son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, He will command his angels concerning you.

And on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him, Again, it is written, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test. Again the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

And he said to him, All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me. Then Jesus said to him, Be gone, Satan, for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve. Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Now, we read that, and we think, okay, relatively straightforward story. Jesus is resisting temptation. And we can certainly benefit from reading the story that way, and you don't have to recognize everything I'm about to show you to get the rich spiritual nourishment that your soul needs from that text.

And yet, when you look more closely, you are going to see some remarkable points of contact because part of what Matthew is trying to do is show you analogy, connecting points between Israel and Jesus. So let's look at these. Both Israel and Jesus are referred to as God's son.

In the Old Testament, Exodus 4:22 and 23, God refers to Israel as his firstborn son. Israel was led by God's presence into the wilderness. Jesus is led by God's Spirit into the wilderness.

Israel was tempted in the wilderness. Jesus is tempted in the wilderness by the devil. Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years.

Jesus was in the wilderness 40 days and 40 nights. And so you see, I've got the slash through the equal sign to show you there's a bit of a contrast there, not exactly the same. Israel was hungry in the wilderness.

Jesus is hungry in the wilderness. And when Israel was tempted by their lack of food, they grumbled. In contrast to that, when Jesus is tempted to turn stones into bread because of hunger, Jesus resists by trusting God.

And he cites Deuteronomy 8, verse 3. I'll come back to that in a moment. When Israel was tempted by lack of water, Israel quarrels with Moses and tests Yahweh. When Jesus is tempted to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple to test God's protection and provision, Jesus resists by trusting God and citing Deuteronomy 6, verse 16.

Israel, when they were tempted to go after other gods, committed idolatry. When Jesus is tempted to receive the kingdoms of the earth if he will worship the devil, Jesus resists by trusting God, citing Deuteronomy 6, verse 13. Now, you notice that the three texts that Jesus quotes from are from Deuteronomy 6 and Deuteronomy 8. And this is where, if you go back and look at what's going on in Deuteronomy 6 and Deuteronomy 8, Moses is retelling the story of Israel in the wilderness.

And so this is where, if you pay attention to the context, Jesus is not just cherry-picking like, ooh, I need a verse that says you shouldn't test the Lord. And so he's searching his mental Rolodex, and he pulls out this little line from Deuteronomy chapter 6. No, he's got the whole context in mind where in Deuteronomy 6 and chapter 8, Moses is reminding this generation of Israelites that their forefathers were in the wilderness and failed. So this is very intentional on Jesus' part to quote these verses because part of what he's stressing is that he is obeying where Israel failed.

That he is God's son and he is God's obedient son. That Israel failed and he has obeyed. And so that's supposed to be part of the big takeaway that you get from reading what Matthew writes here.

That it's not just about, yep, Jesus successfully fended off temptation. That's true. That's good.

But you're also supposed to see that Jesus is obeying where Israel failed. And the connection point rests on both of them being referred to as God's son. And of course there's the heightening, right? Of course Jesus is God's son in a way that Israel never could be because not only is he the promised son from David's line, but he is the second person of the Trinity in the flesh.

And so there's a heightening effect here in Matthew chapter 4. So maybe that one's a little less obvious, but when you really start to see the picture of what's emerging, I think it becomes actually relatively clear that Matthew is intentionally describing Jesus' experience in the wilderness to draw your attention to the connection points between him and Israel. So that's another example, maybe a more subtle example of typology. Let's talk a little bit about the nature of types.

A few things to work through here just as we reflect on how typology works. So when we think of types, there's a sort of temporal reality here, right? That there's the type that you can think of as like a shadow, and that's why you see the faintness of the line there. And as it reaches the anti-type, it becomes clearer and bolder.

So that is one of the ways that scripture talks about typology: the sort of shadow and reality language. We can also depict the difference between forward-looking and backward-looking types with different arrows pointing different directions. And so with forward-looking typology, there's a predicted element embedded in and obvious to us as we read the text that is pointing forward to the later reality.

With the backward-looking, that later reality is needed to see the faint actual type in the Old Testament. So those are a couple different ways of thinking about forward and backward typology. There's another dimension, though, besides just the temporal one.

And we can think about this in terms of spatial relationships. So we've got a triangle here. You've got the heavenly reality at the top of it.

And one arrow going down points us to the type or the shadow as it's revealed in earlier scripture. And the later full reality pointed towards in the New Testament. And so there's both a spatial and a temporal dynamic to typology.

This helpful diagram comes from Giordano Voss in his book, *Teaching of Hebrews*. There's one other reality we need to talk about in terms of the nature of typology before we bring this to a close. And that's the idea of multiple iterations.

Here's what I mean by this. Typological patterns sometimes have multiple iterations of a pattern before culminating in their antitype. And the one I have specifically in view here is Adam to Christ.

Now we just saw in Romans 5 how Paul draws the connection between Adam and Christ. And yet if you look within the Old Testament itself, there seem to be additional iterations, or some scholars call them ectypes, which is not the most useful term. But it gets the idea of before you get to the final realization, there are additional expressions of that pattern in between the original type and the antitype.

Let me show you what I mean by this. So God says to Adam, Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

And then, if you notice, there are multiple points in between this. But if you think back to Noah, when Noah emerges from the ark, God says something similar to what he said to Adam. He says, be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, but he doesn't say rule over and subdue it.

Instead, he says, I have put the fear of you on all of the creation, all the animals. So there's a repetition of the pattern of Adam, but it's slightly different. And I would contend with you that there's actually evidence that that's true with Abraham and Israel and David and Solomon.

That they are described in Adam-like terms, which all build up and consummate in Christ himself. Where do we see that in Christ? I would suggest that we see it here in Matthew 28. Jesus says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

That sure sounds a lot like having dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Kind of sounds a little bit like be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. So the point there is that sometimes there are these multiple iterations of these patterns before you get to the final realization.

Take a deep breath. You might be thinking, OK, what's to stop us here from just going crazy? I mean, we see any kind of analogy, and we're thinking, oh, great typology. It's everywhere.

And so here's where I think we can draw at least one helpful line. Is that there are different types of analogy. Different types of analogy.

So with typological patterns, there's selective analogical use of details; there's a respect for the original context. They depend on real historical events, and crucially, there's an expectational element to it. Now, with the middle column, we have what we refer to as the extended echo effect.

And you'll notice that it matches up with typological patterns until you get to the very bottom row. And these are points of analogy that have a literary, not an expectational element. Let me give you a quick example of this.

There are multiple stories in Genesis that we could call the she's my sister stories. Where Abraham first lies partial truth, partial lie. It's still a lie that his wife, Sarah, is his sister, thinking to protect her and himself.

And then we see later that his son, Isaac, does the same thing. Lies about his wife being his sister. Well, that's not typology.

There's no heightened escalation. There's no looking forward to a later and greater pattern in scripture. It's just an analogy for literary effect.

I think the punchline of that is to show you Isaac's following in his father's same failed path when it comes to that. Now, in contrast to both of those, we have allegory. Where every detail of the text is squeezed for some sort of spiritual significance.

Where there's no regard for the original context of the passage. And it depends on taking a later or an extra-textual framework that is then imposed upon the text. Rather than reading out of the text what is there.

It's taking a grid or a framework or philosophy and imposing it upon the text to drag out what is perceived to be meaning that is actually not there. And so it is ideological rather than exegetical. Okay, I wanted to end here with a snapshot of what I would refer to as some good examples of backward-looking typology.

Meaning that you have these texts that, in their original context, don't give us reason to think they look forward. And yet, in the light of New Testament revelation, they are identified as typological. So let's look here.

We see, for example, in the account of the crucifixion. One of the most striking things when you read through the account of the crucifixion, there are several allusions to Psalm 22 in there. So you've got in Psalm 22, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And we see that in both Matthew and Mark's account, Jesus quotes the first line from Psalm 22.

That one's clear. Next, in Psalm 22, David talks about his opponents dividing his clothes and casting lots. And that's exactly what we see in the description of the crucifixion accounts.

In fact, we see it in all four gospel accounts. Psalm 22, also, David says his opponents mocked him. They hurled insults, shaking their heads.

He trusts in the Lord. Let the Lord rescue him. And then when Matthew is describing the scene at the cross, it's the people passing by hurling insults, shaking their heads, mocking.

He trusts in God. Let God rescue him. So they're intentionally describing the events of the crucifixion in light of what's described in Psalm 22.

But I would argue with you that when you read Psalm 22, you don't come away at the end and think, Oh, that's pointing forward to a future Messiah who's going to suffer these things in greater extent. It just reads as David talking about his own suffering, perhaps in seemingly hyperbolic language or intensified poetic language. And yet, God is using that to point forward, but we can only see it in light of its fulfillment in Christ.

So, let's give some key takeaways. That's a lot. Typology is both fun and scary and lots to think through here.

A few key takeaways. First, God embedded typological patterns within Scripture when he inspired the human authors. We are talking about things that are legitimately there and intended by the divine author, but may require later revelation in order to see and understand what is actually there.

Let me give two quick analogies here. The first is, if you happen to be a fan of true crime shows, you may be familiar with this substance that's used at crime scene investigations. They use this substance called luminol.

And what they do is they spray this chemical, luminol, in a room, and it's intended to reveal the presence of blood. If there's been blood anywhere in that room, it will show it. Even examples of blood where it's invisible to the naked eye.

So they spray this substance, and then they turn the lights off, and they bring in a specialized black light. And when they bring that light in, if there are any spots where there's been blood, they light up like it's Christmas. And you see blood that is actually there.

The luminol doesn't put the blood there. It reveals the presence of blood that's actually already there. It just requires the right lenses or the right tools to see what is actually there.

And I would suggest to you that that's often how typology works. That later revelation is needed to enable us to see what is actually there in the text. A second analogy.

A good sort of mystery thriller, whether it's a novel or whether it's a movie. You're watching, you get to the end, and they have the big reveal of, oh, it was the butcher. He was using the candlestick, and he was in the locker, right? And you go, you know, that kind of caught me off guard a little bit.

But then they start to explain how maybe there were some clues along the way that you didn't understand the significance of until you got to the end and found out, oh, I didn't appreciate how significant that little scene was where the butcher was touching the candlestick. Okay, I didn't even catch that. But now that you tell me, I go, oh, that was a clue.

But then if you go back and read that novel again or watch the movie again, you see that, and you're like, how did I miss that? It seems so obvious now because I know where the story is going. And so when it comes to typological patterns, I think that's often the case: sometimes we just don't have what we need to fully appreciate what is actually there in the original texts until we see its anti-type later on. Second, these typological patterns can be either prospective or retrospective.

I've tried to show how both are present in Scripture. And third, this is probably where some of you have had this sort of niggling little thought in the back of your head as I've been going through this. As interpreters, we should look for typological patterns within Scripture, even beyond those the biblical authors explicitly identify.

Now some of these hopefully seem pretty obvious, right? The biblical authors tell us David is a type of Christ. So we're on good ground there. We're not doing anything innovative.

But what about examples that are less obvious? For example, you're hard-pressed to find any specific place in the New Testament that presents Joshua as a type of Christ. And yet, if you look at what he does, it sure seems like he, as the leader of God's people, giving God's people possession of their inheritance, that sure seems like a pattern or a picture of what Jesus does in giving us an inheritance. Now, when we come across these, I think it's wise for us to acknowledge a measure of interpretive humility and say, you know, the Bible doesn't explicitly tell us this, but it sure seems like there's a pattern here that we can identify.

And I would also say that as a general rule, typology tends to work on the macro level rather than the micro level. So it's less about things like, well, let's see, there's something that's red in this passage. What else is red? It's Jesus' blood that is red.

And so there it is. This is a type of Jesus' blood coming down later. I think that's not typically how typology works.

They tend to work on larger structures and multiple points of contact between that person, that event, that institution, etc. So my encouragement to you would be to simply be necessarily cautious and humble when it comes to working with and identifying with

connections that you think might be typology. If Scripture itself doesn't explicitly say that, hold those with a nice loose grip and don't be dogmatic about it.

So that's a brief introduction to typology. In our next session, we will take a case study and work you through the process of studying how a later biblical author alludes to and interacts with an earlier biblical text so you can see the whole process unfold from beginning to end.

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