

The Bible's Use of the Bible

Session 3: Typological Patterns

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Abstract:

In this lecture, **Dr. Matthew S. Harmon** explores the concept of **typology**, which he defines as intentional patterns in Scripture that connect earlier persons or events to later, greater realities. He differentiates between **forward-looking typology**, which contains inherent expectations of a future figure, and **backward-looking typology**, where the connection is only clear after the fulfillment occurs. By comparing **Adam and Israel** to **Jesus Christ**, the author demonstrates how these analogies highlight a progression and intensification in redemptive history. Harmon also distinguishes true typology from **allegory** by emphasizing that it must be rooted in actual history rather than abstract symbolism. Ultimately, the text encourages readers to identify these **scriptural patterns** with humility, recognizing them as a divine method of revealing the Bible's unified story.

Briefing Document:

Typological Patterns in Biblical Interpretation

Executive Summary

Typological patterns represent a foundational hermeneutical framework for understanding how later biblical texts interact with earlier ones. Defined as intentional scriptural shaping to draw selective, expectational analogies within a historical framework, typology serves as a bridge between the "donor text" (original) and the "receptor text" (fulfillment).

The study of typology centers on the relationship between a "type" (a person, event, or institution that serves as a shadow or anticipation) and an "anti-type" (the greater reality or fulfillment). Key insights include the distinction between forward-looking (prospective) and backward-looking (retrospective) typology, the principle of escalation—where the fulfillment always surpasses the original—and the necessity of maintaining historical grounding to distinguish typology from allegory. Ultimately, typology reveals a divinely inspired structure within Scripture that often requires the light of later revelation to be fully discerned.

Defining Typological Patterns

A precise understanding of typology requires deconstructing its complex definition. Typology is not merely a literary tool but a manifestation of progressive revelation.

Key Components of Typology

- **Intentional Scriptural Shaping:** The author of the receptor text deliberately describes a person, event, or institution in a specific way to evoke an analogy with an earlier text. This is a conscious authorial choice rather than a coincidence.
- **Selective, Expectational Analogies:** Authors do not replicate every detail of a donor text. Instead, they select specific elements that anticipate a future reality.
- **Diverse Categories:** Typological patterns can be found across various biblical elements, including:
 - **Persons** (e.g., Adam, Moses, David)
 - **Events** (e.g., The Exodus)
 - **Institutions** (e.g., The Tabernacle or Kingship)
 - **Procedures** (e.g., Sacrificial systems)
 - **Oracles** (e.g., Prophetic utterances)
- **Historical Framework:** Unlike allegory, which may seek philosophical or abstract truths, typology is rooted in actual historical events and figures.
- **Progressive Revelation and Escalation:** There is an inherent "heightening" between the type and the anti-type. The fulfillment (anti-type) is always greater, more intense, or more significant than the original shadow (type).

The Hermeneutical Debate: Forward-Looking vs. Backward-Looking

A significant scholarly debate exists regarding whether typology is primarily prospective or retrospective. The analysis suggests that Scripture utilizes both forms.

Forward-Looking (Prospective) Typology

This view holds that the original donor text contains internal signals that invite the reader to expect a future fulfillment.

- **Scholar Representative:** James Hamilton.
- **Argument:** Biblical authors intended to signal "promise-shaped patterns" and recurring sequences with a view toward the future.
- **Example:** Deuteronomy 18:15, where God promises to raise up a prophet "like Moses," explicitly directing the reader's gaze forward.

Backward-Looking (Retrospective) Typology

This view argues that types can only be identified in retrospect, once the anti-type has occurred and imparted new significance to the original event.

- **Scholar Representative:** Richard Hays.
- **Argument:** Correspondence between two historical events can only be discerned after the second event provides the necessary context for the first.
- **Example:** 1 Corinthians 5:7, where Paul identifies Christ as the Passover lamb. The original Exodus account in Exodus 11–12 does not explicitly state that the lamb refers to a future person; this is realized only through later revelation.

Detailed Case Studies in Typology

Case Study 1: Adam and Christ (Romans 5:12–21)

Paul intentionally shapes his description of Christ in Romans 5 to draw points of analogy and contrast with Adam, emphasizing the escalation from the type to the anti-type.

Feature	Adam (The Type)	Christ (The Anti-type)
Action	One man's trespass/disobedience.	One man's act of righteousness/obedience.
Result	Judgment and condemnation for all.	Grace and justification for many.
Consequence	Death reigned through one man.	Those receiving grace reign in life.
Scope	Sin increased through the law.	Grace abounded "all the more."

Case Study 2: Israel and Jesus (Matthew 4:1–11)

In the account of Jesus' temptation, Matthew draws a typological connection between the nation of Israel and Jesus. Jesus is presented as the "obedient Son" who succeeds where the "disobedient Son" (Israel) failed.

- **Shared Sonship:** Both Israel (Exodus 4:22) and Jesus are referred to as God's Son.
- **The Wilderness Setting:** Both are led into the wilderness (Israel by God's presence, Jesus by the Spirit).
- **The 40-Unit Duration:** Israel wandered for 40 years; Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights.
- **The Nature of Temptation:** Both faced hunger and the temptation to test God or commit idolatry.

- **Intentional Recourse to Scripture:** Jesus quotes exclusively from Deuteronomy 6 and 8—chapters where Moses reflects on Israel's failures in the wilderness—to demonstrate his successful fulfillment of the pattern of obedience.

The Nature and Dimensions of Types

Spatial and Temporal Relationships

Typology operates on two planes:

1. **Temporal:** Moving from the "shadow" (past) to the "reality" (future/present fulfillment).
2. **Spatial:** Reflecting a "heavenly reality" that manifests first as a shadow in the Old Testament and then as a full reality in the New Testament.

Multiple Iterations (Ectypes)

Typological patterns often repeat through several "iterations" before reaching their final culmination in Christ. For example, the "Adam pattern" of dominion and fruitfulness is echoed in Noah, Abraham, Israel, David, and Solomon before being perfectly realized in Christ's "Great Commission" (Matthew 28), where he claims all authority and commands his followers to multiply disciples.

Distinguishing Typology from Other Analogies

To prevent interpretive overreach, it is necessary to distinguish typology from similar literary or ideological forms.

- **Extended Echo Effects:** These are literary analogies used for effect but lack an expectational or prophetic element (e.g., the recurring "she's my sister" lies told by Abraham and Isaac).
- **Allegory:** Unlike typology, allegory often ignores the original historical context and imposes an external philosophical or ideological framework onto the text. It seeks to "squeeze" every detail for spiritual significance rather than following the selective patterns established by the biblical authors.

Interpretive Conclusions and Takeaways

- **Divine Inspiration:** Typological patterns are not coincidental but were embedded in Scripture by God during the inspiration of the human authors.
- **The Necessity of Later Revelation:** Discerning typology often requires the "Luminol" effect—just as specialized light reveals invisible blood at a crime scene, later revelation reveals patterns that were truly present but invisible to the naked eye in the original context.

- **Interpretive Humility:** While many types are explicitly identified by biblical authors (e.g., David as a type of Christ), others are implied (e.g., Joshua as a type of Christ). Interpreters should exercise caution and humility when identifying patterns not explicitly named in Scripture.
- **Macro vs. Micro Focus:** Typology generally functions on the macro level—focusing on large structures and multiple points of contact—rather than the micro level (e.g., searching for superficial color correspondences like "red" objects).

Study Guide:

Study Guide: Typological Patterns in Biblical Interpretation

This study guide explores the concept of typological patterns as presented by Dr. Matthew S. Harmon. It covers definitions, the scholarly debate between forward-looking and backward-looking typology, specific scriptural examples, and the distinctions between typology and other literary forms like allegory.

Part 1: Short-Answer Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following ten questions in 2–3 sentences, based on the provided material.

1. How does Dr. Harmon define "intentional scriptural shaping" within the context of typology?
2. What is meant by the "selective" and "expectational" nature of typological analogies?
3. Explain the relationship between a "type" and an "anti-type."
4. What role does "progressive revelation" play in understanding typological patterns?
5. Define forward-looking (prospective) typology and provide a representative scholar of this view.
6. Define backward-looking (retrospective) typology and provide a representative scholar of this view.
7. According to the text, why is it necessary for typology to be rooted in a "historical framework"?

8. How does an "extended echo" differ from a true typological pattern?
9. Describe the concept of "multiple iterations" (or ectypes) using the example of Adam and Christ.
10. What is the "luminol analogy," and how does it explain the discovery of typological patterns?

Part 2: Answer Key

1. **Intentional scriptural shaping** refers to the author of a receptor (later) text deliberately depicting a person, event, or institution in a specific way to draw analogies to a donor (earlier) text. This ensures the reader recognizes the connection, indicating the analogy is not accidental or coincidental.
2. **Selective analogies** mean the author highlights only specific details from the original text rather than every element. **Expectational** refers to the idea that the donor text is not just a literary tool but is actually anticipating a future, greater reality within redemptive history.
3. A **type** is the original person, event, or institution that serves as a "shadow" or anticipation of a future reality. The **anti-type** is the final realization or "substance" of that pattern, which fulfills and surpasses the original.
4. **Progressive revelation** involves a sense of escalation, heightening, or intensification. This means the anti-type (fulfillment) is always greater than or surpasses the original type, such as the "New Exodus" being greater than the original delivery from Egypt.
5. **Forward-looking typology** refers to types that are prospective and intended by the original author to signal a future fulfillment. James Hamilton is a representative scholar who argues that the original biblical authors intended to draw attention to promise-shaped patterns pointing to the future.
6. **Backward-looking typology** is the view that correspondences can only be discerned in retrospect after the fulfillment (anti-type) has occurred. Richard Hays represents this view, arguing that the second event imparts a new significance to the first that could not be seen originally.
7. Typology must be rooted in **history** to distinguish it from philosophical or allegorical interpretations that ignore the original context. This ensures the connection is based on real events and persons within the stream of time rather than abstract soul-struggles or external ideologies.
8. While both use selective analogies and respect the original context, an **extended echo** is purely literary and lacks an "expectational" element. It draws an analogy for literary effect—

such as Isaac repeating the failures of Abraham—rather than pointing toward a heightened future reality.

9. **Multiple iterations** occur when a pattern is repeated several times throughout Scripture before reaching its final culmination. For example, the "dominion" mandate given to Adam is repeated with variations in Noah, Abraham, and David before being fully realized in the universal authority of Christ.
10. The **luminol analogy** compares later revelation to a chemical used at crime scenes to reveal blood invisible to the naked eye. Just as luminol doesn't put the blood there but makes it visible, later revelation allows interpreters to see typological patterns that were legitimately present in the original text but required a specific "light" to be identified.

Part 3: Essay Questions

Instructions: Use the source material to develop comprehensive responses to the following prompts.

1. **The Adam-Christ Contrast:** Using the chart provided in Romans 5, analyze how Paul uses intentional scriptural shaping to compare and contrast Adam and Christ. Discuss how the concept of "escalation" (the "how much more" language) establishes Christ as the superior anti-type.
2. **Israel and Jesus in the Wilderness:** Detail the specific points of contact Matthew draws between the nation of Israel and Jesus in Matthew 4. Explain why it is significant that Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6 and 8, and how this supports the theme of Jesus obeying where Israel failed.
3. **The Debate of Directionality:** Compare and contrast the "forward-looking" view of James Hamilton and the "backward-looking" view of Richard Hays. Provide a scriptural example for each view (e.g., Deuteronomy 18 for forward-looking and Psalm 22 for backward-looking) and explain Dr. Harmon's conclusion on the matter.
4. **Distinguishing Typology from Allegory:** Define allegory as described in the text and explain why it is considered "ideological rather than exegetical." Contrast this with the four criteria of typological patterns (selective details, respect for context, historical events, and expectation).
5. **The Ethics of Identification:** Discuss the guidelines Dr. Harmon provides for modern interpreters seeking to identify typological patterns not explicitly named in the New Testament (such as Joshua as a type of Christ). Include the importance of "interpretive humility" and the distinction between macro and micro levels of analogy.

Part 4: Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Allegory	An interpretive method where every detail is squeezed for spiritual significance, often imposing a later or extra-textual framework that ignores the original context.
Anti-type	The later person, event, or institution that serves as the final realization, fulfillment, and greater reality of an earlier "type."
Donor Text	The original, earlier biblical text that provides the source for a typological analogy.
Ectype	An additional expression or iteration of a pattern that appears between the original type and the final anti-type.
Escalation	Also referred to as intensification or heightening; the principle that the fulfillment of a type is always greater than the original.
Extended Echo	A literary analogy between texts that lacks an expectational or predictive element.
Prospective	A forward-looking orientation where a type is intended to point toward a future fulfillment from its original context.
Receptor Text	The later biblical text that identifies or describes an analogy to an earlier donor text.
Retrospective	A backward-looking orientation where a type is only recognizable after the anti-type has occurred.
Type	A person, event, institution, procedure, or oracle in history that serves as a selective, expectational analogy for a later and greater reality.
Typological Patterns	Intentional scriptural shaping used to draw selective, expectational analogies within the historical framework of progressive revelation.