

Revelation:Christ in His Purpose
Symbology & Typology

The Bible truly is a remarkable book.

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”

2 Peter 1:19-21

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”

2 Timothy 3:16

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Hebrews 4:12

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts for as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”

Isaiah 55:9-11

The Bible contains:

66 books

1189 chapters

600-800 stories

3,566,480 letters

783,137 words

1200 pages on average

2 testaments

30-40 authors

1500-1600 years

And yet there is:

One unified theme.

One general subject.

One main character.

One continuous timeline.

One guaranteed victory!

Why symbols and types?

Why not just say what needed to be said with words?

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts...”

Symbols can be very beneficial for our understanding of God’s word and for revealing when, where, in what manner, and by what means His purpose and plan for redemption and restoration will come about.

Symbols, or symbolism, can also provide us another proof of the inspiration of the Word of God.

Somewhat like writing a message in code or saying a code phrase to share knowledge hidden from others.

They also allow us another avenue through which we may gain a fuller understanding of God himself, His intentions and plans, as well as the fulfillment of those plans.

CAUTION!

Symbolism alone will never be enough to fully understand or comprehend what God is communicating to us.

We can NEVER abandon the basic study of the Word of God in favor of symbolism. Symbolism itself MUST be rooted IN the Word of God.

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

So, What is a symbol?

Webster: A symbol is an emblem or representation of something other than itself.

Theologically speaking, there are several ‘categories’ of symbols in scripture.

1 Symbols.

In this context, a *symbol* is a direct representation of a person, place, thing, or idea.

“In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.”

Daniel 7:1-7

There are quite a few symbols that are extremely important to our study just in these 7 verses.

- There are winds.
- There are waters, or seas.
- There are beasts.

Winds represent war, or strife...

“And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come. For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, and before them that seek their life: and I will bring evil upon them, even my fierce anger, saith the LORD; and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them.” **Jeremiah 49:36,37**

Waters, or seas represent multitudes...

“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” **Revelation 17:15**

The beasts represent nations...

“These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.” **Daniel 7:17, 23**

It's all written in the stars

These nations were not given these symbols by chance.

Nor were these symbols chosen by God to represent these nations.

These symbols were chosen by the stars!

It was convention to choose a symbol for your nation based upon the dominant stellar constellation at the birth of the nation.

The Kingdom of Babylon was founded under the constellation Leo, Therefore, Daniel's winged lion is the nation of Babylon.

The Medo-Persian empire was founded under the Ursa Major constellation, therefore their symbol was a Bear. The bear was considered among the most powerful of beasts.

The Greek empire was founded under the Camelopardalis constellation. It was a leopard because of the swiftness of its rise under Alexander the Great, literally taking over the known world in just 13 years. The leopard is known as the fastest mammal on land.

The fourth beast was unlike any of the others. Daniel doesn't give us its description, per se, only telling us that it was great and terrible and exceeding strong. And that it had great iron teeth. Revelation, however, clears this image up for us. This fourth beast is Rome.

2 Shadows.

Shadows are symbols in the OT which give us the 'foreshadowing' of things in the NT, but do not fill in many of the details. They give us the broad outlines, without showing exactly what will come. Like a literal shadow, they show outlines and dimension, but at times are distorted and leave us to 'suss' out their meaning.

*"For the law having a **shadow** of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." **Hebrews 10:1***

The writer makes clear here that the sacrifices of the OT are *shadows* of the sacrifice Jesus would make on the cross.

Elsewhere, Hebrews makes clear that even the tabernacle, the temple, and all their instruments are *shadows* of Christ and His work.

The shadow cannot give a clear picture of the size and detail of the thing that casts it because much depends on the power and angle of the light which falls upon the thing.

3 Types.

Types in the OT are symbols that carry a much clearer message about the object that they represent in the NT.

The NT is *enfolded* in the OT, while the OT is *unfolded* in the NT.

St. Augustine said it like this:

*“The NT is the OT **contained**; while the OT is by the NT **explained**.”*

With Hebrews it becomes easier to understand Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

Without Revelation it becomes difficult to understand Daniel and so forth.

One thing that differentiates types from shadows...

For it to be considered a ‘type’ in the OT, there must also be an ‘antitype’ in the NT.

There are 5 major ‘types’ in the OT which point directly to Christ and His work on the cross.

- 1 The brazen serpent in the wilderness.
- 2 Isaac, son of promise to Abraham.
- 3 The sacrifice of Isaac.
- 4 Noah’s Ark.
- 5 The scape goat.

