

2026-09-22: The Cross

I. Typology and the Shadow

Gradual Revelation of God's Plan

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by *His Son*" (Hebrews 1:1-2)

St John Chrysostom on the Obscurity of the Old Testament:

1. Because the audience was prone to idolatry and lacked spiritual maturity (hardness of their hearts), God used shadows, types, and metaphors to prevent them from being overwhelmed or misinterpreting high spiritual truths
2. Because to reach the meaning, God's grace is needed
 - Not relying on your understanding, but on the Holy Spirit to illumine the mind
 - Requires humility to understand
 - Requires relationship with God (through Church and the Fathers)
 - We need to work to understand - if it's easy, it won't taste as good
3. To be understood ONLY in Christ
 - Prophets themselves did not understand
 - If they understood, they won't do or it won't happen
 - Christ did that with the disciples (raise My Temple in 3 days)
4. Christ, Himself, didn't come very obvious.
 - Manger, Nazareth, Egypt, public spectacle, etc. matches the style of the prophecies
 - His Divinity was hidden in His Humanity

The Unity of God's Plan

The New Testament is in the Old Testament, Concealed. The Old Testament is in the New Testament, Revealed.

A biblical "type" isn't just an analogy invented AFTER the fact. It is an earlier event/person/object that has its own REAL historical meaning, but is also participating in the larger divine pattern.

The Cross is not an "emergency response" after everything else failed.

"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."
(Galatians 4:4)

"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." (Genesis 3:15)

Where do we get it?

Sometimes, there is an accusation against the Orthodox for the use of typology. But we have to know that Typology is originate to the Scriptures and to Christ, Himself. Again, the "type" wasn't an analogy invented AFTER the fact, but even from the very beginning. The Church Fathers expound on the types, of course, but it starts with the Scripture.

The first one to relate all of the Old Testament types and symbols, is Christ, Himself!

- "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:27)
- "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3)
- "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven." (John 6)
- "No sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12)
- etc.

Also the Evangelists

- St Matthew: "That it might be fulfilled"
- St Matthew: "Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist"
- St John: "This He spoke concerning His Body"
- St John: "This He spoke concerning the Holy Spirit"
- "For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken.' And again another Scripture says, 'They shall look on Him whom they pierced.'" (John 19:36-37)
- etc.

St Paul

- Adam is a type of Christ:
 - "Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come" (Romans 5:14)
 - "The first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit."
- Baptism in the Red Sea: "All our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Corinthians 10:1-2)
- "All drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." (1 Corinthians 10:4)
- "These things became our examples [typoi]" (1 Corinthians 10:6)
- Hagar and Sarah as the Old Covenant and New Covenant (Galatians 4)
- Circumcision fulfilled by baptism (Colossians 2)
- "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us." (1 Corinthians 5:7)
- etc.

“And since we have touched on things connected with Paradise, I am truly astonished at the truth of the types.

In Paradise was the Fall, and in a Garden was our Salvation.

From the Tree came sin, and until the Tree sin lasted.

In the evening, when the Lord walked in the Garden, they hid themselves (Genesis 3:8); and in the evening the robber is brought by the Lord into Paradise.

But some one will say to me, You are inventing subtleties; show me from some prophet the Wood of the Cross; unless you give me a testimony from a prophet, I will not be persuaded.

Hear then from Jeremias, and assure yourself; I was like a harmless lamb led to be slaughtered; did I not know it? But what sort of lamb? Let John the Baptist interpret it, when he says, Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29.) They devised against Me a wicked device, saying "Come, and let us place a beam upon His bread" (and if the Lord reckon you worthy, you shall hereafter learn, that His body according to the Gospel bore the figure of bread;) "Come then, and let us place a beam upon His bread, and cut Him off out of the land of the living; And His name shall be remembered no more." (Jeremiah 11:19 LXX)

Vain is your counsel; for before the sun His Name abides in the Church. And that it was Life, which hung on the Cross, Moses says, weeping, "And your life shall be hanging before your eyes; and you shall be afraid day and night, and you shall not trust your life." (Deuteronomy 28:66) And so too, what was just now read as the text, Lord, who has believed our report?

St Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures 13

The Superiority of the Antitype

In St Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, the main point of the epistle is to show the superiority of the New Covenant, Christ's Priesthood, Christ's Sacrifice, etc.

- Earthly priests "serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things" (8:5)
- "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises." (8:6)
- "Better hope" (7:19)
- "Better Sacrifice" (9:23)

- “Better Possession” (10:34)
- “Better Country” (11:16)
- “Better Resurrection” (11:35)

St John Chrysostom homily on Genesis 22, the sacrifice of Isaac. After going through the literal interpretation and exhausting the richness of its meaning, St John turns to the typological meaning.

“All this, however, happened as a type of the Cross.

Hence Christ too said to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced in anticipation of seeing my day; he saw it and was delighted." How did he see it if he lived so long before?

In type, in shadow: just as in our text the sheep was offered in place of Isaac, so here the rational lamb was offered for the world. You see, it was necessary that the truth be sketched out ahead of time in shadow.

Notice, I ask you, dearly beloved, how everything was prefigured in shadow:

- an only-begotten son in that case, an only-begotten in this;
- dearly loved in that case, dearly loved in this. "This is my beloved son," Scripture says, in fact, "in whom I have found satisfaction."
- The former was offered as a burnt offering by his father, and the latter his Father surrendered. Paul too shouts aloud in the words, "He who in fact did not spare his own Son but handed him over for the sake of us all - how will he not also grant us every gift along with him?"

Up to this point there is shadow, but now the truth of things is shown to be more excellent.

This rational lamb, you see, was offered for the whole world, he purified whole world; he freed human beings from error and led them forward to the truth; he made earth into heaven, not by altering the nature of the elements but by transferring life in heaven to human beings on earth. Through him all worship of demons is made pointless; through him people no longer worship stone and wood, nor do those endowed with reason bend the knee to material things - instead, all error has been abolished and the light of truth has shone brightly on the world. Do you see the superiority of the truth? Do you see what shadow is, on the one hand, and truth, on the other?

St John Chrysostom - Homilies on Genesis, Homily 47

II. Types of the Cross

The Tree of Life

The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads." (Genesis 2:8-10)

- The Tree of Life is the Cross and its fruit is Eucharist
 - "We have become worthy to have, the Tree of Life to eat from, which is the Body of God, and His True Blood."
- The river is the water of Baptism

The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Antithetical Typology)

St John Chrysostom, giving a sermon on the Fall of Man and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, says:

“But in case we make this sermon completely melancholy by going on and on about this sin that consisted of eating of the tree, and of the disobedience overwhelming the human being, come now, if you don't mind, let us change the topic from the tree to that other one, from this tree to the tree of the Cross, and let us see what harm the former caused and what good the latter introduced. Rather, it was not the tree that caused the harm, but slothful will and contempt displayed for God's command.

The former tree brought death, death entering the scene after the Fall, remember, whereas the latter endowed us with immortality; one drove us from paradise, the other led us up to heaven; the former rendered Adam liable to such a terrible penalty for one transgression, whereas the latter freed us from the countless burdens of our sins and restored to us confidence in the Lord's sight.

Do you see the difference between the one tree and the other? Do you see the devil's malice, man's indifference, and the Lord's loving kindness?

Accordingly, let us arm ourselves, I beg you, dear people, with the armor of this lifegiving tree, and in its power let us do to death deadly passions, as the Apostle also instructs us in these words: "Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts." (Galatians 5:24) What he means is this: people giving themselves completely to Christ have crucified every improper desire affecting the flesh and risking impairment to the soul's whole vitality."

St John Chrysostom - Homilies on Genesis, Homily 16 (20)

Noah's Ark

- Ark: Made of wood
- Through it, Noah and his family pass from death to life
 - The Ark is the Church
 - Her wood is the saving wood of the Cross

“On each occasion life comes by means of wood. For in the time of Noe the preservation of life was by an ark of wood.” (St Cyril of Jerusalem – Catechetical Lectures 13)

“The Cross is the foundation of the Church” (St Ephrem the Syrian)

Isaac's Wood

"So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and the knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'My father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.' So the two of them went together." (Genesis 22:6-8)

“As for the boy, Isaac, the wood of the burnt offering was laid upon him by his father, and he carried it until he came to the place where the sacrifice would be made. So Christ, carrying his own cross upon his shoulder, suffered outside the gate [144].

It was not by human strength that he was forced to suffer, but it was of his own will and the will of God the Father, as he said to Pontius Pilate, 'You would have no authority over me unless it had been given you from above.' (John 10:11)

Isaac, having the wood placed upon him, is led away to suffering and death. Yet it is the ram given by God that is offered up as the sacrifice. For the Word was in reality of the substance of God the Father, shining radiantly in his own temple, that which was supplied through the Virgin, and which was nailed to the tree.

Although as God he was impassible and immortal, he took himself away to suffering and death, and through his own body he offered up a pleasing aroma to God the Father."

St Cyril of Alexandria - Glaphyra on the Pentateuch, Glaphyra 3

Jacob's Hands

“Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim’s head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh’s head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn.” (Genesis 48:14)

1. Blessing is through the Cross

2. The Cross reverses the order
 1. The first will be last, the last will be first (the younger or the last is the Gentiles)
 2. Death will lead to life
 3. Curse will become blessing
 4. Gentiles will be brought into the inheritance
3. By the Cross, Joseph's children become Jacob's children, receiving from HIS inheritance

Passover Blood

Rod of Moses

Crossing the Red Sea

“In the time of Moses the sea, on beholding the emblematical rod, was abashed at him who smote it; is then Moses' rod mighty, and is the Cross of the Saviour powerless? But I pass by the greater part of the types, to keep within measure.

The wood in Moses' case sweetened the water; and from the side of Jesus the water flowed upon the wood.

The beginning of signs under Moses was blood and water; and the last of all Jesus' signs was the same. First, Moses changed the river into blood; and Jesus at the last gave forth from His side water with blood.

St Cyril of Jerusalem – Catechetical Lectures 13

Striking the Rock

“Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” (Exodus 16:6)

"And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." (1 Corinthians 10:4)

- In order to drink from the rock, it had to be struck first by the wood of Moses' rod.
- In order to drink from Christ, He was struck first by the wood of the Cross.

The Tree at Marah

“Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, ‘What shall we drink?’ So he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet.” (Exodus 15:23-25)

“And for us, exchanged punishment for salvation.” (Heavenly Orders)

Moses' Outstretched Hands

“And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.” (Exodus 16:11)

The Bronze Serpent

Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is* no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.” So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived. (Numbers 21:4-9)

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:14-15)

Revision #2

Created 2026-09-22 17:34:16 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba

Updated 2026-09-23 14:57:19 UTC by Fr.Maximus Wahba