

**“Sir, we would see Jesus” – John 12:21**  
Jesus in Old Testament types, symbols & prophecies<sup>1</sup>

**Introductory thoughts regarding Old Testament typology:**

“When John the Baptist sent representatives to ask Jesus, ‘Art thou he that should come? Or look we for another?’ (Luke 7:19), Jesus said, ‘Go your way, and tell John what things you have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached’ (Luke 7:22). **The Lord’s answer to John suggests an important principle: we can identify a person by what he is like and by what he does.** Healing the sick and preaching to the poor were among the works that Isaiah predicted the Spirit-filled Messiah would do (Isaiah 61:1).<sup>2</sup> **Christ expected John to put ‘two and two’ together... As we read the Old Testament, we should learn to do the same thing in our search for Christ. If we know who Christ is, what He does, and what He is like, we should be able to put ‘two and two’ together and see Him** even if we are not using a red letter edition.

“**The simple truth is that the more we know Christ, the more likely we will be able to recognize Him in the Scriptures.** Part of the problem with many Christians is that their inability to find Christ in the Old Testament stems from their limited knowledge of who He is and what He is like. If I am told to pick someone out of a crowd and I have no idea what that someone looks like, it becomes purely a guessing game. Indeed, I could be looking right at him and not know it. If we do not know what we are looking for, we will most likely find nothing. Looking for nothing in particular, we find nothing in particular. This is the sad fact with many who read the Old Testament: because they read with no particular objective, they can read the most explicit of messianic texts and not even know that they have looked at Christ. **If, on the other hand, I know someone well, I can pick him out in the largest crowd, even without seeing all of him...** I know my wife so well that I could recognize her anyplace. I can recognize the back of her head, the way she stands, sits, or walks. I don’t have to see all of her to know her when I see her. **So it is that the better we know Christ, the easier it will be to see Him in the Old Testament—even if we don’t see all of Him at once.**

“One more thing is true about seeing someone we know in a crowd of strangers. Although we may often feel lost and uncomfortable as we look at a sea of unfamiliar faces, **as soon as we recognize a familiar face in the crowd,** it is as though an ‘eye magnet’ attracts our attention and fixes our gaze on the one we recognize. **There is a sense of relief; we are not alone. So should it be in our reading of the Old Testament.** If we know Christ, even in the thick of those texts that seem so strange on the surface, our attention will be attracted to and fixed on Him. **To find Christ in our reading of the Old Testament is a blessed relief. We may not immediately recognize anything else, but to see the Savior will help put everything else in the proper perspective.**”<sup>3</sup>

“**[Our] focus... is not how much Old Testament saints knew, but how much Christians today should know, given all the advantages they have.** We have in the New Testament, among other things, a divinely inspired commentary on the equally divinely inspired Old Testament. **Since truth is timeless, universal, and unchangeable, we must conclude that the New Testament never changes the meaning of any Old Testament text; it always gives the correct and originally intended meaning.** Rather than ignoring this inspired evidence, it should be the safeguard and guide to a correct understanding of the Old Testament.”<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Compiled by Mike Edwards, Bible Baptist Church, Madison, Ohio, Dec. 2016. The outline & all of the following information, apart from that not in parentheses or otherwise noted, has been taken from Michael P. V. Barrett, *Beginning At Moses – A Guide to Finding Christ in the Old Testament* (Ambassador—Emerald International: Belfast, Northern Ireland, 1999, 2001). All italicizing & bolding, as well as everything appearing in brackets [ ] has been added by me. –mwe

<sup>2</sup> See also Isa. 35:5-6

<sup>3</sup> Barrett, pp. 19-20

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 21-22

## PEOPLE

“I [Barrett] would suggest that **persons in the Old Testament are types of Christ not by virtue of their character traits but rather by virtue of their office.** For a believer, whether in the Old or the New Testament dispensations, to be conformed to the image of Christ... is exemplary... but I would not say that such a life is necessarily a picture prophecy [type] pointing to Christ. That’s my opinion, and I am aware that some disagree. Nonetheless, **there are many people who were types...** every prophet, priest, and king was prophetic of ***Christ the Ideal Prophet, Priest, and King.*** Jonah was a prophet, but Christ is greater than Jonah (Luke 11:32). Solomon was a king, but Christ is greater than Solomon (Luke 11:31). Aaron was a priest, but Christ is greater than Aaron (Hebrews 7:11).”<sup>5</sup>

**AARON** – “Remember that the basic definition of a priest is one chosen and ordained by god to be the mediatorial representative of men before God. The three primary functions of the priest were:

- a) To offer ***sacrifices to God,***
- b) To make ***reconciliation for the sins of the people,*** and
- c) To offer ***intercession before the Lord in behalf of the people.***

“The great lesson of the priesthood was that men could approach God only through His chosen priest... **the high priest, was a picture prophecy [type] of Christ, who is indeed the only true way to the only true God (John 14:6)**<sup>6</sup>... [let’s] focus on one particular aspect to illustrate what we can learn about Christ from the Old Testament type. **Exodus 28 is a key chapter on the priesthood because it details the ‘holy garments’ that Aaron was to wear ‘for glory and for beauty’ (Ex. 28:2).** What he wore was what the people saw, and the Lord gave specific instructions about **these garments, each one of which was a symbolic object lesson.**

“When the people looked at Aaron all dressed up, **they were to reflect on the visible message and learn the spiritual truth that corresponded and pointed to the Ideal High Priest.** Seven specific items are detailed, but **three stand out for special attention because each includes a direct statement of purpose and function: the ephod, the breastplate, and the crown.** Note the verb ‘bear’ that links these three pieces together (Ex. 28:12, 29 & 38)... I will suggest **three truths** that we learn about Christ from these garments.”<sup>7</sup>

- 1) **The Ephod** – “The ephod teaches that ***Christ has the might to uphold His people.*** When wearing the ephod, ‘Aaron shall ***bear*** their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial’ (Ex. 28:12).
  - a) “**Let’s get the Picture.** The ephod was a short garment extending from the shoulders to the waist. It consisted of two pieces of fine linen joined at the shoulders. The rich colors of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, if nothing else, magnified the glory and beauty of the office. **Most significant were the two onyx stones set in gold sockets on the shoulders, inscribed with the names of the tribes of Israel.** As Aaron would stand before the Lord, he carried on his shoulders the names of those he presented as a memorial for the Lord to set His mind and will on the people. ***In his office, Aaron took the people into God’s presence.*** That’s what the people saw.
  - b) “**Let’s get the Message.** The shoulders represent ***strength*** and ***power,*** the place where loads are carried. **As Aaron, the type, symbolically bore the names of the people before the Lord, even**

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 270

<sup>6</sup> See also Acts 4:12

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, pp. 270-71

more so **Christ, the *antitype*, in spiritual reality bears the names of His people in the very presence of God.** We have no *power, ability, or right* to stand before the Lord, but Christ our great High Priest has infinitely sufficient strength to uphold us and all our concerns before God. **On His great shoulders, He carries us and upholds us in the Holy Place.**<sup>8</sup> **When Christ passed through the heavens, He triumphantly carried with Him all that He represents.** We have the right to approach God because Christ upholds us there and He will not let us down. God cannot look at Christ without seeing us in inseparable union with Him. *Christ fulfills the ephod prophecy.*<sup>9</sup>

- 2) **The Breastplate** – “The breastplate teaches that *Christ has the mercy to plead for us.* When wearing the breastplate, ‘*Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel... upon his heart*’ (Ex. 28:29-30).
  - a) “**Let’s get the Picture.** The breastplate was made of fine linen folded over to make a pouch that was held in position by gold chains and blue lace over the ephod. Arranged in four rows were twelve precious stones, each stone inscribed with the name of one of the tribes. **This was another obvious picture that wherever the high priest went the people went as well. The location of the stones over the heart testified to the compassion and sympathy that the priest was to have for the people.** After all, the heart was the symbol of love, mercy, and pity.
  - b) “**Let’s get the Message.** Any compassion and love that Aaron may have had for Israel pale into insignificance in comparison to the sympathy, compassion, and love Christ has for his people. **The Ideal High Priest [Jesus] is touched with the feeling of the infirmities of all His people at all times** (Heb. 4:15). Forever on His heart, those He represents and presents before the throne of grace are precious to Him, and with tender thoughts toward them He intercedes in their behalf. Does Jesus care? O yes, He cares. *Christ fulfills the breastplate prophecy.*”<sup>10</sup>
- 3) **The Holy Crown.** “The holy crown teaches that *Christ has the merit to present us.* Aaron was to wear the holy crown that he might ‘*bear the iniquity of the holy things*’ so that the people could ‘*be accepted before the Lord*’ (Ex. 28:38).
  - a) “**Let’s get the Picture.** A plate of pure gold was to be placed on a background of blue lace and fixed to the miter—the turban or headpiece, of the high priest. Inscribed on the gold plate were the bold words, ‘*HOLINESS TO THE LORD.*’ As Aaron approached the Lord as the representative of the people, the Lord would see flashing from his brow the ‘*password*’ for any entrance to the Lord’s presence. **The Lord is absolutely and infinitely holy, and without holiness none will or can see Him [cf. Heb. 12:14].** The sin of the people had rendered them unfit and unable to approach God, so **a holy mediator was essential.** Aaron symbolically took the guilt incurred by the people against holiness, and **they, with their names inscribed on his shoulders and over his heart, were in spite of their own guilt, accepted before the Lord in the person of the mediator.**
  - b) “**Let’s get the Message.** As beautiful as the picture was, it was woefully imperfect because **Aaron had his own sin and iniquity to deal with.** Knowing what they knew about Aaron personally would prevent the people from seeing in him a sinless mediator. The Old Testament ceremonial law of necessity made ‘*men high priests which have infirmity*’ (Heb. 7:28); **that’s the only kind of men there were—until Christ came!** Unlike all the Old Testament priestly

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Isa. 9:6

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pp. 271-72

<sup>10</sup> p. 272

pictures of Him, the Lord Jesus was in person ‘*holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*’ (Heb. 7:26). **What Aaron did symbolically, the Lord Jesus Christ did REALLY.** As our real High Priest, Christ bore the guilt of our sin in order that God might accept us on the merits of His holiness and righteousness. **To be in union with Christ, who as our representative bears our names on His shoulder, and over His heart, is to enjoy full pardon and full acceptance before the Lord.** God sees believers only through the flashing glory of Christ’s holiness. ***His merit is the only firm ground on which we can stand*** [. Christ is the only ‘password’ into heaven. ***Christ fulfills the holy crown prophecy.***”<sup>11</sup>

- 4) **The Imperfect Picture of Aaron** – [i.e. **The Aaronic vs. the Melchizedek priesthood**]. “As you study the functions of Aaron and his successors, do so with a view to the ideal fulfillment of the priestly ministry in Christ... [The fact that] they did things so imperfectly, having to sacrifice *for their own sins before they could do anything for the people*, **was inherent evidence of the built-in obsolescence of the Aaronic priesthood.** Any Israelite with an ounce of spiritual sense would... perceive that a Priest was needed who would finally *get it right* (i.e. the *typical* prophecy). Every Israelite with faith looked beyond the type to the promised Messiah (the *antitype* of it all).

“Significantly, Moses gave more clues *that Aaron was not the ultimate Priest that God intended.* He gave the first clue in Genesis when Abraham, the father of the nation, paid his tribute and tithe to Melchizedek, the king of Salem, the priest of the Most High God (**Gen. 14:18-20**). **Keep in mind that Moses wrote Genesis for the same people for whom he wrote Exodus, and at about the same time.**

“Overshadowing all the glory and beauty of Aaron was the realization that **there was another priesthood that their and Aaron’s father had recognized as superior.** Years later David confirmed that this was a divinely intended overshadowing of Aaron when he wrote that the Lord had irrevocably sworn to the Messiah, ‘*Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek*’ (**Psalm 110:4**). [cf. **Heb. 7:23-24**]

“Interpreters differ as to whether Melchizedek was an actual *Christophany* or a *type* of Christ. [Barrett’s] opinion is that Melchizedek was a real person who from the scanty details we know about him, was a fitting and necessary *type* of Christ and His Priesthood. **Melchizedek conveyed something about the Ideal Priesthood that Aaron could never do. The Ideal Priest would also be the Ideal King, the King of righteousness and peace.** Aaron’s priesthood served nicely in affirming that there was only one mediator between God and men [cf. **I Tim. 2:5**]. **For Christ to be a priest according to Melchizedek’s order rather than Aaron’s resolved the problem of one mediator’s being both king and priest.** [The] point here is not to develop all of the *typical* points of correspondence between Jesus and Melchizedek; the book of Hebrews does that most effectively (**Heb. 5-7**). [The] point is simply that **God included in the symbolic and typical priesthood of the ceremonial laws sufficient safeguards against confusing the object lesson with the reality.**”<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pp. 272-73

<sup>12</sup> Pp. 273-74

## ITEMS/OBJECTS:

**THE TABERNACLE.** “If one thing was central to the ceremonial laws defined in the Mosaic covenant, it was the Tabernacle. **It was a simple yet complex structure that foreshadowed Christ and the gospel from every angle and from every action associated with it.**

“As we try to figure out all the points of correspondence between Christ, the gospel, and the Tabernacle, **it is easy for us to get lost, bogged down, overly imaginative, or discouraged in the all the details** (there are a lot of them). Notwithstanding the details, there are some surface lessons that are most instructive. **Indeed, if all we are able to discern are the surface lessons, we will still have a good, clear picture of gospel truths, *all of which ultimately point to Christ.*”<sup>13</sup>**

### THE PURPOSE OF THE TABERNACLE

“**The divine intent of the Tabernacle as an object lesson of truth is clear from all the specific instructions that God gave** to guide its erection (**Exodus 25-31**) and from the detailed record of those instructions being carried out (**Exodus 35-40**)... [There is] considerable repetition throughout the text of Exodus, but **it underscores the important truth that God orders the way of worship and man cannot and must not alter that way**... Note that the only essential difference between the Tabernacle and Temple was that the first was a *portable* structure whereas the second was *fixed*; the theology communicated is the same...

“**First, the Tabernacle typified the *Incarnation of Christ*.** John unquestionably plays on Tabernacle prophecy when he declares, ‘*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*’ (**Jn. 1:14**). The word ‘*dwelt*’ could well be translated ‘*tabernacled*.’

“**Second, the Tabernacle typified *heaven*, the principal dwelling place and throne of God.** Hebrews settles this... (**Heb. 9:23-24**). Not only does the Tabernacle proclaim that God is present with His people on earth, but **it also pictures the final destination of His people who will dwell with Him in heaven.** That would have been good news for a people wandering in a wilderness; it’s not bad news for us [too].

“**Third, the Tabernacle typified the *church corporately*.** Paul warned ministers to guard their ministry lest they defile the temple of God and then reminded the Corinthian church that they were indeed that temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells (**I Cor. 3:16-17**). Using Tabernacle language, John identified the seven churches as golden candlesticks and declared that Christ was walking in the midst of them (**Rev. 1:13, 20; 2:1**).

“**Fourth, the Tabernacle typified *believers individually*.** Paul’s argument for individual purity and separation included the fact that God regarded believers as His temple: ‘*Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people*’ (**II Cor. 6:16**).”<sup>14</sup>

### NAMES OF THE TABERNACLE

“**First, there are lessons derived from the names of the Tabernacle... The word ‘*Tabernacle*,’ then, declares that **God takes up residence with His people. He does not simply drop in from time to time; He lives with them**... Certainly God, being omnipresent, fills all space immediately, but **He dwells with His people in a most special and intimate way. *That truth has never changed and it never will change.*** [Amen!]**

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pp. 274-75

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, pp. 275-76



- A) “Sometimes the Tabernacle is called the *Tent* (*‘ohel*). As a portable structure, it testified to the Lord’s identification with His people in their circumstances. They were living in tents; He dwelt in a tent... the tent illustrated what Isaiah later said concerning the Lord during Israel’s wanderings: *‘In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them’* (Isa. 63:9). **Christ most vividly fulfilled the Tent prophecy as He came in the very likeness of sinful flesh** (Rom. 8:3); **He is able, therefore, because of His personal experience, to be touched with the feeling of all our infirmities** (Heb. 4:15). That the Temple ultimately replaced the Tent testifies to the same truth. The people were living in houses; He dwelt in a house. **Two other names of the Tabernacle build on the Tent idea: *the Tent of Testimony* (*‘ohel ha’eduth*) and *the Tent of Meeting* (*‘ohel mo’ed*):**
- B) “**The Tent of Testimony** identifies the Tabernacle as a place of revelation. God would communicate, explain, and reveal Himself at this designated place... ***It prophesies Christ who dwelled among men as the perfect and Ideal Prophet, revealing God in person.***
- C) “**The Tent of Meeting** certainly suggests meeting together in communion and fellowship, but it also includes the important idea of meeting by appointment. Meeting with God is not haphazard, casual, or accidental. **God sets the terms of meeting;** He makes the appointment and guarantees His presence at those meetings. **Follow the statements in Exodus 25-30 where the Lord says, ‘There I will meet with thee’ (25:22; 29:42; 30:6) and you will learn three important truths concerning where God meets His people.**

“At the ark, God meets His people at the **place of propitiation** [cf. Rom. 3:25; I Jn. 2:2].

At the altar of burnt offering, God meets His people at the **place of consecration** [cf. Rom. 12:1-2]. At the altar of incense, God meets His people at the **place of prayer** [cf. Heb. 4:15-16]. Each of these places **finds ultimate significance in Christ, the only place sinners can ever meet God in peace.**

- D) **The final common designation of the Tabernacle is Sanctuary (*miq-dash*), literally ‘the place of holiness.’** The core component of holiness is separateness or otherness. **Although including the notion of separation from sin, the concept of holiness goes far beyond that.** Interestingly, the antonym to holiness in the Old Testament is ***not that which is sinful, but that which is common, mundane, or ordinary.*** [!] ...The Sanctuary declared that being in God’s presence is special and that it therefore requires reverent caution. **There is no barging into God’s presence.** The Sanctuary stood as witness to the truth that **although He was near, access to Him was restricted.** **Approaching God requires clean hands and pure heart** (Ps. 24:3-4 [cf. 66:18]). The Sanctuary declared loudly the need for an absolutely clean and pure Mediator who could approach the most holy God, taking those He represented with Him. ***That is exactly what Christ did and does.***<sup>15</sup>

## **THE STRUCTURE OF THE TABERNACLE**

“Second, there are lessons derived from the structure and floor plan of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was divided into **three distinct sections: the *outer court*, the *holy place*, and the *most holy place*.** The outer court was under the open sky and **accessible to the covenant community.** The holy place was veiled but lighted, and **accessible only to the priests.** The Holy of Holies (a superlative statement meaning ‘*the most holy place*’) was completely veiled, dark, and **accessible only to the high priest, only once a year, and never without blood.** Vividly, the floor plan declared that the closer to God one approaches, the greater the restrictions or requirements of holiness. **The greater the awareness of God’s holiness, the greater will be the consciousness of personal unholiness and of the need for a perfect Mediator** [cf. I Tim. 2:5].

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, pp. 275-76

**“But perhaps the most important lessons conveyed by the floor plan was the safeguard it provided against confusing the object lesson with the reality above and beyond it. Hebrews says that by these increasing restrictions, the Holy Spirit was ‘signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present...’ (Heb. 9:8, 9).**

**“Any Israelite with the slightest spiritual perception would conclude that the Tabernacle economy was not working if it was meant to bring people personally into the presence of God. *But it was not supposed to. This was the built-in obsolescence that demanded and increased the hope for Christ who by His own blood would enter in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12).*”<sup>16</sup>**

### **FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE**

**“Third, there are lessons derived from the furniture in the Tabernacle... Let’s note some of the obvious lessons.**

The Altar.

**The offerings in Leviticus (Barrett, pp. 284-288)**

### **EVENTS:**

**The Day of Atonement (Barrett, pp. 289-293)**

#### **ADDITIONAL PEOPLE:**

Joseph  
Moses  
Joshua

#### **ADDITIONAL THINGS:**

Noah’s Ark – cf. I Peter 3  
Serpent on a Pole – cf. John 3

#### **ADDITIONAL EVENTS:**

Abraham’s potential sacrifice of Isaac (The Ram caught in the Thicket)

#### **CHRISTOPHANIES/THEOPHANIES:**

Abraham’s Visitor  
Melchizedek

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 279