

# Series in Christology

by John F. Walvoord

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## Chapter 1

### Part 1: The Preincarnate Son of God

[Author's note: The series of studies in Christology beginning in this issue is planned to present the whole doctrine of Christ including His Person and His work from eternity past to eternity future. Without undue development of any one theme, the series is intended to include every important aspect of the subject, thereby providing for the student of Christology a comprehensive treatment of the whole doctrine. The articles will present for the first time in print the material which for some years has been mimeographed for the use of seminary classes in Christology. The form of the material is new, however, and the entire treatment has been recast to include new material and to make plain the thought to the reader who may not have had previous instruction in this doctrine. It is intended that the more technical material not absolutely essential to the thought will be included in footnotes for those interested.]

The first major division of Christology dealing with the preincarnate Son of God will occupy the articles to be printed in 1947. Instead of following the customary division of the subject into that which is found in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, it will be the plan to include all material in both Testaments having bearing on the preincarnate Christ. Two major divisions will be observed: (1) the preincarnate Person of Christ; (2) the preincarnate work of Christ. In the first division particular attention will be given to the testimony concerning the deity of Christ. In the second division the works of Christ in eternity past, in creation, providence, preservation, revelation, and salvation in the Old Testament will have principal treatment. No attempt will be made to follow the traditional limitation of Christology to the Person of Christ only. The importance of His work in the total revelation of Christ justifies the extended discussion. Messianic prophecies will be included in the later discussion of Christ incarnate.]

## Introduction

Christianity by its very name has always had Christ as its historical and logical center. The doctrine of Christ is vitally related to every important doctrine of theology. The important matter of bibliology—the place of the Bible and divine revelation in theology—is logically inseparable from the doctrine of Christ. It is a matter of history that those who have interpreted literally the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the infallible and inspired Word of God have almost always accepted the deity of Christ. It is normal also for those who accept the unique deity of Christ to also accept the Scriptures. The individual alone determining what is truth. This subjective approach finally had its *reductio ad absurdum* in the liberalism of a decade ago which was unblushing humanism.

The ultimate in the destruction of the Biblical doctrine of Christ was reached early in the twentieth century when the charge of certain liberal theologians that Jesus was only a myth began to be taken seriously in the theological world. Liberal theology in some quarters had accepted as already proved that Jesus was not essential to Christianity, but it remained for Arthur Drews in his *The Christian Myth* (1909) to state it blatantly and win a group of followers.<sup>1</sup> It is safe to say that the pendulum has swung somewhat back at present and the general opinion of modern liberal theologians is that Jesus was an historical character, though misunderstood by ancients and moderns, and the proper subject of scientific restudy to determine the true Jesus of history. It is taken for granted that the destruction of grounds for implicit faith in the infallibility of Scripture has been achieved and that the Jesus of history was after all only a man with at best a deeper God-consciousness than others. Douglas Clyde Macintosh, Professor of Theology and Philosophy of Religion in Yale University, has perhaps

stated what may be accepted as the norm of present liberal attitude toward Jesus in the following statement:

In our sketch of the life and thought of the Reverend John Cotton we noted the theory advanced by Sir Henry Vane the younger, Governor of the Colony in 1636, that the Holy Spirit is united to the believer in the same manner as the divine nature was united with the human Jesus. This rather startling Christological suggestion, which seems to have been rejected as heretical by the theological builders of that day, bids fair to be made, after some slight reshaping, the headstone of the corner in the reconstructed temple of Christian evangelicalism. The modification of Sir Harry Vane's formula which we would suggest is that it is increasingly *possible* for the Christian to be united to God the Holy Spirit in essentially the same way in which the human nature of Jesus was united with his divine nature, or indeed with God himself. Conversely, Jesus strengthened the emphasis on progressive revelations substitution of present religious experience as a norm of doctrine for the infallible Scriptures. We are told today, then, that the real question is not whether the Scriptures are infallible, whether Christ was uniquely divine, but rather what Christ speaks to our hearts today through our religious experiences. Barthianism, like other forms of modernism, is utterly bankrupt as far as providing a basis for Christology. It is, in fact, a revival in new terminology of ancient Gnostic ideas which were utterly destructive to Christian faith. The charge that Barthianism is a new form of liberalism rather than a new form of Reformed theology can be sustained on both theological and philosophical grounds.<sup>4</sup>

While, therefore, the history of Christology in the past and present will serve as a guide in the present study, the time-honored path of dependence upon the Scriptures will be followed instead of the present modern spirit. Christology has a more extensive field of literature than any other aspect of theology. It is not intended that this study should be a resumé, but rather that the great central truths which many others have stated at length should here be reduced to a simple and comprehensive statement based upon the Scriptures themselves for argument and proof. It is an impossibility for any one man to embrace the entire field of Christology in an ordinary lifetime, but it is necessary to define the Scriptural doctrine in reasonable limits without cumbrance of historical data. The objective of life and eternity is defined simply by Paul in the words, "That I may know him" (Phil 3:10). If this study is used to this end, the purpose of the author will be achieved.

## I. The Preincarnate Person of the Son of God

The definition of the preincarnate Person of the Son of God is to all practical purposes the statement and proof of the eternal deity of the Second Person of the Trinity. In view of the ancient and modern attempts to reduce in one way or another the deity of Christ to a level below that of the First Person, the Father, it is necessary to emphasize certain aspects of the preincarnate Person of Christ. Crucial in this argument is the proof that Christ is eternal. Supporting this evidence is the full-orbed revelation that Christ possessed all the attributes of God, and that His works, titles, majesty, and promises are all those of God Himself. The theophanies of the Old Testament provide historical evidence of His pre-existence.

In denouncing the Arian heresy that Christ was the first of created spirits and therefore not eternal, the church has, since 325, maintained the eternity and deity of the Son of God in its historic creeds. The purpose of this discussion is to restate in brief form the Scriptural evidence in support of this doctrine. For the sake of brevity in statement, the expression *preincarnate Christ* will be used as equivalent to the term *preincarnate Person of the Son of God*, which is more accurate.

## The Eternity of the Son of God

The doctrine of the eternity of the Son of God is most important to the doctrine of Christology as a whole. If Christ is not eternal, then He came into existence in time and is a created being and vastly different in being and attributes from God Himself. If Christ is eternal, it is affirming that He has no dependence upon another for His existence, that He is in fact self-existent. It is saying more than that He was pre-existent. This would affirm only that He existed before the incarnation. Arius, for instance, believed in the pre-existence of Christ but not in His eternity. To affirm that Christ existed from all eternity past is to attribute to Him all that self-sufficiency and independence which is true of God.

The Scriptures bear a clear witness to the fact of the eternity of Christ, sometimes directly, often indirectly. The Old

Testament foreview of Christ spoke of Him as the child to be born in Bethlehem “whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting” (Mic 5:2). As Fausset has said, “The terms convey the strongest assertion of infinite duration of which the Hebrew language is capable (cf. Ps 90:2; Prov 8:22, 23; John 1:1).”<sup>5</sup> All of the Old Testament anticipations of the coming of Christ which assert His deity are further evidence to establish His eternity. In Isaiah 9:6, Christ is declared to be not only “Mighty God,” but also “Everlasting Father,” or “Father of Eternity.” The very name *Jehovah* which it will be shown is given to Christ as well as to the Father and the Spirit is assertion of eternity. He is the eternal I AM (cf. Exod 3:14).

The New Testament is, if anything, more explicit than the Old Testament. The incarnate Christ is an unexplainable character apart from His eternal deity. The introduction to the Gospel of John has no other justifiable explanation than a statement of His eternity: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The phrase “in the beginning” (ε•ν α•ρχη•) probably in itself is a reference to the point in time in eternity past beyond which it is impossible to go, as Dorner interprets it.<sup>6</sup> In any case the verb *was* (η•ν) is explicit. As Marcus Dods expresses it: “The Logos did not then begin to be, but at that point at which all else began to be He already *was*.”<sup>7</sup> The contrast between the timeless existence of the Word which became flesh and any creature is brought out in John 8:58, where Christ said, literally translated, “Before Abraham came (γενε•σθα), I am (ει•μι).” Christ claimed not only to have pre-existed before Abraham, but He was claiming continuous existence. It was so patent to His listeners that He was claiming the eternity of God that some took up stones to stone Him. In 1 John 1:1, Christ is again described by John as “That which was from the beginning.”

The Apostle Paul in his epistles states the same doctrine in unmistakable terms. In Colossians 1:16-17 in one statement both the eternity and the creatorship of Christ is declared. In verse seventeen we find, “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” In verse sixteen, it is revealed, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth.” The two statements together assert that Christ is before all creation and therefore self-existent and uncreated. The eternity of Christ is further asserted in the eternal covenant (Eph 1:4), and in the declaration by Christ Himself, “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” (Rev 1:11). The contributing arguments to these explicit Scriptures are too numerous to mention here. His titles, works, immutability and other divine attributes, His eternal promises, all imply and require eternity. It is a matter of history that no denial of the eternity of Christ has endured which has not also denied the Scriptures as the very Word of God.

## **The Pre-Existence of the Son of God**

Many Scriptures which strictly speaking do not assert the eternity of Christ speak of His existence before the incarnation. For all practical purposes these are corroborating testimony to His eternity and have been taken as such in church history. Theologians who have accepted the pre-existence of Christ have in almost all cases accepted His eternity.

An important line of evidence are the many statements of the heavenly origin of Christ. John 3:17 speaks of the fact that “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” John 3:31 is more specific, “He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.” Christ states Himself, “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38). Christ further speaks of the glory of heaven as a matter of memory and experience (John 17:5, 24). Other Scriptures too numerous to quote speak of His heavenly origin (John 1:15, 18, 30; 3:13, 16; 6:33, 42, 50, 51, 58, 62; 7:29; 8:23, 42; 9:39; Eph 1:3-5; 1 Pet 1:18-20). It is significant that while John, Paul, and Peter all speak of His pre-existence, most of the references are in John in connection with the proof of His deity.

The doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ is substantiated by many other lines of evidence, such as His preincarnate works of creation, providence, preservation, His promises made in eternity past, the theophanies, and other intimations of pre-existence. These are considered more properly under the second major division of the preincarnate Son of God, namely, His preincarnate works. Their added testimony leaves no shadow of doubt as to the pre-existence of Christ for anyone accepting the accuracy of the Scriptures. Remaining to be considered under the present division is the important and conclusive testimony to the Person of Christ contained in His divine attributes, His titles, and the argument from the doctrine of the Trinity.

Dallas, Texas

(To be continued in the April-June Number, 1947)

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<sup>1</sup> For a more extended discussion of this see *The Harvard Theological Review*, V (1912), 423-473, or B. B. Warfield, *Christology and Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1929), pp. 313-367.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Cornelius Van Til, *The New Modernism* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1946), 384 pp. Van Til shows by massive arguments that Barthianism is a new and dangerous form of modernism. Cf. also William H. Chisholm, "A New Heresy in the Christian Church," *The Sunday School Times*, December 14, 1946, pp. 1155ff.

<sup>5</sup> A. R. Fausset, *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments* by Rev. Robert Jamieson, Rev. A. R. Fausset, and Rev. David Brown (Glasgow: William Collins, Sons, and Company, 1868) IV, 600.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1907), pp. 309-310.

<sup>7</sup> *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 683.

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## Chapter 2

### Part 2: The Preincarnate Son of God

[Author's note: This second article in the series concludes the consideration of the preincarnate Person of the Son of God. Having previously treated the historical setting of the doctrine of Christ and His eternity and pre-existence, we present here His divine attributes, His titles, and the contribution of the doctrine of the Trinity to the subject.]

{Editor's note: Footnotes in the original printed version were numbered from 8-13, but in this electronic version are numbered 1-6, respectively.}

### The Divine Attributes of the Son of God

The divine attributes of the Son of God present a clear revelation that in Him “dwells the whole fullness of deity bodily” (R. S.V., Col 2:9). Every attribute of importance which can be attributed to the Father or the Holy Spirit can be attributed to Christ. The testimony of the Scriptures on this point has been so clear that since the Council of Nicea in 325 when the deity of Christ was stated as the doctrine of the church and of the Scriptures there has been no denial of the deity of Christ which did not also deny the infallibility of the Scriptures. In other words, it has been generally conceded that the literal interpretation of Scripture gives a firm basis for the deity of Christ.

It is the purpose of this discussion to present briefly the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the divine attributes of Christ. It will be assumed that the deity of Christ in His preincarnate state was the same as in His incarnate state. Hence, for the revelation of His divine attributes we may appeal to any Scripture in the Old or New Testament which may apply. The arguments of the kenotic theologians to the point that Christ surrendered some of His divine attributes in the incarnation will be discussed and refuted in its proper place. It is held here that His deity is constant from eternity to eternity, with the same divine attributes.

There is unusual significance to most of the divine attributes. Their individual character is such that if it be proved that Christ possessed certain divine attributes it necessarily follows that He possessed all devine attributes. Hence if Christ is omniscient He must be also omnipotent. If He is infinite, He must be also omnipresent. If He is eternal, He must be self-existent. The evidence is, however, complete and does not need to rest on this rational argument.

*Eternity and pre-existence.* As previously shown, Christ is declared by the Scriptures to be eternal (Mic 5:2; John 8:58; Col 1:16-17; Rev 1:11). All the passages on His pre-existence are sustaining evidence for His eternity. If Christ is eternal, it almost necessarily follows that He is God.

*Self-existence.* From the fact of the eternity of Christ, it follows that He is the uncaused cause, the self-existent one. Inasmuch as He is the Creator of all things, it is necessarily true that He Himself is uncreated (John 1:1-3; Col 1:16-17).

*Omnipresence.* That God is omnipresent is the clear teaching of Scripture (Deut 4:39; Ps 139:7-10; Prov 15:3; Isa 66:1; Jer 23:24; Acts 17:27). It is evident that Christ possessed the same attribute. His promises of abiding with His disciples forever (Matt 28:20), and His promise to indwell the believer (John 14:18, 20, 23) are impossible of any literal fulfillment unless Christ is also omnipresent. The experience of Nathaniel (John 1:48) would imply that Christ was spiritually omnipresent

even during His life on earth. If the disputed passage of John 3:13, “which is in heaven,” be admitted as genuine, it would be explicit statement of this doctrine. Inasmuch as the deity of Christ can be sustained on other grounds, it would follow that Christ as God has the same omnipresence which is described so clearly in Psalm 139:7-10. Whether in heaven or hell or in the uttermost parts of the sea, Christ is there.

*Oniscience.* Repeatedly in Scripture Christ is said to possess knowledge which by its nature declares that He is omniscient. Christ is said to “know all” (literal translation of John 2:24), and again, “He knew what was in man” (John 2:25). The disciples bear witness: “Now we know that you know all things” (John 16:30, R.S.V.). Peter declared, “Lord, you know everything” (John 21:17, R.S.V.). If Acts 1:24 be a reference to Christ, it is another testimony: “Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men...” The Scriptures also speak of Christ in His foreknowledge. In John 6:64, it is stated, “For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.” Other references substantiate the doctrine that Christ had complete foreknowledge (John 13:1, 11; 18:4 ; 19:28 ). Included in the concept of omniscience is the idea that in Christ is also the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:30).

*Omnipotence.* The evidence for the omnipotence of Christ is as decisive as for other attributes. Sometimes it takes the form of physical power, but more often it refers to authority over creation. Christ had the power to forgive sins (Matt 9:6), all power in heaven and in earth (Matt 28:18), power over nature (Luke 8:25), power over His own life (John 10:18), power to give eternal life to others (John 17:2), power to heal physically as witnessed by His many miracles, and power to cast out demons (Mark 1:29-34, etc.), and power to transform the body (Phil 3:21). By virtue of His resurrection “he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him...” (Heb 7:25). He is “able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim 1:12). He is “able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24). It will be observed that the incarnation and the death and resurrection of Christ permitted Christ to act in regard to sin and salvation. His omnipotence in any case is restricted to that which is holy, wise, and good.

*Immutability.* The attribute of immutability may seem to have been contradicted by the incarnation. It is the doctrine of the Scripture that, while the Person of the Incarnate Christ differs from the Person of the preincarnate Christ by the addition of the complete human nature, the divine nature of Christ remains unchanged and is essentially immutable. In the quotation of Psalm 102:25-17 in Hebrews 1:10-12, it is affirmed of Christ, “Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” The classic passage on immutability states the same doctrine—”Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb 13:8). By this doctrine it is established that the divine Son of God of eternity past, the divine Son of God incarnate, and the glorified Son of God in heaven is, as to His deity, one and the same Person with unchanging attributes.

*The Fullness of the Godhead in Him.* As a confirmation of specific attributes it is also revealed in Scripture that in Christ is all the fullness of the Godhead: “For in him dwells the whole fullness of deity bodily” (Col 2:9, R.S.V.). The passage is very emphatic in the original. The expression *in him* (ἐν αὐτῷ) stands first and is thereby emphasized. The word *dwells* (κατοικεῖ) means “permanently dwells.”<sup>1</sup> The phrase *the whole fullness of deity bodily* is obviously intended to convey the thought that in Christ is all that is in deity. As Peake puts it, “It is vain to seek it [the Godhead] wholly or partially outside of him.”<sup>2</sup> The statement constitutes a blanket endorsement of all that is taught, in particular concerning the divine attributes of Christ.

*Sovereignty.* Proceeding from His omnipotence, the Scriptures assign divine sovereignty to Christ. According to Matthew 28:18 (R.S.V.), Christ declared, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Again in 1 Peter 3:22, Christ in heaven is declared to be at the right hand of God, “with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him” (R.S.V.). Other passages bear out the same concept of absolute sovereignty (John 5:27; Acts 2:36; 1 Cor 12:3; Col 1:18; Phil 2:9). He is indeed King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev 19:16).

*Other qualities of deity.* Christ is constantly represented in Scripture as having qualities which could be possessed only by God. His divine glory is mentioned in John 17:5, described in Revelation 1:12-18. Christ refers to Himself as “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), qualities which inhere only in God. He is the “righteous branch...Jehovah our righteousness” (Jer 23:5-6). He is the holy Son of God of Luke 1:35. Above all, Christ is the manifestation of grace—divine

love and righteousness combined (John 1:17). There is not an attribute of deity which is not directly or indirectly ascribed to Christ.

Charles Hodge has the following summary of the Scriptural evidence for the divine attributes of Christ:

All divine names and titles are applied to Him. He is called God, the mighty God, the great God, God over all; Jehovah, Lord; the Lord of lords and King of kings. All divine attributes are ascribed to Him. He is declared to be omnipresent, omniscient, almighty, and immutable, the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is set forth as the creator and upholder and ruler of the universe. All things were created by Him and for Him; and by Him all things consist. He is the object of worship to all intelligent creatures, even the highest; all the angels (i.e., all creatures between man and God) are commanded to prostrate themselves before Him. He is the object of all the religious sentiments: of reverence, love, faith, and devotion. To Him men and angels are responsible for their character and conduct. He required that man should honour Him as they honoured the Father, that they should exercise the same faith in Him that they do in God. He declares that He and the Father are one, that those who had seen Him had seen the Father also. He calls all men unto Himself, promises to forgive their sins, to send them the Holy Spirit, to give them rest and peace, to raise them up at the last day, and to give them eternal life. God is not more, and cannot promise more, or do more than Christ is said to be, to promise, and to do. He has, therefore, been the Christian's God from the beginning, in all ages and in all places.

## The Titles of the Preincarnate Son of God

The titles given to Christ in both the Old and New Testaments constitute an important aspect of the total revelation of His Person. A distinction should be observed between those titles which apply to His preincarnate Person and those which refer to His incarnate Person. Such designations as *Jesus Christ, Son of man, prophet, priest, king*, etc. have primary reference to Christ in the incarnate state, even though they are found in the Old as well as the New Testaments. Their meaning and contribution falls properly under the discussion of Christ incarnate. To be considered here are the titles which belong properly to Christ in His preincarnate state, titles which are references to His deity and preincarnate Person.

*Jehovah.* A comparison of the Old Testament and New Testament passages proves beyond doubt that the Christ of the New Testament bears the title *Jehovah* in the Old Testament. This fact has long been recognized by conservative theologians. This is not denying that the Father and the Spirit also bear the title *Jehovah*, but affirms that it also belongs to Christ. The name is used both of the Persons of the Trinity severally and of the Trinity as a whole.

Many passages link Christ with the name *Jehovah*. In Zechariah 12:10, where Jehovah is speaking, the description is to be applied clearly to Christ: "They shall look unto me whom they have pierced" (R.V.). Revelation 1:7 describes Christ in the same language. Again in Jeremiah 23:5-6, Christ is declared to be "Jehovah our righteousness" (cf. 1 Cor 1:30). Similar comparisons are found in other passages (Ps 68:18, cf. Eph 4:8-10; Ps 102:12, 25-27, cf. Heb 1:10-12; Isa 6:5, cf. John 12:41). Christ is the Jehovah of the temple (Mal 3:1; Matt 12:6; 21:12, 13) and the Jehovah of the Sabbath (Matt 12:8).<sup>3</sup>

*Elohim.* It is easily demonstrated that Christ is identified also with the Elohim of the Old Testament. In Isaiah 40:3, Christ is spoken of as both Jehovah and Elohim (cf. Luke 3:4). In Isaiah 9:6-7, Christ is called "the mighty Elohim." It is apparent that Elohim in the Old Testament has as its equivalent in the New Testament θεός. Hence all passages in the New Testament referring to Christ by this title link Him with the Elohim of the Old Testament (cf. Rom 15:6; Eph 1:3; 5:5, 20; 2 Pet 1:1).<sup>4</sup>

*Logos.* In the opening of the Gospel of John, Christ is introduced by the title *Logos* (Λόγος), translated *Word*. The Word is declared to have been in the beginning with God, and the Word was God. The title in itself seems to imply at least four ideas: (1) the concept of revelation—making known the truth which could not be learned otherwise. Christ was preeminently a revelation of God. (2) The concept of intelligence, or having the power of mind and will. This is shown in the context, in that He is the Creator and the true light which came into the world to manifest God. (3) The concept of order. There is the implication of being the designer and agent of purposeful works. (4) The idea of incarnation. The Word is the embodiment

in a tangible and significant form of that which is the eternal God. As an ordinary word embodies and represents a thought, so Christ is the embodiment of what God is. It is not thought that Christ is more than God because He is the Word, but rather that He is the expression of what God is.

The doctrine of the Logos has had considerable treatment in historic theology and in particular connects with the rational and philosophic implications of the revelation in Christ. Much of this speculation has been useless as far as contributing to the doctrine of Christ. The central idea remains of an intelligent, ordered revelation of God in tangible expression.<sup>5</sup> The theophanies in the Old Testament are partial representations of Christ but not in the same sense or as accurate a revelation as Christ the Logos.

*Son of God.* This title is used of both angels and men, but when a title of Christ it is used to express an eternal relationship to the Father. The meaning of the term has aroused considerable theological discussion which has not abated through the centuries. In the main, however, the doctrine of the church has been, since the Council of Nicea in 325, that the title refers to the eternal relationship of the Son to the Father.

A number of other views are presented at length in theological works. Of these, six false theories of the sonship of Christ can be mentioned. that He is “designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord” (R.S.V.). It is clear to all that the resurrection is an outstanding proof of the deity and of the divine sonship of Christ, but this is not to say that He was not the Son of God before this event. Such interpretation is definitely ruled out by the fact that He is called the Son of God repeatedly before His death and resurrection, and used the term *Father* in relation to the First Person.

Another passage which bears on the issue is Acts 13:32-33: “And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus: as also it is written in the second psalm, ‘Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee’” (R.S.V.). Here the reference is to Psalm 2:7, in which the decree of God is revealed concerning the generation of the Son. At first glance, the application in Acts seems to be to the resurrection. The expression “raising Jesus” as here used does not refer to the resurrection at all, but to the simple fact that God gave His Son to the world in the incarnation. The word *raise* (ἀ•ναστῆ•σαι) is used in the same sense as *arise* (cf. Matt 22:24; Acts 7:18; 20:30 ), i.e., to come on the scene of life. The common expression that “a prophet arose” is the same idea. The passage in Acts which immediately follows introduces the resurrection as a new idea to the context in Acts 13:34: “And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he spoke in this way, ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David’” (R.S.V.). In other words, the thought of resurrection is not introduced until verse thirty-four . It is true, of course, that the resurrection brought the humanity of Christ into a new victory of resurrection in which the deity of His Person and His victory over sin, death, and the grave are demonstrated. It is not true that His divine sonship begins with the resurrection.

(4) *False theory of sonship by means of exaltation to the right hand of God.* Based on Hebrews 1:3, it is held that Christ was made a Son when He was exalted at the ascension. It can be objected to this view as to others that He is clearly a Son from eternity and is declared to be a Son before His exaltation. This exaltation is a declaration of His divine Sonship and of His victory over sin and death.

(5) *False theory of sonship by means of title or office.* This theory, based on Philippians 2:9, holds that Christ was a Son in the sense only of bearing this title and that He was not actually a generated Son. Against this it may be objected that such a concept of sonship destroys most of its meaning. Unless there is corresponding reality which justifies the term, sonship becomes merely a compliment. The Scriptures speak of Christ as a begotten and generated Son, and, while His generation is not the same in kind as human generation, being different and unique, it is nevertheless a constitutional aspect of the Second Person rather than an acquired title.

(6) *False theory of sonship by means of covenant relation.* This view which is based on the concept of the eternal covenant between members of the Godhead holds that the sonship of Christ is an assumed office, beginning with the covenant in eternity past and ending when the covenant relationship and work is completed. Again this view is inadequate to explain the Scriptural terminology. It would give to the term *son* merely the significance of a title or office which has not real

connection with the ordinary human connotations of the word.

(7) *The Biblical and true view of the sonship of Christ.* The Scriptures represent Christ as eternally the Son of God by eternal generation. While it must be admitted that the nature of the sonship and the nature of the generation are unique, being eternal, it has been used in the Bible to represent the relationship between the First Person and the Second Person. In Psalm 2:7, Jehovah speaks, "I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son; This day have I begotten thee" (R. V.). According to this passage, Christ is declared to be the Son of God and begotten in the day of the eternal decree. This is, in effect, a statement that Christ is eternally the Son of God as the decree itself is eternal. He is not only declared a Son from eternity but begotten from eternity. Some have interpreted this passage prophetically on the ground that the context is prophetic. It is rather that the prophesied victory is on the ground of His sonship. The passage in Psalms 2:7 is quoted three times in the New Testament (Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5). The Acts passage deals with the fact of Christ being raised up to be the incarnate Savior. In Hebrews 1:5, the appeal is made to the majesty of Christ as that above the angels because He is the Son of God. The appointment of Christ to the priesthood by the Father is said to be added to His sonship in Hebrews 5:5. All three of the citations in the New Testament draw on Psalm 2:7 for proof of the unique status of Christ and confirm rather than deny His eternal sonship. Further evidence for eternal sonship is found in the fact that Christ is represented as already the Son of God when given to the world (John 3:16, 17; Gal 4:4).

The Scriptural view of the sonship of Christ, as recognized in many of the great creeds of the church, is that Christ was always the Son of God by eternal generation, and that He took upon Himself humanity through generation of the Holy Spirit. The human birth was not in order to become a Son of God, but because He is the Son of God. Principal Scriptures bearing on the doctrine in addition to those discussed are numerous (Matt 16:13-16; 26:63-64; Luke 2:11, 26, 38; John 1:49; 3:16, 18, 35, 36; 11:27; Acts 9:20; Heb 1:2, 8; 1 John 2:23; 5:9-12). As God, Christ addresses the First Person as His Father, while as man, Christ addresses Him as His God (John 20:17).

*The first begotten (πρωτοτοκος).* Seven times in the New Testament this term is used of Christ (Matt 1:25; Luke 2:7; Rom 8:29; Col 1:15, 18; Heb 1:6; Rev 1:5). It occurs twice in reference to others (Heb 11:28; 12:23). As a descriptive name of Christ, it appears with three distinct meanings. (1) As the "first-born among many brethren," and as "the first-born of all creation" (Rom 8:29; Col 1:15), it is used clearly in reference to the eternal existence of the divine Son of God and helps to confirm the doctrine of eternal generation. (2) As the first-born of Mary (Matt 1:25; Luke 2:7; Heb 1:6), the title is given to Christ as Mary's firstborn son. It is used clearly in reference to His incarnate Person. (3) A third usage is found in the description of Christ as "first-born from the dead" (Col 1:18, R.S.V.), and "the first-born of the dead" (Rev 1:5, R.S.V.). Here the meaning is that Christ is the first to be raised from the dead in resurrection. There had been a number of restorations as in the case of Lazarus, but no one before had received resurrection life and an immortal, resurrection body. Christ is the first of this order.

*The only begotten (•ονογενης).* This title is used for Christ five times in the New Testament (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9), all in the writings of John. The Revised Version translates the expression by "only Son," which seems to be an over-simplification of the real meaning. The Authorized Version as used here is more literal. The thought is clearly that Christ is the begotten of God in the sense that no other is. This is illustrated in the use of the same word in regard to Isaac (Heb 11:17), who was not literally the only begotten of Abraham, but he was the only begotten of Abraham in the sense that he was the promised seed. It is used in the ordinary sense also in Scripture (Luke 7:12; 8:42, the only other references in the New Testament). The term is again a confirmation of the idea of eternal generation, though Christ was also the only begotten in reference to His humanity. The thought of John 3:16 seems to be that the Son which was the only begotten from eternity past was given by the Father.

*The Angel of Jehovah.* One of the significant and important titles is that given Him in the Old Testament when He appeared as the Angel of Jehovah. As one of the principal theophanies, it is important for many reasons, confirming the pre-existence of Christ, and revealing the ministry of God to men in the Old Testament period. It is the teaching of Scripture that the Angel of Jehovah is specifically the Second Person of the Trinity. At least three lines of evidence substantiate this claim.

(1) Christ as the Angel of Jehovah is identified as Jehovah in numerous Old Testament passages. When the Angel of

Jehovah spoke to Hagar (Gen 16:7-13), He is identified as Jehovah (vs. 13 ). The account of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:11-18) affords the same identification and is confirmed by other passages (Gen 31:11-13; 48:15, 16 , cf. 45:5 ; Exod 3:1ff, cf. Acts 7:30-35; Exod 13:21; 14:19 ; Judg 6:11-23; 13:9-20 ).

(2) The Angel of Jehovah is also revealed to be a distinct person from Jehovah, i.e., a Person of the Trinity. In Genesis 24:7, for instance, Jehovah is described as sending “his angel.” The servant of Abraham testifies to the reality of this in Genesis 24:40. Moses speaks of Jehovah sending an angel to lead Israel (Num 20:16). An instance which is very clear is that found in Zechariah 1:12-13, where the Angel of Jehovah addressed Jehovah: “Then the angel of Jehovah answered and said, O Jehovah of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? And Jehovah answered the angel that talked with me with good words, even comfortable words” (R.V.). Many other similar passages occur (Exod 23:20; 32:34 ; 1 Chron 21:15-18; Isa 63:9; Dan 3:25-28). Still other passages affirm the deity of the Angel of Jehovah without trinitarian personal distinctions (Judg 2:1-5; 2 Kgs 19:35).

(3) The Angel of Jehovah is the Second Person of the Trinity. Having determined the deity of the Angel of Jehovah and that He is a Person of the Trinity, it remains to demonstrate that He is the Second Person. This is, in fact, the only solution of an otherwise confused picture. How can a Person be God and at the same time address God? The answer lies in the personal distinctions of the Trinity. There are at least four lines of evidence which identify the Angel of Jehovah as the Second Person.

(a) The Second Person is the visible God of the New Testament. Neither the Father nor the Spirit is characteristically revealed in bodily and visible form. While the Father’s voice is heard from heaven, and the Holy Spirit is seen descending in the form of a dove, Christ, the Second Person, is the full manifestation of God in visible form. It is logical that the same Person of the Trinity should appear in bodily form in both Testaments.

(b) Confirming this induction is the fact that the Angel of Jehovah of the Old Testament no longer appears after the incarnation. References to angels in the New Testament seem to refer to either angelic or human messengers. It is a natural inference that the Angel of Jehovah is now the incarnate Christ.

(c) The similarity of function between the Angel of Jehovah and Christ can be observed in the fact that both are sent by the Father. In the Old Testament, the Angel of Jehovah is sent by Jehovah to reveal truth, to lead Israel, and to defend and judge them. In the New Testament, Christ is sent by God the Father to reveal God in the flesh, to reveal truth, and to become the Savior. It is characteristic for the Father to send and the Son to be the sent one. These facts again point to the identification of the Angel of Jehovah with Christ.

(d) By the process of elimination, it can be demonstrated that the Angel of Jehovah could not be either the First Person or the Third Person. According to John 1:18, “No one has seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known” (R.S.V.). This passage seems to imply that only Christ could be visible to man and that the First Person and the Third Person did not reveal themselves in visible fashion. As the Angel of Jehovah is the sent one, He could not be the Father for the Father is the sender. As the Angel of Jehovah characteristically appears in bodily, usually human form, He could not be the Holy Spirit who does not appear bodily, except in the rare instance of appearing in the form of a dove at the baptism of Christ. It may, therefore, be concluded that the Angel of Jehovah is the Second Person of the Trinity.

The other theophanies of the Old Testament tend to confirm this judgment, revealing in particular the work of Christ in that period. Discussion on this aspect of Christology will be included in the treatment of His work in the Old Testament period.

## **The Son of God in the Trinity**

In previous discussion, the deity and eternity of the Son of God has been considered, with the contribution of the many titles which refer to His preincarnate state. It remains to examine briefly the relation of the Son of God to the Trinity. It is not the purpose of this discussion to attempt to establish the doctrine of the Trinity as such or to support the trinitarian doctrine as

stated in the great creeds of the church. The bearing of the material already treated will be related to the doctrine of the Trinity, with certain important conclusions being drawn.

In establishing the deity and eternity of Christ, an important step was taken in relation to trinitarian doctrine. The added proofs of there being divine attributes in Christ and the many titles speaking of His deity combine to confirm the doctrine. Historically as well as logically, the doctrine of the Trinity turns on the question of the deity and personality of the Son of God. Christ has been seen to be, in His divine nature, all that God is. He has been related to the Father as His eternally begotten Son. His divine attributes confirm the fact that the essence of God is in Christ. His distinction in Person is confirmed by the subject and object relationship between the Father and the Son established not only in the incarnate state but also in the preincarnate as the Angel of Jehovah. The accepted order of the Trinity in which Christ is the Second Person has been found to be in keeping with the fact that the Father sends the Son, and the Son in turn sends the Spirit (John 16:7).

The evidence already considered in every way, then, confirms the ordinary doctrine of the Trinity. In fact, the existence of this evidence historically forced the church to study and state the doctrine of the Trinity. It is also true, however, that the doctrine of the Trinity once established in turn enforces and contributes to the doctrine of Christ. It is safe to say that no attack on the doctrine of the Trinity can be made without attacking the Person of Christ. It is also true that no attack on the Person of Christ can be made without attacking the doctrine of the Trinity. They stand and fall together. It is for this reason that current liberalism is usually at heart unitarian or modalistic in its attitude toward the Trinity. The Person of Christ remains the great doctrine upon which Christianity as a whole rests.

The preincarnate Person of Christ stands as a foundational truth of theology and the Scriptures. Its complementary doctrine, the Person of the incarnate Christ, will add further light and amplify the present findings. Before considering this important and complex theme, it is necessary first to consider the revelation of the preincarnate work of Christ which in itself is a complete revelation of the Person of Christ.

Dallas, Texas

(To be continued in the July-September Number, 1947)

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<sup>1</sup> *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, III, 523.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. L. S. Chafer, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, October-December, 1940, pp. 391-92.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 392.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Archibald Alexander, *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, "Logos," III, 1911-17.

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# Series in Christology

by John F. Walvoord

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## Chapter 3

### Part 3: The Preincarnate Son of God

[Author's note: The previous articles have presented the Person of the preincarnate Son of God. In this article we begin the study of the work of the Son of God before the incarnation.]

{Editor's note: Footnotes in the original printed edition numbered from 14-18, but in this electronic edition are numbered 1-5, respectively.}

## II. The Work of the Preincarnate Son of God

One of the most commonly neglected aspects of Christology is His work in the preincarnate state. It can be granted that this is not as important as His work after the incarnation, but it is important in establishing and presenting His full-orbed deity before He became incarnate. The study is vast in its larger dimensions as it involves the statement and proof of such important doctrines as the decree of God, creation, providence, preservation, salvation, and revelation in the Old Testament. Clearly, a comprehensive treatment is impossible in the scope of these studies. Taking as premises, however, the inspiration of Scripture and the Reformed position in regard to the decree of God and His sovereignty over events in creation, it will enhance the study of Christology to consider the bearing of the work of the preincarnate Son of God on the total doctrine of Christ.

### The Son of God in the Eternal Decree

The Scriptural revelation of the work of the Son of God begins with His part in the eternal decree of God. As a working basis, we may accept the concise definition of the decree given by the Westminster Shorter Catechism: "The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."<sup>1</sup> It is clear, if the Reformed concept of the decree of God is correct, that Christ had an important part as the Second Person in this eternal decree, and that therefore He is involved in all aspects of the total work of God. (Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:4-11; 3:11 ; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 1:9; Jas 2:5; 1 Pet 1:1, 2). The plan of salvation was not conceived after the fall of man as a plan of rescue, but it was instead the considered wisdom of God in its relation to the whole decree. It is a matter of great significance that from eternity past it was decreed that Christ should become incarnate, that He should suffer the death on the cross for the sin of the world, and that His triumph in resurrection, the salvation of all who believe, and the ultimate consummation were as clear to Him from eternity past as they will be from the viewpoint of eternity future.

Great as is the importance of the plan of salvation in the decree, it should not be made the sole principle of the works of God. As the Westminster Catechism quoted above brought out, the ultimate principle of the decree is the glory of God. Hence, in the eternal decree and purpose of God for Christ there is included not only His work in salvation, but also His work in creation, preservation, providence, and revelation, His part in the church of the New Testament and the program of Israel in the Old Testament as well as His future fulfillment of the promises given to David of a King who will sit forever on the throne of David. The participation of the eternal Son of God in all these aspects of the decree lend to the total picture the certainty of fulfillment, and the wisdom of God is seen in the complexity of the plan being unfolded in history. There is danger of oversimplification of the doctrine. The use of the eternal promises of God in regard to salvation to deny the revelation of Scripture concerning God's plan in its separate aspects relating to Israel and the church are an illustration of the

reductive fallacy—the attempt to make God’s plan of salvation a total explanation of all God’s purposes.

Thus, before any of the events conceived of as occurring in time is the decree of God with its important relation to the Son of God and His work. All the subsequent unfolding of the will of God and the work of Christ are the fulfillment of that which was in the mind of God from eternity past. We see Christ actively participating in the decree itself as well as promising His part in its fulfillment. In it all is the will and work of a sovereign, wise, and loving God who has designed all to manifest His own perfections and glory.

## The Son of God in Creation

The doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* as the free act of God has been the generally accepted doctrine of the historic Christian church. It is opposed on the one hand to ancient theories of the eternity of matter and the theory that matter emanated from God and is of His substance. It is also opposed to modern theories of evolution as the means or process of creation. If philosophy cannot deal in the last analysis with ultimates, as is commonly admitted, then it cannot solve this problem of the truth or error of the doctrine of creation. It is a doctrine which can be made known only by a revelation of the Creator Himself. Concerning creation, the Scriptures give an adequate testimony for all who are prepared to receive it. From the first chapter of Genesis to the book of Revelation, the universe is presented in the Bible as that which God created.

Creation is commonly conceived as a work of the Father rather than of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures themselves, however, in the work of creation attribute it to all three Persons of the Trinity. The use of Elohim and Jehovah for the triune God gives clear intimation of this even in the Old Testament. It is the Elohim who creates in Genesis 1, and already in Genesis 1:2 the Spirit of God is acting creatively. The Holy Spirit is mentioned frequently in the Old Testament as the Creator (Job 26:13; 33:4 ; Ps 104:30; Isa 40:12, 13). The Father is also mentioned specifically in the New Testament (1 Cor 8:6). It is therefore to be expected that a similar revelation will be given concerning the Son of God.

The Son of God is revealed to be the eternal Word of God of whom it is said: “All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3, R.S.V.). In 1 Corinthians similar revelation is given: “Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (1 Cor 8:6, R.S.V.). The doctrine is given its fullest statement in Colossians: “He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:15-17 R.S.V.).

Many attempts have been made to explain these citations as teaching something less than that the Son of God is the Creator. All such attempts fail before the plain intent of these passages. It can be seen at once that the name of no man or angel could be inserted in these descriptions without blasphemy. The work revealed is the work of God. There is no excuse either for Unitarian interpretations which make Christ merely a manifestation of God. The passages at once distinguish the Son of God from the other Persons of the Trinity and at the same time link the work of creation to all of them. It may be that we can concede with Berkhof that there is a distinction in the form of their work: “All things are at once *out of* the Father, *through* the Son, and *in* the Holy Spirit. In general it may be said that *being* is out of the Father, *thought* or *idea* out of the Son, and *life* out of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>3</sup> The Scripture does seem to make distinctions which are in keeping with the order of the Trinity, but even the distinctions do not carry through in all passages. Life is said to be in Christ (John 1:4), which seems to be the function of the Holy Spirit. Again it is said of Christ that all things are “in him” (Col 1:16), which is ordinarily said of the Spirit. Again, “In him all things hold together” (Col 1:17). These distinctions do not divide the work of creation or make Christ or the Spirit mere agents. In all the work of creation there is manifest the power and activity of the triune God.

The significance of the work of creation as ascribed to Christ is that it reveals His eternity, power, wisdom, and omnipresence. As the Creator He is specifically “before all things” (Col 1:17), and therefore eternal. The nature of creation reveals His power, wisdom and presence in creation. The telescopic wonder of the heavens as well as the microscopic wonders of the world too small for human eyes to see combine in their witness to His power. It is such a God who became such a Savior.

## Preservation and Providence

The doctrine of providence has always formed an essential part of the Christian faith. The fact that God preserves His creation, guides it into intelligent and wise consummation of His purposes, and governs it as sovereign God is by its very character essential to a true theism. Even the liberal scholar Burrows states emphatically: “The basic issue for religious faith in this connection is whether the universe is governed by a personal God.... If it is not, biblical religion is basically false.”<sup>4</sup> Conservative theologians have agreed with one voice concerning the fact of providence though struggling somewhat in its definition. It is usually held that providence includes (1) preservation, (2) concurrence or cooperation with creatures, (3) government.<sup>5</sup> In regard to the study of the work of the preincarnate Son of God, the question may be raised concerning His part in this undertaking of God.

The Scriptural evidence for providence in its various phases, which involves hundreds of passages, usually uses the names of God which are not specifically related to one Person of the Trinity. Hence, frequently Jehovah or Elohim are used in the Old Testament (Cf. Gen 28:15; Exod 14:29-31; Deut 1:30-31; 2 Chron 20:17; Ps 31:3, 20; etc.). As a work of the triune God, then, providence is a work also of Christ, and all that is said of Jehovah or Elohim may be said of Christ.

There are reasons to believe, however, that the Son of God is specifically active in the work of God in providence. First, the work of the Angel of Jehovah, to be considered separately, presents monumental proof that the Son of God preserved and guided Israel. Second, the various references to Jehovah as the Shepherd of Israel may be taken as specific references to Christ (Cf. Gen 49:24; Ps 23:1; 80:1; Isa 40:11; Jer 31:10; Ezek 34:11-12, 23; 37:24). Third, the language of Isaiah 63:9 (A. S.V.) specifically refers to the Son of God under the title, “the angel of his presence”: “The angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.” This is clearly the work of providence and preservation in the Old Testament period.

In the New Testament we have a fourth line of evidence which is also specific: “He is before all things and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:17, R.S.V.). Here again is a comprehensive statement—the universe “holds together” because of the immediate agency of Christ. In view of modern discoveries concerning the atomic structure of all matter—in which each atom is a miniature solar system—this work of Christ becomes especially significant. The principle of indeterminism in physics, now generally accepted in relation to motion within the atom, at least confirms that this work of Christ is immediate rather than a work of second causes. The immaterial bonds which hold together the atom as well as the starry heavens are traced in this passage to the power and activity of the Son of God.

The same doctrine as revealed in Colossians 1:17 is found again in Hebrews 1:3, “He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power” (R.S.V.). In other words, without denying the validity and use of second causes, the universe is said to be upheld by the *word* of the power of the Son of God. While the context of Hebrews 1:3 bears on the incarnate Person of Christ, its reference is clearly to His deity and eternal power and authority.

Another important aspect of providence is the Scriptural revelation concerning divine government and the relation of Christ to this. Without attempting to solve here the problems of the relation of this aspect of divine sovereignty to human will and the permission of sin, it is important to note that God has not turned from His purpose to bring every creature under the immediate authority of Christ. This is true in regard to God’s purpose for the *earth*. The Son of God “shall have dominion also from sea to sea, And from the River unto the ends of the earth.... Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; All nations shall serve him” (Ps 72:8, 11, A.S.V.). It is also the will of God that creatures in heaven acknowledge the Son as supreme Lord: “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:9-11, R.S.V.). To a large extent the fulfillment of these prophecies is yet future. Throughout the period before the incarnation, human will and sin were permitted to go on in accomplishing the ultimate purpose of God. The theocracy in the Old Testament is to be related to this place of Christ in the government of God. In the millennium Christ will reign as the Son of David in fulfillment of many prophecies. Taken as a whole, the work of Christ in

the preincarnate state in providence includes all the major features of the doctrine, and the Son of God is seen preserving, guiding, delivering, and governing His creatures. The aspects of the work of Christ yet to be considered, the theophanies and their revelation of God, the work of Christ in salvation in the Old Testament, and the types of Christ, combine to confirm and enlarge the doctrine of providence.

Dallas, Texas

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<sup>1</sup> *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.* (Philadelphia: Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1946), p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> Millar Burrows, *An Outline of Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. John T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), pp. 189ff; Berkhof, *op. cit.*, p. 165ff, etc.

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# Series in Christology

by John F. Walvoord

## Chapter 4

### Part 4: The Preincarnate Son of God

{Editor's note: Footnotes in the printed original were numbered from 19-24, but in this electronic edition are numbered from 1-6, respectively.}

## II. The Work of the Preincarnate Son of God (Continued)

### The Old Testament Theophanies

The word theophany, coming from θεο•ς (God) and φαίνω (*to appear*) has historically been taken to refer to appearances of Christ in the Old Testament. Another term often used is *epiphany* (*appearance to someone*). In the Bible, theophanies have reference specifically to Christ.<sup>1</sup> Usually they are limited to appearances of Christ in the form of man or angel, other forms of appearance, such as the Shekinah, not being considered as a formal theophany. The principal theophany of the Old Testament is the Angel of Jehovah, which has been shown in previous discussions to be the Son of God appearing in the form of an angel.<sup>2</sup>

*The Angel of Jehovah.* As the most frequent form of theophany in the Old Testament, the Angel of Jehovah affords a rich study in revelation of the Person and work of Christ in His preincarnate state. Reference to the Angel of Jehovah or the Angel of the presence is found throughout the entire Old Testament (Gen 16:7-13; 21:17 ; 22:11-18 ; 24:7, 40 ; 31:11 ; 32:24-32 ; cf. Hos 12:4; Gen 48:15, 16; Exod 3:2; cf. Acts 7:30-35; Exod 13:21; cf. 14:19 ; 23:20-23 ; 32:34 ; 33:2 ; Num 20:16; 22:22-35 ; Judg 2:1-4; 5:23 ; 6:11-24 ; 13:3-23 ; 2 Sam 14:17-20; 19:27 ; 24:14-17 ; 1 Kgs 19:5-7; 2 Kgs 1:3, 15; 19:35 ; 1 Chron 21:11-30; Ps 34:7; 35:5-6 ; Eccl 5:6; Isa 37:36; 63:9 ; Dan 3:28?; 6:22? ; Zech 1:9-21; 2:3 ; 3:1-10 ; 4:1-7 ; 5:5-10 ; 6:4-5 ; 12:8 ). In some passages reference is merely to “the angel” or to “the angel of God.” In general, the context determines whether this is specifically a reference to the Angel of Jehovah. There are some passages in which it is not clear (Dan 3:28; 6:22 ). In other references, the context leaves little doubt as to the meaning of the term.

A study of the many passages dealing with the Angel of Jehovah will reveal a most remarkable breadth to the preincarnate work of Christ for His people. At the same time, His Person is revealed in all its grace and righteousness. In the first instance (Gen 16:7-13), Christ is seeking fleeing and disheartened Hagar. To her He gives comfort and assurance. Again in Genesis 21:17-19, Christ as the Angel comes to her aid. It is certainly a revelation of the gracious care of God that in the first two theophanies of Scripture in which the Angel appears, it is on behalf of a friendless and comfortless person who is not even included in major features of the Abrahamic covenant.

In Genesis 22:11-18, the Angel stays the hand of Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac and a substitute is provided—a beautiful type of the substitution of Christ on behalf of those under the curse of death. The Angel goes before the servant of Abraham seeking a wife for Isaac and prospers his way (Gen 24:7, 40). The Angel ministers to Jacob (Gen 31:11; 48:15, 16 ). He appears to Moses in the burning bush to call him to his work as leader (Exod 3:2). The Angel of God was in the pillar of a cloud and the pillar of fire and led Israel through the wilderness to the promised land (Exod 13:21; 14:19 ; 23:20-23 ; 32:34 ; 33:2 ; Num 20:16; Isa 63:9). He warns Balaam (Num 22:22-35). He warns and judges Israel (Judg 2:1-4). Gideon is called and commissioned as a leader and judge by the Angel (Judg 6:11-24). An entire chapter of Scripture is devoted to the Angel of Jehovah and His dealings with the parents of Samson (Judg 13:3-23). The common belief in the Angel of Jehovah as God

Himself is shown in the conversation of various people in the Old Testament: the woman who appeared before David (2 Sam 14:4-20); Mephibosheth (2 Sam 19:27); and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 3:28).

The Angel of Jehovah as the righteous judge is revealed also in His judgment upon sin, as in the case of David's sin in numbering Israel (2 Sam 24:14-17; 1 Chron 21:11-30), and the slaying of 185,000 Assyrians (2 Kgs 19:35; Isa 37:36). The thoughtful care of the Angel of Jehovah is shown in His treatment of Elijah (1 Kgs 19:5-7). He instructs Elijah in his controversy with Ahaziah and the judgment on the messengers (2 Kgs 1:1-16). He is the protector of Daniel (Dan 3:28; 6:22), if these passages are correctly applied to the Angel of Jehovah. He is the revealer of secrets to Zechariah in his prophecy.

The combined testimony of these passages portrays the Son of God as exceedingly active in the Old Testament, dealing with sin, providing for those in need, guiding in the path of the will of God, protecting His people from their enemies, and in general executing the providence of God. The references make plain that this ministry is not occasional or exceptional but rather the common and continual ministry of God to His people. The revelation of the Person of the Son of God thus afforded is in complete harmony with the New Testament revelation. The testimony of Scripture has been so complete on this point that in general scholars who accept the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture have been almost of one voice that the Angel of Jehovah is the Christ of the Old Testament. Not only Christian theologians, but Jewish scholars as well have come to this conclusion.<sup>3</sup> It is at once a revelation of the Person and preincarnate work of Christ and an evidence for His pre-existence and deity.

*Other theophanies.* While fewer in number, other forms of theophany are afforded in the Old Testament. In Genesis 18:1-35, Jehovah appears in the form of a man, accompanied by two other men who were probably angels. In view of the revelation afforded in other theophanies, there can be little doubt that this theophany is also an appearance of Christ. Jacob's experience of wrestling with God (Gen 32:24-32) is identified in Hosea 12:4 as the time when Jacob "had power over the angel, and prevailed." The appearance of God to the elders of Israel is probably another theophany of Christ (Exod 24:9-11). The cloud of the Lord, the glory of the Lord (Exod 40:38) and the cloudy pillar (Exod 33:9-23) are all to be taken as appearances of Christ in the Old Testament, even though in somewhat different character than a formal theophany like the Angel of Jehovah. It is safe to assume that every visible manifestation of God in bodily form in the Old Testament is to be identified with the Lord Jesus Christ. The prince of the host of Jehovah (Josh 5:13-15), the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah of Ezekiel (Ezek 1:1-28), and other similar appearances are easiest explained as theophanies of Christ. Some passages must, however, remain in dispute, as the appearance of an angel to Daniel (Dan 10:1-21).<sup>4</sup> The number of theophanies which are without question furnish one of the major forms of Old Testament revelation of God. Their identification with the Son of God refutes at once the Arian heresy that Christ was a created being and the Socinian and Unitarian perversions of the Person of Christ. For anyone who will accept the Scriptures in their plain intent, there is a clear portrayal of Christ in these Old Testament theophanies.<sup>5</sup> salvation of God. Only by denying the accuracy of Scripture can any other view be supported. It is rather curious that the modernist after declaring as spurious or interpolated the portions of early Scripture which oppose the evolutionary theory then turns to what is left of the Scripture for evidence of his own view. In the doctrine of Old Testament salvation, if the Scriptures are accepted as infallible, the revelation of salvation is not a late development of prophetic writers but instead a primary and basic revelation of God to the first man and succeeding generations.

*The revelation of universal sin and condemnation.* In the account in Genesis 3 of the fall, nothing is made clearer to man than the fact that through his sin he had come under condemnation. This was manifest in hiding from God and in confessions to God. The need for salvation was patent. In the Garden of Eden began the two contradictory systems—the serpent's suggestion of the possibility of self-improvement and development of natural man, and the revelation of God of sin and depravity and the hopelessness of man's estate apart from God's salvation. Here is the fundamental conflict between Biblical Christianity and pagan humanism as reflected in human thought down to our day. As God plainly told Adam and Eve, the penalty of sin is death, both spiritual and physical. There was evident need of salvation, and Adam and Eve knew it.

*The revelation of a coming Savior.* It is a wonderful revelation of the mercy and love of God that in the Garden of Eden, before He pronounced judgment on Adam and Eve, God—it may have been the Son of God Himself—promised that the

seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15). Here was the ray of hope in the darkness of human sin and failure. God had a way of salvation. There can be no question that the reference to the seed of the woman is a specific reference to the Son of God. This is the point of Luke's genealogy. The coming Savior was to be the seed of the woman—human; and yet in the fact that He is not called the seed of man, we have the foreshadowing of the virgin birth. To Adam it was made very plain that his hope lay in this future child of the woman, that through this child salvation would come from God. God confirmed His mercy to Adam and Eve by driving them out of the Garden—a judgment for sin to be sure, but an act of mercy as well, lest they eat of the tree of life and live forever in bodies of sin.

*The revelation of the way of salvation.* It must remain for the most part a matter of speculation how much God revealed to Adam which is not recorded in the Scriptures. The extent of pre-Scripture revelation has been greatly underestimated. A study of Job, which was among the first books to be written and deals with a period long before Scripture, reveals a most advanced system of theology based on direct revelation of God. It is remarkable how extensive is the knowledge of theology proper, anthropology and hamartiology, soteriology, and even eschatology as contained in Job. We must believe that God did not leave the world in darkness on knowledge essential to the way of salvation.

In the immediate facts of the Genesis narrative of the lives of Adam and Eve and their children, there is a clear testimony to their knowledge of the way of salvation. Immediately after the account of the fall, the incident of the offerings of Cain and Abel serve to illustrate the extent of their knowledge. Cain's offering of a bloodless sacrifice is refused by God, and Cain is told that a sin offering lay at the door (literal rendering of *sin*, Gen 4:7). Cain is plainly told that the way of forgiveness is through offering a bloody sacrifice. Abel's offering of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof (Gen 4:4) was accepted. No doubt the offerings reflected the spiritual condition of the offerer, but the illuminating point is that God appeals to Cain on the basis of revelation previously given. Abel and Cain both knew that the sacrifice for sin should be a particular animal, a lamb; a particular lamb, the firstling; and a particular part of the lamb, the fat. Such knowledge could come only from revelation.

The question has often been discussed concerning the condition of salvation in the Old Testament. If the present offer of the grace of God is secured to those who believe in Christ, what was the specific condition of salvation in the Old Testament? The problem has assumed undue proportions as a result of the unwarranted zeal of scholars who emphasize the unity of God's plan without regard for Biblical dispensational distinctions. It is clear that Old Testament saints did not believe in Christ in the same way and with the same comprehension that believers with the New Testament do. In the nature of the case the issue of faith is to believe in the revelation given. On the other hand there are not two ways of salvation. All salvation of God stems from the Savior, the Son of God, and His work on the cross. It is also clear that the salvation of individual souls requires faith. Even a merciful and gracious God cannot save a soul who passed into eternity in unbelief. The two great essentials of salvation remain the same from the salvation of Adam to the last soul which God takes to Himself in the future. Faith is the condition and the death of Christ is the basis.

The chief difficulty, however, rests in the precise definition of these two elements. Faith in what? The Gospel of grace was given to Paul as new revelation. God does not hold the Old Testament saints to account for revelation given in the New Testament. Faith as a condition of salvation is obviously faith in the promise of God insofar as it is revealed. For Adam and Eve this was faith in the promise that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent—would bring salvation to fallen man and defeat the tempter. As the exact character and work of the Deliverer is only gradually unfolded in the Old Testament, faith took the form of trust in Jehovah Himself without necessarily specific knowledge of the way by which Jehovah was to provide an adequate salvation.

The remaining principal element is the relation of faith to the system of sacrifices immediately instituted under the patriarchal system from Adam to Moses and of faith to the Mosaic system which followed. In what sense were the sacrifices a necessary condition of salvation? Does this constitute a salvation by works?

Even the New Testament emphasizes, "Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (Jas 2:17, R.S.V.). In other words, mere belief which does not issue into works is not real faith at all. There is no fundamental antithesis between James two and Paul in Romans four. James is presenting the issue of whether a person has living faith. Paul is dealing with the issue of

justification before God. The principle involved is that salvation is by faith, but that faith if real will have certain manifestations. This same principle can be carried into the Old Testament.

Under the system of sacrifices, God provided an outward means of manifesting inward faith. The sacrifices in themselves could not save. An unbeliever who offered sacrifices was still lost. A believer who really trusted in Jehovah would, on the other hand, be sure to offer his sacrifices. The sacrifices while not work which was acceptable as a ground of salvation before God were nevertheless a work which demonstrated faith. Faith in the Old Testament therefore took a definite outward form of manifestation. In offering the sacrifice, the offerer was assured that he was performing an act of recognition of God as His Savior and in particular a recognition of the promise of the coming seed of the woman, the Son of God Himself. The institution of the Mosaic covenant did not fundamentally alter the way of salvation. It specified more particularly the way of sacrifice. It provided moreover a detailed rule of life and the obligation to obey as a condition for blessing in this life. Salvation was still a work of God for man, not a work of man for God.

*The work of the Son of God in salvation.* The unfolding of the plan of God in salvation after Adam is the story of progressive revelation. The mass of humanity moved away from the revelation given and was plunged in darkness and sin. Through succeeding generations a remnant continued to believe in God, to receive further light. Noah and his family were delivered from destruction and after the flood he immediately offered his sacrifices. Abraham “believed in Jehovah and he reckoned it to him for righteousness” (Gen 15:6). While Abraham’s justification is somewhat different than the Christian’s justification *in Christ* by baptism of the Spirit, he nevertheless was counted righteous before God because of faith in Jehovah and His promises regarding Abraham’s seed. Sarah is declared in the New Testament to have “considered him faithful who had promised” (Heb 11:11, R.S.V.). Moses is declared to have had a personal faith in Christ on the basis of which he forsook Egypt: “He considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt” (Heb 11:26, R.S.V.). The Psalmists are replete with ascriptions of trust in Jehovah for their salvation. It is often presented as taking refuge in Jehovah: “How precious is thy loving kindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge under the shadow of thy wings” (Ps 36:7). “O taste and see that Jehovah is good: Blessed is the man that taketh refuge in him” (Ps 34:8). Of particular interest is the passage in Psalms 2:12, “Blessed are they that take refuge in him.” The context indicates that the him is a specific reference to the Son. To the Son of God is attributed that same confidence and trust that is given to Jehovah.

The work of the Son of God in salvation was not only a matter of salvation from the guilt and condemnation of sin. In many cases the salvation of Jehovah is described in its present application—deliverance from ungodly and wicked men. Again the Psalmists can be taken as illustrative of this point: “The salvation of the righteous is of Jehovah; He is their stronghold in the time of trouble. And Jehovah helpeth them, and rescueth them: He rescueth them from the wicked, and saveth them, Because they have taken refuge in him” (Ps 37:39-40). The familiar twenty-third Psalm is an expression of this same reality in the experience of David. In declaring, “Jehovah is my shepherd” (Ps 23:1), David is declaring his confidence in the preincarnate Son of God, the Good Shepherd, to care for him as a shepherd cares for his sheep. David believes that the present mercies of God will be crowned by his dwelling “in the house of Jehovah for ever” (Ps 23:6).

The full story of salvation of the Son of God in the Old Testament is too large to be compressed into a limited discussion. Suffice it to say, the salvation provided through the Son of God was a complete salvation. It gave assurance and rest of heart to the believer. It transformed his life even though much of the enablement provided for the believer today was lacking. Salvation included forgiveness, justification as in the case of Abraham, deliverance from evil, and the full-orbed work of God in providence toward His own. The important fact which stands out above all others is that the Savior of the Old Testament is the Savior of the New. He was actively engaged in bringing salvation in its widest sense to those who trusted Him.

The full picture of the Son of God in His preincarnate state usually includes a discussion of Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament and the rich field of typology. Inasmuch as this properly presupposes the incarnation for its fulfillment, the plan of study is to include these two major features of Old Testament theology as an introduction to study of the incarnate Son of God which will immediately follow.

Dallas, Texas

<sup>1</sup> The words are also used in Greek mythology of appearances of God.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April-June, 1947, pp. 165-168.

<sup>3</sup> A. C. Gaebelein in his *The Angels of God*, p. 20, makes the following statement: “it is noteworthy and of great interest that the ancient Jews in their traditions regarded the Angel of the Lord, in every instance, not as an ordinary angel, but as the only mediator between God and the world, the author of all revelations, to whom they gave the name *Metatron*.” Richard Watson in his *Theological Institutes* (New York: Nelson & Philipps, 1850, 29th edition), I, 501, also affirms the support of ancient Jews to this interpretation.

<sup>4</sup> H. A. Ironside views this passage as a reference to an angel, based on the angel’s need of the help of Michael. William Kelly considers it a theophany. Cf. *Lectures on Daniel*, by H. A. Ironside, pp. 174-175.

<sup>5</sup> The testimony of the early Fathers on the theophanies of Christ in the Old Testament is full and conclusive. Justin Martyr declared: “*Our Christ* conversed with Moses out of the bush, in the appearance of fire. And Moses received great strength from Christ, who spake to him in the appearance of fire.” Irenaeus wrote: “The Scripture is full of the Son of God’s appearing: sometimes to talk and eat with Abraham, at other times to instruct Noah about the measures of the ark; at another time to seek Adam; at another time to bring down judgment upon Sodom; then again, to direct Jacob in the way; and again, to converse with Moses out of the bush.” Tertullian stated, “It was *the Son* who judged men from the beginning, destroying that lofty tower, and confounding their languages, punishing the whole world with a flood of waters, and raining fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, *the Lord* pouring it down *from the Lord*: for he always descended to hold converse with men, from Adam even to the patriarchs and prophets, in visions, in dreams, in mirrors, in dark sentences, always preparing his way from the beginning: neither was it possible, that God who conversed with men upon earth, could be any other than *that Word* which was to be made flesh.” Quotations from Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes*, I, 501,502. Watson also cites Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Theophilus of Antioch, the synod of Antioch, Cyprian, Hilary, St. Basil, and others as holding the same viewpoint of theophanies of Christ in the Old Testament.

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# Series in Christology

by John F. Walvoord

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## Chapter 5

### Part 1: The Incarnation of the Son of God

[Author's note: This article begins the study of the Son of God in the incarnate state with the consideration of the contribution of Messianic prophecy. Later articles will include a survey of the types of Christ in the Old Testament, the consideration of the incarnation itself, and a discussion of the person of the incarnate Son of God.]

#### Introduction

The incarnation of the Son of God is one of the important lines of revelation in both the Old and New Testaments. The whole plan of the ages has the incarnation as its central and most important aspect. The incarnation is at once the revelation of God, the revelation of man, and the revelation of salvation in the plan of God, the scope of the revelation being so vast that any major aspect of it becomes itself an extensive field of study.

The plan of consideration here for the most part waives the discussion of critical schools of interpretation in favor of a more simple, Biblical approach. The apologetic for the doctrines considered hangs on the doctrine of the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures. Others have dealt with these problems.<sup>1</sup> Assuming the Bible to be an accurate revelation in this field of doctrine as in others, the problem to be considered is the content and significance of Biblical teaching on the incarnation. As a background for the study of the incarnation itself, the field of Messianic prophecy and typology will first be investigated.

#### I. Messianic Prophecy

The Old Testament anticipations of the incarnation of the Son of God are commonly summed in the word *Messiah*. The English word is derived from the Greek Μεσσι•ας (Messias) which is a transliteration of the Aramaic form of the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ. The equivalent in the New Testament is Χριστο•ς or *Christ*. In the Old Testament the adjective form of the Hebrew is used for priests (Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:22) and the noun form used for kings (Saul, 1 Sam 24:6, 10; David, 2 Sam 19:21; 23:1; Zedekiah, Lam 4:20). The term *Messiah* was used as a designation of the hope of the coming Savior and Deliverer by Daniel (cf. Dan 9:25, 26) and was used commonly by the Jews at the time of the incarnation to express this general idea (John 1:41; 4:25).

The field of Messianic prophecy is extensive, but certain features stand out. There are two principal types of Messianic prophecy. (1) Messianic prophecy was often general, i.e., in language only a Messiah could fulfill. An illustration of this is afforded in 1 Samuel 2:35, "I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in my heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever" (A.R.V.). The immediate fulfillment of the prophecy has Samuel in view, but the larger view anticipates the coming of the Messiah. (2) In many other passages the Messiah is identified by some specific term, and these can be called personal. In Isaiah 7:14, for instance, the Messiah is identified by the unusual term *Immanuel*, or *God with us*. The passage deals only and specifically with the Messiah. Both types of Messianic prophecy play an important part in the whole doctrine.

Messianic prophecy has its own peculiar characteristics which are shared only in part with other forms of prophetic revelation. (1) The language of Messianic prophecy is often purposely obscure. Only true believers in God who are taught

by the Holy Spirit will be able to discern some passages as belonging to genuine Messianic prediction. It is necessary to have the entire content of the Scriptures in mind in interpreting such passages.

(2) Predictions regarding the Messiah are often given in figurative language. It does not necessarily follow that the meaning is uncertain, but the passages which are of this character require interpretation. When the Scripture speaks of “a shoot out of the stock of Jesse and a branch out of his roots” (Isa 11:1, A.R.V.), it clearly refers to the Messiah, but it is in figurative language.

(3) In Messianic prediction the future is often regarded as past or present. The great prophecies of Isaiah 53, for instance, are largely in the past tense. The Hebrew frequently uses the perfect for prophecy. As A. B. Davidson points out, “This usage is very common in the elevated language of the Prophets, whose faith and imagination so vividly project before them the event or scene which they predict that it appears already realized. It is part of the purpose of God, and therefore, to the clear eyes of the prophet, already as good as accomplished (*prophetic perfect*).”<sup>2</sup> The use of the perfect tense in the Old Testament signifies, then, that the event is certain of completion, not that it is past. Messianic prediction in the past tense is in fact an emphatic future.

(4) Messianic prediction like many other forms of prophecy is often seen horizontally rather than vertically. In other words, while the order of prophetic events is generally revealed in Scripture, prophecy does not necessarily include all the intermediate steps between the great events in view. The great mountain peaks of prophecy are revealed without consideration of the expanse of valleys between the peaks. Old Testament prophecy often leaps from the sufferings of Christ to His glory without consideration of the time which elapses between these aspects. It is not unusual for great periods of time to separate prophecies closely related. An illustration of this is afforded in the quotation by Christ of Isaiah 61:1-2 in Luke 4:18-19. The Isaiah passage links the first and second comings of Christ without any indication of an intervening period of time. Christ in His quotation includes the aspects relating to His first coming but stops abruptly without including the reference to “the day of vengeance of our God” which refers to the second coming. The interpretation of Messianic prophecy, accordingly, has its own peculiar problems which are, however, not insuperable, but which require careful consideration and an understanding of the spiritual truth involved.

## **The Messianic Line: His Lineage**

A well-defined line of prediction is provided in the Old Testament predictions concerning the coming of the Savior. The line begins with Adam and Eve and is traced through a constantly narrowing focus until all the important factors are revealed. The coming Savior will be the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15); in the line of Seth (Gen 4:25); through Noah (Gen 6-9); a descendant of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3). Subsequent revelation traces the lineage through Isaac (Gen 17:19), Jacob (Gen 28:14), Judah (Gen 49:10), through Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and David (2 Sam 7:12-13). From here on appeal is necessary to the New Testament genealogies of Matthew 1:2-16 and Luke 3:23-38.

The story of the lineage of the coming Savior is on the one hand a demonstration of the sovereign purpose and certainty of God’s will. On the other hand, the corrupting work of Satan is everywhere present throughout the history of the lineage of Christ. Satan begins corrupting the newly created race by leading Adam and Eve into temptation and the fall (Gen 3:6). To fallen Adam and Eve God gave the protevangelium, the first indication of His plan of giving His Son as the Savior. The seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15). Satan’s continued work is manifest in the murder of Abel and the corruption by that act of Cain (Gen 4:8). God raises up a new seed in the birth of Seth (Gen 4:25).

The corruption of the human race and with it the line of the Messiah continues until the time of Noah. Here in the destruction of all except Noah’s family God purifies the race and preserves the godly seed (Gen 6-9). The subsequent defection of the race soon follows and God begins again in the selection of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3) through whom His purpose in regard to the Messiah is continued. The book of Genesis traces the narrowing line through Abraham’s descendants Isaac (Gen 17:19), Jacob (Gen 28:14), and Judah (Gen 49:10). The continued Satanic opposition to the godly line is manifest in the delayed birth of Isaac, the disinterest of Esau and the selection of Jacob in his place, and in the immorality that corrupted Judah. In sovereign grace, God nevertheless declares, “The sceptre shall not depart from

Judah...” (Gen 49:10). The prophecy of Jacob, while in language which is somewhat obscure, is nevertheless clear in its main import—the Messiah will come through Judah.

The story of Ruth and Boaz is another illustration of sovereign design in the lineage of the Messiah. With evident divine preparation, the line of David the King is linked with Judah. In few books of the Bible is the doctrine of providence illustrated more abundantly than in the book of Ruth.

The Old Testament picture of the lineage from David to Christ is by no means complete. This deficiency is more than met by the New Testament genealogies. Of particular interest are the dual lines of Joseph and Mary which connect with David. The genealogies are best explained by referring the genealogy of Matthew to Joseph and the genealogy of Luke to Mary. Thus interpreted, Joseph is seen to descend from David through Solomon and the line of the kings of Judah. Mary is found in the line from David through David’s son Nathan. This detail is a striking fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. To David God had promised both the continuance of his seed and his throne forever (2 Sam 7:12-16). To Solomon, David’s son, God promised that his throne and kingdom would continue forever, but the record is silent in the prediction concerning Solomon’s seed. This is given further light in the apostasy of the kings of Judah. Jehoiakim, king of Judah, is solemnly cursed because of his sin and the Scriptures declare: “He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity...” (Jer 36:30-31). Coniah, his son (also known as Jehoiachin and Jeconiah), was carried off captive when Jerusalem fell and the line of the kings of Judah ends in him (cf. Jer 22:30). The problem is immediately apparent: How can God fulfill His promise to David if this line is cut off? The answer is that the kingly line of the Messiah is preserved through Nathan rather than through Solomon and his descendants. Hence, in the New Testament the legal right to the throne of David is passed through Solomon and Jehoiakim to Joseph and to Joseph’s legal son Christ. The physical seed, however, is passed through Nathan and Mary to Christ. Thus the promises to both David and Solomon are literally fulfilled in and through Jesus Christ. It is at once a striking illustration of the accuracy of the prophetic Word, God anticipating the defection of the kings of Judah and their curse, and at the same time a confirmation of the virgin birth. If Jesus had been the physical son of Joseph, He would have been disqualified by the curse upon Jehoiakim.

The records of Scripture provide, then, an accurate and indisputable record of the qualifications of Christ as the inheritor of the promises to David. All conservative scholars are agreed that Christ fulfills the anticipation of these prophecies, and even unbelieving Jews anticipate that the coming Messiah will fulfill these prophecies. The genealogies of the Jews were, of course, destroyed in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The New Testament records are the only ones extant which provide authentic genealogies to identify the Messiah.

## **Prophecies of the Birth of Christ**

The prophecies in regard to the birth of Jesus Christ are among the more transparent of the Old Testament predictions. The prophecies regarding the lineage of the predicted Savior in themselves anticipated His birth. The place of His birth was plainly revealed in Micah 5:2, and the passage is so clear that it was commonly known that Bethlehem was destined to be the birthplace of the Messiah. The scribes and the chief priests quickly informed Herod of this fact when the Magi came for direction to the King of the Jews.

Other aspects of the birth of Christ are also revealed in the Old Testament. Isaiah prophesied that His birth would be a sign: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa 7:14). The unwarranted attack of liberal theologians on this passage is in itself a confession of its important contribution. Here both the human aspect of the incarnation, conception and birth, and the divine are clearly revealed —”Immanuel” or God with us.

The date of birth of the coming Messiah seems also to be revealed within certain limits. According to Genesis 49:10, the Messiah was to come before the destruction of the Jewish government. This would seem to be identified with the destruction of Jerusalem at 70 A.D. and the complete end of all Jewish rule in Palestine for many centuries. The prophecies of Daniel 9:25 that sixty-nine weeks of seven years each would elapse before the Messiah should be cut off have been shown to

culminate in the death of Christ. While the interpretation of the Daniel passage has occasioned much dispute, it is agreed by most scholars that a literal interpretation would bring us to the approximate time of the lifetime of Jesus Christ. While this revelation in the Old Testament apparently was not realized by the scholars before Christ, it is significant that the revelation was given and the fulfillment has been literal. There was in any case a widespread expectation among the generation in which Christ was born that the Messiah would come soon.

The prophecies of the Old Testament, then, outline with precision the main elements involved in His birth: the place, time, lineage, and supernatural character of His conception and birth.

## Prophecies concerning the Person of Christ

In the nature of the Old Testament predictions, certain conclusions can be drawn relative to the Person of Christ. In a word, there is an entirely adequate testimony concerning both His humanity and His deity. The revelation is not with the same clarity or force as the presentation in the New Testament, but it is nevertheless clear in its main elements.

The humanity of the coming Savior is involved in practically all the Messianic passages. From Genesis 3:15, where the Messiah is described as the seed of the woman, to the predictions of the later Old Testament prophets, the Messiah is declared to be human. The testimony concerning His lineage, His connection with Israel, His predicted birth in Bethlehem, and His title as a son leave no room to doubt the intention of the revelation of His humanity. It was the uniform expectation of the Jews that the coming Deliverer would be a man, born of a Jewish mother.

The remarkable aspect of the predictions, however, is the recurring testimony to His deity. According to Isaiah 7:14, He was to be born of a virgin. The clear intent is to state that He was to be supernaturally conceived without a human father. He is declared in the same passage to be worthy of the title, "Immanuel"—God with us. In Isaiah 9:6-7, the child born and the son given is described as "Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." The predictions of His birth, in Micah 5:2, go on to describe the child to be born as one "whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." The expression is the strongest possible statement of His eternal existence before His birth. The combined testimony of these passages as well as many others leave no doubt that the Messiah when He came was to be both God and man in one person.

Dallas, Texas

(To be continued in the April-June Number, 1948)

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<sup>1</sup> The work of B. B. Warfield, *Christology and Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1929), in particular the first chapter on *The Divine Messiah in the Old Testament*, is an able résumé of the problems involved in higher criticism as bearing on Christology.

<sup>2</sup> *An Introductory Hebrew Grammar* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930), pp. 156-157.

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# Series in Christology

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## Chapter 6

### Part 2: The Incarnation of the Son of God

[Author's note: This article continues the study of the Son of God in His incarnate state as presented in Messianic prophecy.]

{Editor's note: The footnote in the original printed edition was numbered 3, but in this electronic edition is numbered 1.}

### Prophecies concerning the Life of Christ

A remarkable foreview of the life of Christ is afforded in many Messianic prophecies which portray the character of His life. His important public ministry was to be preceded by a messenger, "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts" (A.R.V., Mal 3:1). Previously Isaiah had spoken of the "voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah" (A.R.V., Isa 40:3). There can be no doubt that the reference in both cases is to John the Baptist (cf. Matt 3:3; 11:10 ; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:27), and all the Gospels record the fulfillment of these prophecies.

The coming Messiah was in His life to fulfill the offices of prophet, priest, and king. Moses had predicted the coming of such a prophet (Deut 18:15-18). and the New Testament points specifically to its fulfillment in Christ (John 1:21; 4:29 ; 5:46 ; 6:14 ; 8:28 ; 14:24 ; Acts 3:20-23). The priesthood of Christ was anticipated in the whole priestly system given by revelation, first the patriarchal and later the Levitical orders. The prophecy given in 1 Samuel 2:35 can be fulfilled completely only by Christ, even if partially fulfilled by Samuel. The prediction of Psalm 110:4, quoted in Hebrews 5:6, and discussed at length in Hebrews, is clearly fulfilled in Christ. Zechariah combines the priestly and kingly offices in his prophecy, "He shall be a priest upon his throne" (Zech 6:13). The context indicates that the reference is to Christ. the same. The entire eleventh chapter of Isaiah is a picture of the rule of the King.

Jeremiah repeats these same major aspects of the future kingship of the Messiah: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness" (A.R.V., Jer 23:5, 6). The prophecy is turned to its particular effect on Israel. Zechariah speaks of the king coming as the Savior and Deliverer of His people: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass" (A.R.V., Zech 9:9). Here we have Christ in His character as King in His first coming, in contrast to previous passages quoted which referred to the kingdom after the second advent. The Zechariah passage has its fulfillment in the New Testament (Matt 21:4-9; Mark 11:9, 10; Luke 19:37-38). The Old Testament foreview of Christ as King includes, then, both His first advent and the kingdom to follow the second advent.

That the Messiah was to be a Savior and Deliverer had been anticipated in many Old Testament passages beginning with the protevangelium of Genesis 3:15. Even Job, who lived before the day of written Scripture, knew of the hope of a coming Redeemer (Job 19:25). Almost all the passages which are Messianic speak of it. The classic passage predicting the saving work of Christ is, of course, Isaiah 53.

One of the important lines of prediction concerning the coming Messiah is embraced in the figure of Christ as a corner stone and foundation. The principal Old Testament passage is found in Isaiah 28:14-18. The numerous passages each contribute something to the total revelation (Gen 49:24; 1 Kgs 7:10-11; Ps 118:22; Isa 8:14; Zech 4:7. Cf. New Testament passages, Acts 4:11; Rom 9:33; 11:11 ; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:6-8). The thought in these passages is that Christ will bring security to Israel.

Considerable attention is given in the Old Testament to the Messiah as the Servant of Jehovah. Important passages dealing with this line of truth are found in Isaiah 42:1-7; 49:1-7 ; 52:13-53:12 . The New Testament alludes to these predictions in regard to the Messiah frequently (Matt 8:17; 12:17-21 ; Luke 22:37; John 12:38; Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30 ; 8:32 ; Rom 10:13; 15:21 ; 1 Pet 2:22-24). The term *Servant of Jehovah* as found in the Old Testament sometimes has reference to Israel, sometimes to the obedient remnant of Israel, sometimes specifically to the Messiah, and in Isaiah 37:35 refers to David. The principal idea in these predictions is that of presenting Christ as the obedient servant, who through His sufferings and death redeems His people.

In connection with the prophecies of the coming Messianic kingdom, it is revealed that the Messiah will perform many great miracles. The testimony to this is not always related specifically to the Messiah, but is given as a description of the period. Hence in Isaiah 35:5-6, it is written, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." While the immediate context deals with the Messianic kingdom, it is at once a description of the credentials of the Messiah. Christ called attention to the significance of His miraculous works as a testimony to Himself (John 5:36).

Taken as a whole, the Old Testament provides a remarkable picture of the coming Messiah. He is to be preceded by a messenger, to be a Savior and Deliverer when He comes, to execute the offices of prophet, priest, and king, to be a corner stone and foundation, to fulfill the expectation of an obedient servant of Jehovah who would redeem His people, and one whose life should be filled with good and miraculous works. His works and teachings were to manifest the power of the Spirit of Jehovah (Isa 11:2-3).

## **Prophecies concerning the Death of Christ**

The Old Testament foreview of the death of Christ is given principally in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, though many other passages contribute to the doctrine. Isaiah 53, presenting the suffering of the servant of Jehovah, gives most of the major details of the death of Christ. He is to be brutally beaten (Isa 52:14), "wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities" (Isa 53:5); His sufferings provide peace and healing (Isa 53:5). He is to be silent before His persecutors as a lamb led to the slaughter (Isa 53:7). His soul will be an offering for sin (Isa 53:10). He will die with the wicked, but will be buried with the rich (Isa 53:9). His sufferings arise not from His own sin, for "he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth" (A.R.V., Isa 53:9). To say the least, we have in Isaiah an accurate and detailed account of the sufferings and death of Christ together with a theological reason for His death—He was dying for the sins of others, as a satisfaction to God. Even a casual examination of the New Testament record reveals a fulfillment of all the details of this prophecy.

While on the cross, Christ Himself quoted from Psalm 22, thereby calling attention to the predictions afforded in this Psalm. The Messiah is to be forsaken of God (Ps 22:1), ridiculed and taunted (Ps 22:6-8); to suffer unspeakable agony (Ps 22:14-16); His bones were to be pulled out of joint (Ps 22:14); He was to suffer thirst (Ps 22:15); His hands and feet were to be pierced—an anticipation of His crucifixion (Ps 22:16); His garments were to be divided with the exception of His vesture, for which they would cast lots (Ps 22:18); He was to be brought into death (Ps 22:15). This Psalm accordingly presents a graphic picture of the sufferings of Christ on the cross fulfilled in every detail by the events recorded in the Gospels. that it refers specifically to the Son of God. Psalm 72, which affords a general view of the coming kingdom, closes with a benediction, "And blessed be his glorious name for ever; And let the whole earth be filled with his glory" (A.R.V.). Isaiah predicts, "In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious" (A.R.V., Isa 4:2). The reference to the "branch" seems clearly a reference to Christ. Isaiah asks the question, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength?" (A.R.V., Isa 63:1). The context makes

the reference to the Messiah evident. Daniel gives a comprehensive picture: “And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (A.R.V., Dan 7:14).

These numerous references to the glory of the Messiah in contrast to His sufferings gave occasion to Peter’s mention of this problem: “The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory” (R.S.V., 1 Pet 1:10). In other words, the Old Testament prophets themselves while recognizing the dual prophecies of suffering and glory of the Messiah were not able to harmonize this apparent contradiction. The testimony of the Old Testament is, therefore, abundantly clear on this aspect of Messianic prophecy.

The New Testament confirms this interpretation,. Christ at His ascension returned to glory. His glorious present session in heaven is mentioned often in Scripture (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Heb 4:14; 9:24 ; 1 Pet 3:22). From this present glorious state He will return for the church (John 14:1-3; 1 Cor 15:51-52; 1 Thess 4:13-18). After the church is taken up to glory, the church will be judged by Christ (1 Cor 3:12-15; 9:16-27 ; 2 Cor 5:8-10; Rev 3:11). The glorious return of Christ follows (Matt 26:64; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:11). After the reign on earth the eternal state is ushered in (1 Cor 15:24-28). From the moment of the ascension, however, Christ is in His glorious estate and all His works and appearances are in keeping with His glory. The New Testament adds many of the details to the outline of prophecy, but the fact of His glory is as well attested by the Old Testament.

The incarnation of Christ is attended by all the important revelation of these Old Testament Messianic prophecies. The incarnation has in its essential character the fulfillment of the revealed plan of God. With the Old Testament background in view, the incarnation assumes its rightful place of central importance in the outworking of the sovereign plan of God.

Dallas, Texas

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# Series in Christology

by John F. Walvoord

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## Chapter 7

### Part 3: The Incarnation of the Son of God

{Editor's note: Footnotes in the original printed edition were numbered 4-11, but in this electronic edition are numbered 1-8 respectively.}

## II. Christological Typology

Latent in the Scriptures of the Old Testament is a rich treasury of Christological truth in the form of Biblical types. Typology has always suffered certain disabilities and unbelief which other branches of theological instruction have been spared. For this reason and others it has been largely neglected, and that unjustly, in theological discussion. As Patrick Fairbairn states in opening his classic work on the subject, "The Typology of Scripture has been one of the most neglected departments of theological science. It has never altogether escaped from the region of doubt and uncertainty; and some still regard it as a field incapable, from its very nature, of being satisfactorily explored, or cultivated so as to yield any sure and appreciable results."<sup>1</sup>

The difficulty has been that typology by its nature is more subject to personal opinion of the interpreter than ordinary exegesis. It is often confused with allegorical interpretation and is not as subject to the corroborating teachings of other Scripture. Typology is primarily concerned with application of an historical fact as an illustration of a spiritual truth. As Webster puts it, a type is "a figure or representation of something to come."<sup>2</sup> It is therefore prophetic by its character, and we may expect a considerable contribution from it to the doctrine of Christ. A study of Christological typology includes about fifty important types of Christ—about one half of the recognized total in the entire field of typology.<sup>3</sup>

In the New Testament two Greek words are used to express the thought of a type:  $\tau\upsilon\pi\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\upsilon\pi\omicron\delta\epsilon\iota\gamma\mu\alpha$ . As Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer has stated: " $\tau\upsilon\pi\omicron\varsigma$  means an imprint which may serve as a mold or pattern, and that which is typical in the Old Testament is a mold or pattern of that which is antitypical in the New Testament. The root  $\tau\upsilon\pi\omicron\varsigma$  is translated by five English words ('ensample,' 1 Cor 10:11; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:7; 2 Thess 3:9; 1 Pet 5:3; 'example,' 1 Tim 4:12; Heb 8:5; 'figure,' Acts 7:43; Rom 5:14; 'pattern,' Titus 2:7; 'print of the nails,' John 20:25).  $\delta\epsilon\iota\gamma\mu\alpha$  means a 'specimen' or 'example,' and when combined with  $\upsilon\pi\omicron$  indicates that which is shown plainly under the eyes of men.  $\&\Upsilon\pi\omicron\delta\epsilon\iota\gamma\mu\alpha$  is translated by two English words ('example,' John 13:15; Heb 4:11; 8:5; James 5:10; and 'pattern,' Heb 9:23)."<sup>4</sup> Typology as a branch of Biblical revelation is well established in the Scriptures themselves as evidenced by the frequent use made of it in the New Testament. The problem to be considered here is not the larger discussion of typology as a whole, but its contribution to Christology.

As many writers have pointed out, typology is concerned with (1) typical persons; (2) typical events; (3) typical things; (4) typical institutions; and (5) typical ceremonies.<sup>5</sup> It is manifestly impossible to gather into a brief discussion the wealth of revelation afforded in the types which concern Christ in the Old Testament, but rather than omit this important contribution, an attempt will be made to summarize the important types and their prophetic light.

## Typical Persons

*Aaron.* The Scriptures, particularly Hebrews, give a firm basis for believing that Aaron is a true type of Christ. As a priest, Aaron was appointed to his sacred office (Heb 5:4) as was Christ to His priesthood (Heb 5:5-6). Aaron was appointed to minister in the earthly sphere as Christ was appointed to the heavenly (Heb 8:1-5). Aaron administered the old Mosaic covenant while Christ ministered the new covenant (Heb 8:6). Aaron was appointed to offer sacrifices daily while Christ offered Himself once for all (Heb 7:27). The Aaronic type reveals Christ in His true humanity and in His priestly work. As Aaron remained a part of Israel even as he served as mediator, so Christ remains genuinely human, on earth knowing weakness, certain limitations, suffering, and struggle, as did Aaron, and even in heaven continues in His true humanity. While Hebrews brings out the contrasts between Aaron and Christ, there is obviously a typical foreshadowing of Christ in the Aaronic priesthood in the person of Aaron. The intercession of Aaron is a picture of the intercession of Christ.

*Abel.* In this type we have Christ presented as the true Shepherd who made an acceptable bloody sacrifice to God in obedience to the command of God. As Abel was slain by Cain, representing the world, so Christ was slain. As Abel's offering was accepted by God, so Christ in His offering is accepted. The fact that Abel's offering was accepted because offered by faith (Heb 11:4) does not take away its essential character. It was because Abel believed that revelation concerning sacrifices that he offered his lamb in contrast to Cain's bloodless offering. He is therefore a type of Christ in life as Shepherd, in his offering, and in his death.

*Adam.* One of the important types recognized by Scripture is that of Adam. Adam is the head of the old creation as Christ is the head of the new creation. This is plainly inferred in Romans 5:14, "Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come" (R.S.V.). Both Adam and Christ entered the world through a special act of God. Both entered the world sinless; both acted on behalf of those whom God considered in them representatively. The sin of Adam is contrasted to the act of obedience of Christ. The Scripture discussion of the subject leaves no room for doubt on the main elements of this type (Rom 5:12-21). The very terms *first Adam* and *last Adam* and similar expressions are applied respectively to Adam and Christ (1 Cor 15:45-47). Adam as the husband of Eve is also a type as the bridegroom in relation to the church as the bride.

*Benjamin.* In the contrast of the two names of Benjamin there was foreshadowed the two aspects of the Person of Christ—His sufferings and the glory to follow. With her dying breath, Rachel named her new-born son, Ben-oni, meaning, *son of sorrow*. Jacob called him, however, Benjamin, meaning, *son of my right hand*. As Ben-oni, Christ was the son of sorrow to his mother (Luke 2:35) and the one who knew suffering as the man of sorrows and death. As Benjamin, Christ is "the son of my right hand" to God the Father, victorious in the battle with sin as Benjamin was victorious as the warrior tribe. While the type is without express New Testament authority, it seems a clear prophetic picture of Christ.

*David.* The historic and prophetic connection between David and Christ is commonly recognized, but the typical significance of David is often overlooked. David is a type of Christ as the one who is first shepherd, then king. David experienced the call of God, rejection by his brethren, was in constant danger of his life because he was anointed king, and during the years of his rejection took a Gentile wife, typical of the church. Later he ruled over Israel in complete power and sovereignty. It is not difficult to see the typical significance of these events, as well as many minor incidents in his life as foreshadowings of Christ.

*Isaac.* In the New Testament Isaac is used as a type of the church, which is composed of the spiritual children of Abraham (Gal 4:28) and as a type of the new nature which is born of the Spirit in contrast to the old nature typified by Ishmael (Gal 4:29). It is interesting to note that Isaac is taken to be a type of two distinct things in two successive verses of the New Testament.

More prominent in the person of Isaac are typical truths relating to Christ which are not mentioned in the New Testament. Isaac was a type of Christ in many particulars. The births of Isaac and of Christ were genuinely miraculous. Both are involved in the promised deliverance first announced to Eve. Their births were anticipated and involved in the promises of God long before fulfillment. Both are the beloved of their fathers and both are declared to be only-begotten (John 3:16; Heb 11:17) although Ishmael was born before Isaac and all believers in Christ call God their Father. In Genesis twenty-two in the sacrifice of Isaac on Moriah we have a foreshadowing of the death of Christ which is too clear a picture to gainsay. In the

type, Isaac is saved at the last moment and a substitute is provided. In the antitype, just as truly offered by the Father, there could be no substitute. Truly, Isaac lived because Christ died. In the beautiful story of Genesis twenty-four the securing of the bride for Isaac is again a prophetic picture, in type, of the Holy Spirit securing a bride for Christ, and complete in all its details.<sup>6</sup> The entire life of Isaac affords a more complete typical picture of the Person and work of Christ than any previous character in Scripture.<sup>7</sup>

*Joseph.* While the New Testament nowhere authorizes the interpretation that Joseph is a type of Christ, the numerous factors of his life which point to this conclusion indicate in fact that Joseph is the most complete type of Christ in the Old Testament. Both Joseph and Christ were born by special intervention of God (Gen 30:22-24; Luke 1:35). Both were objects of special love by their fathers (Gen 37:3; Matt 3:17; John 3:35); both were hated by brethren (Gen 37:4; John 15:24-25); both were rejected as rulers over their brethren (Gen 37:8; Matt 21:37-39; John 15:24-25); both were robbed of their robes (Gen 37:23; Matt 27:35); both were conspired against and placed in the pit of death (Gen 37:18, 24; Matt 26:3-4; 27:35-37); both were sold for silver (Gen 37:28; Matt 26:14-15); both became servants (Gen 39:4; Phil 2:7); both were condemned though innocent (Gen 39:11-20; Isa 53:9; Matt 27:19, 24). As Joseph is a type of Christ in humiliation, so is he also in exaltation. Both were raised from humiliation to glory by the power of God. Even Pharaoh saw in Joseph one in whom was the Spirit of God (Gen 41:38), and Christ is manifested in resurrection power as the very Son of God. Both during the time of exaltation but continued rejection by brethren take a Gentile bride and were a blessing to Gentiles (Gen 41:1-45; Acts 15:14; Rom 11:11-12; Eph 5:25-32). After the time of Gentile blessing begins to wane, both were received finally by their brethren and recognized as a savior and deliverer (Gen 45:1-15; Rom 11:1-26). Both exalt their brethren to places of honor and safety (Gen 45:16-18; Isa 65:17-25). It is an unmistakable evidence of the providence of God that Joseph should have been guided through such unusual experiences which were not only tokens of God's care over him but profound truths typical of the Person and work of Christ.

*Joshua.* Attention is directed to Joshua first on account of his name, which means, *Jehovah saves*. It is the Old Testament equivalent of the Greek name *Jesus*. As a type of Christ, Joshua is significant first because he is the successor of Moses just as Christ succeeded Moses and the law (John 1:17; Rom 8:2-4; Heb 7:18-19; Gal 3:23-25). Joshua like Christ won a victory where Moses had failed (Rom 8:3-4). In the time of conflict and defeat both Joshua and Christ interceded for their own (Josh 7:5-9; Luke 22:32; 1 John 2:1). The portions of Israel were allotted by Joshua even as Christ gives gifts and rewards to His own (Josh 13ff). While not a prominent type of Christ, it adds its own truth to the whole.

*Kinsman-Redeemer.* Throughout the Old Testament there is constant reference to the **•••** or kinsman-redeemer. It is evident that these instances are typical foreshadowings of Christ as our Redeemer. The general law of redemption in the Old Testament is clear. The redeemer had to be a kinsman, one related to the person or inheritance to be redeemed (Lev 25:48-49; Ruth 3:12-13; Heb 2:14-15). Christ fulfilled this by becoming man and by having the sins of the world imputed to Him. The Old Testament redeemer had to be able to redeem even as Christ in the New Testament (Ruth 4:4-6; John 10:11, 18; 1 Pet 1:18). The redemption is accomplished by the payment of the price (Lev 25:27; Rom 3:24-26; 1 Pet 1:18-19; Gal 3:13). Latent in the entire Old Testament order of redemption is the prophetic picture of Christ who would come to redeem through the sacrifice of Himself. The consummation of His redemption yet awaits the saints both in earth and in heaven.

*Melchizedek.* The brief account given of the meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek in Genesis fourteen provides the background for this type of Christ. In the account Melchizedek as king of Salem brings forth bread and wine as the priest of the most high God and blesses Abram after his return from the conquest of the kings. The Scriptures record that Abram gave to Melchizedek tithes of all. Later in Psalm 110:4, it is predicted that Christ should be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. These two passages are the occasion for the discussion in Hebrews 5-7 in which Christ is declared a priest according to the prophecy of the Psalm. Combining the various elements presented in these passages, it becomes clear upon Scriptural warrant that Melchizedek is a type of Christ. His name is significant. As Dr. Isaac Brubacher has written: "The name Melchisedek is a composite word derived from two Hebrew words, **•••** meaning, king; and **••••** meaning, righteous. The two words combined with **•••** of possession form **••••••••** which means, my king is righteous. The narrative further tells us that he was king of Salem. The word Salem is derived from the Hebrew word **•••** which means, peace."<sup>8</sup> Hence in Melchizedek we have a type of Christ as the righteous King-Priest, who is king of Salem—meaning, *king of peace*. As one who brings forth bread and wine some have suggested that the type refers particularly to the resurrected Christ. In the New

Testament Melchizedek is interpreted as proving the eternity of the priesthood of Christ and its superiority to the Levitical priesthood, based on the argument that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham his forefather (cf. Heb 5:6, 10; 6:20 ; 7:17, 21 ).

*Moses.* As one of the great prophets and leaders of the Old Testament, it is not surprising that Moses should also be a type of Christ. Moses predicted to the children of Israel on the basis of the revelation given to him by Jehovah that a prophet would come like unto himself to whom they should give ear (Deut 18:15-19). The typology of Moses is, however, based primarily on the evident significance of events in his life foreshadowing the coming of Christ. Like Christ, Moses as a child was in danger of death, being born in a period during which Israel was under oppression. By sovereign choice of God, both were chosen to be saviors and deliverers (Exod 3:7-10; Acts 7:25). Both are rejected by their brethren (Exod 2:11-15; John 1:11; Acts 7:23-28; 18:5-6 ). Both during the period of rejection minister to Gentiles and secure a Gentile bride, typical of the church (Exod 2:16; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-32). Moses after the period of separation is concluded returned to deliver Israel even as Christ is predicted to return to deliver Israel. Both are received by Israel at their second comings (Exod 4:19-31; Rom 11:24-26; Acts 15:14-17). Like Christ Moses is prophet (Num 34:1, 2; John 12:29; Matt 13:57; 21:11 ; Acts 3:22-23); priest as advocate (Exod 32:31-35; 1 John 2:1-2) and intercessor (Exod 17:1-6; Heb 7:25); and king or ruler (Deut 33:4, 5; John 1:49). Like Christ, Moses had to die before the children of Israel could enter the land, typical of a Christian's possessions. As in the lives of Isaac and Joseph, we find in Moses an outstanding illustration of typical truth valuable for its foreshadowing of the life and ministry of Christ.

*Nazarite.* While Christ Himself was not a Nazarite in the strict sense of the term, He nevertheless fulfilled the spiritual significance of the Old Testament regulations governing Nazarites. A Nazarite was required, in the commandment recorded in Numbers six , to abstain from wine and unclean food, not to cut the hair or beard, and not to touch dead bodies. The underlying thought was total separation to God and holy use. Abstention from wine seems to represent abstaining from natural joys in order to have spiritual joy (Ps 97:12; Hab 3:18; Phil 3:1, 3; 4:4 ). Long hair identified the Nazarite but was to the world a token of reproach (1 Cor 11:14), and symbolizes willingness to suffer because of identification with the Lord. Abstention from unclean and dead things was necessary to be holy to the Lord. Christ beautifully fulfills this type in every spiritual sense (Heb 7:26).

Taken as a whole the typology of persons in the Old Testament manifests that it is Christ-centered, having its main purpose in foreshadowing the Person and work of Christ. It is a rich field for devotional study and one that unfortunately has been greatly neglected.

## Typical Events

The field of typical events is too inclusive to be embraced in a brief study, but as a complement to other aspects of Christological typology, illustrations can at least be drawn from the abundance of incidents in the Old Testament. The major typical events from the fall of Adam to the entrance of Israel into the land will be considered.

*Clothing of Adam and Eve.* In the midst of the ruin of sin and the judgment which followed the fall of Adam and Eve, the Scriptures record a gracious thing which God did for fallen humanity. In Genesis 3:21 (A.R.V.) it is written: "And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them." It was, of course, a supply of a physical need for clothing which God recognized, but it seems evident that the meaning is deeper than this. God was representing to them the fact that He would supply that which would cover the nakedness of sin and provide a righteous covering through the death of Christ, a thought which is given frequent utterance in Scripture (Job 29:14; Ps 132:9; Isa 61:10; 64:6 ; Rom 3:22; Rev 19:8).

*Preservation in the Ark.* Another dramatic event in the early history of the race is the preservation of Noah and his family in the ark. The ark itself is a significant type, to be considered as a typical thing, but the event of preservation is freighted with meaning. In the midst of almost universal judgment, God singled out the righteous and preserved them. It represents in general God's deliverance of the righteous from judgment. In particular it foreshadows the future preservation of the saints in the period of great tribulation before the second coming of Christ. It may also be applied to the true church which will be

caught up to be with Christ before this final period begins and will return to the earth after the judgment is completed. The principle of deliverance of the righteous is referred to by Peter in his warnings of judgment on the wicked. God “saved Noah” while “bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly” (2 Pet 2:5). God also “delivered just Lot” from Sodom (2 Pet 2:7), though the city was destroyed. Peter concludes: “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pet 2:9). Paul expresses the same confidence, even though like Peter he was facing imminent martyrdom (2 Tim 4:18). The principle is illustrated in the ark that God preserves His own through His judgments upon the wicked. While it is in the large a work of the Trinity, it is clear that it is based upon the work of Christ in His sacrifice, intercession, and second coming.

*Deliverance from Egypt.* The entire picture of Israel being delivered out of Egypt and brought through the wilderness experiences into the promised land is a major field of typology and one which illustrates the work of Christ in salvation. The major elements of the deliverance, the plagues, the institution of the Passover, and the salvation of Israel at the Red Sea all speak of Christ. The plagues represent the judgment upon the wicked world and in type speak of the future deliverance of Israel in the great tribulation. The Passover is an eloquent type of the death of Christ as the believer’s only place of safety from the judgment and death which overtakes the world. At the Red Sea Israel is delivered through the same waters which destroyed the Egyptians, a type of the death of Christ in its power to deliver from the world. The wilderness experiences with the manna from heaven (Exod 16:4), speaking of Christ as the bread of life, the water out of the rock (Exod 17:6), speaking of Christ smitten that we might have life, and many of the other incidents speak of the work of Christ for His own.

*Entrance into the Land.* The crossing of the Jordan River and the subsequent conquest of Canaan has always been recognized as typical truth, though the interpretations have often been confused. Canaan is not a type of heaven, but is instead the believer’s present sphere of conflict and possession in Christ. It is obtained by crossing the Jordan with its piled up waters which speak of the death of Christ as the means for victory and enjoyment of our possessions in Christ. The Angel of Jehovah, which is Christ, went before the Israelites and it was through His power that they achieved the conquest. The experiences of Joshua have their parallel in Ephesians in the New Testament. We possess our possessions by faith in Christ, by crucifixion with Christ, and by the mighty power of God.

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(To be continued in the October-December Number, 1948)

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<sup>1</sup> *The Typology of Scripture* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1900), I, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Webster’s New International Dictionary of the English Language* (Second Edition), s.v. *type*.

<sup>3</sup> L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), I, xxx.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, xxx-xxxi.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. L. S. Chafer, *loc. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the beautiful exposition of this by George E. Guille, *Isaac and Rebekah* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Assn., 1914), 31 pp.

<sup>7</sup> For a simple summary of Isaac as a type of Christ cf. *Scofield Reference Bible*, notes, pp. 31, 33, 34.

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# Series in Christology

by John F. Walvoord

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## Chapter 8

### Part 4: The Incarnation of the Son of God

#### II. Christological Typology (Continued)

##### Typical Things

It is an essential postulate of theism that creation reveals the Creator. In fact, the material world was evidently designed by God to illustrate spiritual things. Such elements as life and death, light and dark, the sun, moon, and stars—in a word both the macroscopic and the microscopic—speak of corresponding ideas in the spiritual world. It is not strange or unexpected that God should expressly appoint certain things to constitute illustrations of spiritual truths. Where God appoints a *thing* to reveal a *truth*, we have a type. The Old Testament is full of things which have a typical meaning. Often there is express Scriptural warrant for such interpretation, but there is a vast field which is left to the insight of the interpreter without mention in the New Testament. If the study is confined to the more obvious types two fields of typology stand out—the sacrifices of the Old Testament and the Tabernacle. Both were designed and revealed by God Himself and were unquestionably intended to be types and illustrations of spiritual truth. In addition to these, there are a few other outstanding typical things in the Old Testament such as the rod of Aaron, the brazen serpent, and the smitten rock.

*The Old Testament sacrifices.* The sacrifices of the Old Testament are clearly intended to be a typical foreshadowing of the sacrifice of Christ. Almost every aspect of the meaning of the death of Christ is anticipated. Central in the sacrifices is the feature of shed blood, looking forward to the shed blood of Christ. The explanation given in the Old Testament is that the blood was given and shed to make an atonement: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life” (Lev 17:11 A.R.V.). This central truth dominates the typology of the sacrifices.

Among the sacrifices, the offering of a lamb was most common. This was practiced even before the Mosaic law (cf. Gen 4:4; 22:7 ). At the institution of the Passover, the lamb was used by Israel for its observance. Under the Levitical ritual, a lamb was offered morning and evening as a sacrifice and two lambs were offered on the Sabbath. As a general rule the lamb was an acceptable sacrifice for most other offerings. Without exception the lamb was to be without blemish and its blood was shed. The New Testament makes plain that in all these sacrifices the lamb prefigured “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The lamb speaks of the purity of Christ (1 Pet 1:19), of the gentleness and submission of Christ to the will of God (Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 2:21-23) and of substitution—bearing sin which was not His own. In Revelation, Christ is given repeatedly the title, *the Lamb*.

Other animals were, of course, used and sometimes prescribed. The ox or bullock was used frequently in the burnt offerings (Lev 1:5; Num 7:87, 88; 2 Sam 24:22; 2 Chron 5:6; 7:5 ). In the sin-offering the bullock is again specified as an acceptable offering (Lev 4:3, 14) especially for sins by priests or of the whole congregation. The sacrificed bullock typifies Christ as the one “obedient unto death” and bearing the burdens and sins of others. Another animal frequently used in sacrifices was the goat. Like the lamb it was used before the Mosaic law (Gen 15:9), was permitted for use in the Passover (Exod 12:5). It was used as a burnt offering (Lev 1:10), as a sin offering (Lev 4:24; Num 15:27), and as a peace offering (Num 7:17). A special case is the use of two goats on the day of atonement, one of which was killed and the other allowed to escape as a scapegoat (Lev 16:5-10). In all the instances the use of the goat seems to emphasize the thought of substitution. Even in common English the word *goat* has come to mean a scapegoat or one bearing blame for others. It anticipates that Christ

would become the sin bearer for the sins of the whole world. The live goat of Leviticus 16 illustrates Christ bearing away our sins from before God—His present work as Advocate in contrast to His finished work on the cross. In every instance Christ takes the sinner's place and fulfills in antitype all that was anticipated in the type. Christ is not only our sin-offering, but our burnt offering—whose righteous obedience is accepted as on our behalf—and as our peace offering, the one in whom and through whom we have peace.

The special offering of the red heifer has its own place in the sacrificial offerings. As described in Numbers 19, the ceremony of its sacrifice and the sprinkling of blood was designed as a means of cleansing from defilement, a clear instance being found in the purification of an unclean person (Num 19:17). The sacrifice speaks of Christ as cleansing the believer from the defilement of sin through His sacrifice.

Other sacrifices only enlarge the typical truth already mentioned. The turtle-dove or pigeon was the offering of the poor, and refers especially to the fact that Christ became poor that we might be rich (2 Cor 8:9). The pigeon was acceptable for burnt offerings (Lev 1:14), sin offerings (Lev 5:7), trespass offerings (Lev 5:7), and for various rites of cleansing (Lev 12:6, 8; 14:22, 30 ; 15:14, 29 ). The usual pattern was to offer one dove as a sin-offering and the other as a burnt offering. Of special interest is the fact that Mary, when offering for her cleansing according to commandment of Leviticus 12:6, 8, brought the offering of the poor (Luke 2:24). Two birds were also used in the ceremony of the cleansing of the leper (Lev 14:4-7) in which one bird is slain and the other dipped in blood and released, somewhat after the pattern of the two goats on the Day of Atonement. In this sacrifice we have again the two aspects of the work of Christ for sinners—His death and His present work.

Taken as a whole the sacrifices point to the one sacrifice of Christ as forever putting away sin. They make the death of Christ essential to God's plan of salvation and speak of the most profound truths of Biblical revelation.

*The Tabernacle.* Of all typical things in the Old Testament, undoubtedly the Tabernacle was the most complete typical presentation of spiritual truth. It was expressly designed by God to provide not only a temporary place of worship for the children of Israel in their wanderings but also to prefigure the person and the work of Christ to an extent not provided by any other thing.

In view of the many excellent works on the structure and meaning of the Tabernacle, we need to offer here only a brief résumé of its more important aspects. The Tabernacle itself was surrounded by a linen fence, speaking of the righteousness of Christ and supported and displayed by wooden posts, the wood speaking of the humanity of Christ throughout the Tabernacle. The posts themselves rested on sockets of brass, typical of the righteousness of God, and were fastened together by fillets of silver, the metal of redemption. The fence as a whole shut out those outside both from entrance and from seeing within. It typifies the fact that Christ in His righteous life and sacrificial death excludes all from participation who do not come through the door.

The door of the fence was to the east. It was some thirty feet wide (twenty cubits) and hung on four pillars. The gate was made of white linen which was embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet, four colors which seem to anticipate the four Gospels. Matthew is the Gospel of the King—purple, Mark of the Servant of Jehovah who came to be obedient unto death—scarlet, Luke the perfect man—white linen, and John, the Gospel of the Son of God come from heaven—blue. There seems to be a planned connection between the door of the court, the door of the Tabernacle, and the door of the Holy of Holies. Frank H. White has commented: "By comparing Ex. xxvi.31, 36 , and xxvii.16 , it will be seen that the 'Gate of the Court' was made of the same materials, with exactly the same arrangement of colours as the door of the Tabernacle and the Beautiful Vail, excepting that the latter had cherubic figures worked upon it. The entire dimensions were also the same. The Gate of the Court being twenty cubits by five, or one hundred cubits square, whilst the hangings for the door and the vail were both ten cubits by ten, making also a square of one hundred cubits. Do not these facts indicate that the same truth is prefigured in each instance? There was but *one gate* to the Court, *one door* to the Tabernacle, and *one vail* by which to enter the Holiest of All."<sup>1</sup> The gate clearly refers to Christ as the door of salvation and worship. As Christ Himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Two items of furniture stood between the gate of the court and the Tabernacle itself. The first of these was the brazen altar. It was made of wood covered with brass, constructed in a square shape five cubits to each side and three cubits high. It was equipped with staves on each side for the purpose of carrying it and various pots and pans formed a part of the equipment. On this altar the priest offered the various sacrifices. In many respects it was the most used and most prominent item of the Tabernacle. Standing as it did between the gate and the Tabernacle it speaks of the death of Christ as the means of access to God. The brass represents the righteousness of God which required a sacrifice and the wood underneath signifies the humanity of Christ. The righteousness of God was revealed in the incarnate Son of God dying as a sacrifice. The altar was the meeting place of a righteous God and sinful man.

Near the brazen altar was the laver, also made of brass and containing water for the cleansing of the priest in his daily ministrations. The laver clearly speaks of the cleansing of the believer priest. The water used in the laver represents the cleansing provided by the Word of God (cf. Eph 5:26). Apparently there was a place for water at the foot of the laver as well as on the top. In this the priest washed his feet. The central fact taught by the laver is that the priest must have clean hands and feet, representing spiritual purity in service and walk, in order to fulfill the functions of a priest at the altar. Its relation to Christology is stated in Ephesians 5:25-26, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." The laver, then, anticipates the present work of Christ in the cleansing of the believer by the applied Word of God.

The Tabernacle itself provides a pleroma of typical revelation afforded in no other single thing in the Old Testament. The Tabernacle was constructed in the shape of a parallelogram ten cubits wide and thirty cubits long with the entrance on the narrow side which faced east. It was constructed of wood boards ten cubits long and one and one-half cubits wide set on end in sockets of silver, two to each board. Transverse bars of wood held them together. All the wood of the Tabernacle was covered with gold and was therefore completely hidden from view. The combination of wood and gold speak here as elsewhere of the hypostatic union—the human and divine combined in one person—but viewed from the standpoint of the divine. All is glory in the Tabernacle. The sockets of silver upon which the boards rested refer again to redemption in Christ as providing the basis for all the truth typified in the Tabernacle.

The Tabernacle had four coverings. The outside which was visible was of badger skins (Exod 26:14). These were apparently dark in color, and not particularly attractive, giving no hint of the glories within. This signified that to human sight the Christ was to be ordinary in appearance at least before the cross and, in the words of Isaiah, was to fulfill the prediction, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isa 53:2 A.R.V.; cf. Phil 2:7). Underneath the badger skins was the second layer of covering made of ram skins dyed red. Here was a covering made from a ram which was classified as a clean animal (contra badger). The rams were killed to provide the covering, and everything in the Tabernacle was under the skins of the sacrificed rams. The red color brings out the thought of shed blood specifically. As rams were used in the consecration of priests, it signifies that the blood of Christ has made us holy—in a word, accomplished our sanctification. The believer's sanctification like the holiness of Christ Himself is often hid from the world by our present humiliation, i.e., the badger skins. The sanctification of the believer is nevertheless a present reality in the sense that all true believers are here and now set apart as holy to God through the sacrifice of Christ.

The third layer of covering was made of curtains of goats' hair of sufficient dimensions (Exod 26:7-13) to cover the top and also the sides of the Tabernacle. While the dimensions of the two outer coverings are not given, it is clear that the goats' hair covered everything. No explanation is given of the use of this material, but here again we have reference to an animal of sacrifice, the goat, which is used typically to emphasize substitution. The believer-priest as he ministered in the Tabernacle was completely covered by that which a substitute provided.

The fourth layer invisible from the outside but which could be seen in the Tabernacle from the inside was made of fine linen with cherubims embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet, speaking of angelic presence and ministry, but more specifically of the glory of Christ which is seen by angels. As the priest looked up, he was in a figure looking into heaven itself. The colors speak of the various perfections of Christ as indicated in the description of the gate of the court. The inner layer of linen curtains may have hung down also on the inner side of the Tabernacle.<sup>2</sup> Whether the linen or the gold boards appeared, everything spoke of Christ in the Tabernacle.

The door of the Tabernacle, mentioned before, was embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet, and made of fine linen, suspended by gold hooks from five pillars of gold-covered wood. Like the inner veil of similar construction which separated the holy place from the holy of holies, the doors speak of Christ as the door to the presence and fellowship of God. In Hebrews 10:20, it is revealed that the veil represents the flesh of Christ—His humanity in its display of the holiness of God. The veil was rent as the body of Christ was rent, and the way is now open to every believer into the holiest of all.

In the holy place were three significant items of furniture: the golden lampstand, the table of showbread, and the altar of incense. The golden lampstand as described in Exodus 25:31-40 was made of pure beaten gold with seven individual lamps burning olive oil. The exact specifications given by God were followed. In its material it spoke of Christ in His divine perfections, represented by pure gold. The fact that the gold was beaten typifies His sufferings even as the Son of God. The number seven has reference to the perfection of all the attributes of Christ. The point of central significance in the lampstand, however, is the fact that it gave light only when supplied with pure olive oil, representing the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Tabernacle, being without windows, was dependent upon the light of the lampstand to reveal the glories within and to permit the priestly functions to be conducted. In type this represents the indispensable ministry of the Holy Spirit in making Christ known. The light required the constant attention of the priests, speaking of human agency in making known the revelation.

The table of showbread stood on the north side of the room opposite the lampstand on the south. It is described in Exodus 25:23-30 as a small table of two cubits long and one cubit wide, a cubit and a half high, made of wood covered with gold. The table in itself representing Christ in His incarnate state—human and divine as typified by wood and gold—was designed to present the work of Christ for Israel. On the table each week the twelve pieces of unleavened bread were placed, identical in size, and made fragrant by frankincense. Each piece represented a tribe of Israel. The weekly renewal spoke of God's constant provision for them. The bread being unleavened typified the purity of Christ to which Israel was also called. The bread was made of fine wheat flour, ground and sifted, and baked in fire, signifying the sufferings of Christ. Frankincense represented the attractiveness of Christ. On each Sabbath, the priests ate the showbread, anticipating the fact that Christ is the believer's food.

The altar of incense was placed just before the veil before the holy of holies. Like the table of showbread it was made of wood, covered with gold, smaller in area but higher—one cubit square and two cubits high. On it the priests were to burn the prescribed incense morning and evening. The instructions concerning its construction and use are precise (Exod 30:1-10, 34-38). The incense itself was composed of stacte, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense, each of which apparently had typical meaning. The incense was to be burned by taking a coal off the brazen altar and bringing it to the altar of incense. This meant that the priest had to offer the sacrifice first and come for cleansing to the laver, typifying the fact that true worship requires cleansing by blood and water beforehand. Once a year the altar of incense was cleansed by blood (Exod 30:10).

Without doubt the holy of holies was the most sacred part of the Tabernacle. In it were the ark of the testimony in which were placed the tables of the law, Aaron's rod that budded, and the golden pot of manna (Exod 25:10-22; Heb 9:3-5). The ark itself was an imposing article of furniture protected by the most solemn instructions for preservation of its holiness. It was a chest two cubits and a half in length, a cubit and a half in breadth, and a cubit and a half in height. Made of wood, it was overlaid with gold, and provided with staves for carrying. On top of the ark of the covenant and serving as a lid was the mercy seat, which was made of a pure slab of gold the same size as the top of the Ark. At the two ends of the mercy seat, cherubims were made of beaten gold with wings stretched over the mercy seat. It was in this sacred spot that God promised Israel He would meet Moses and the high priest. Yearly on the day of atonement the holy of holies was sanctified by the sprinkled blood of the sacrifice. The holy law of God contained in the tables of the law and representing God's righteousness was made into a mercy seat where the sinner could meet God through the shed blood. The priest coming into the holy of holies typified Christ entering into heaven itself to become the Mediator between God and man. The whole scene in the holy of holies was designed to represent a sinner coming into the presence of a righteous God. Israel was represented by the priest, even as the Christian is represented by Christ Himself. Through Christ every believer has access into the holiest of all—the very presence of God.

Taken as a whole, the Tabernacle speaks of Christ in every part. In it is prefigured the person, sacrifice, intercession, and

provision of the Savior for those who trust Him. It is the Gospel in illustration and undoubtedly is more rich in its meaning to the believer of this dispensation than to the Old Testament saint who only dimly understood all the typical representation. The Tabernacle remains an almost exhaustless source of illustration of spiritual things relating to the Son of God.

*Other typical things.* Among other typical articles in the Old Testament, mention should be made of Aaron's rod that budded, representing as it does the resurrection of Christ which is not given much space in the Old Testament. The background of the significance of this article is found in Numbers 16, where it is recorded that the children of Israel rebelled against the authority and leadership of Moses and Aaron. This was followed by two judgments, the first in which the earth opened and swallowed up the leaders of the revolt and the second consisting in a plague which destroyed the people who accused Moses and Aaron of killing the leaders of the insurrection (Num 16:42). God then ordered a test to show that Moses and Aaron were chosen of Him (Num 17). Twelve rods, one for each tribe, were laid up in the holy of holies overnight. In the morning the rod of Aaron budded, bloomed and yielded almonds. This signified God's approval of Aaron, and the rod was placed in the ark of testimony as a reminder (Heb 9:4). The rod of Aaron became by this background a significant type of the resurrection of Christ. Though dead and without life, the rod had come to life and borne fruit. In bearing the testimony of its new life, it authorized the priesthood of Aaron. So Christ in His resurrection not only manifested life but authenticated His person and His work. As Christianity alone has a truly, resurrected Savior, so alone among the twelve rods the rod of Aaron was resurrected.

The brazen serpent of Numbers 21:5-9 bears the testimony of Christ Himself that it is an important type (John 3:14-16). As a result of rebellion of Israel against God and Moses, a plague of fiery serpents was sent among them which resulted in many dying. Upon confession of their sin, God provided for Israel a way of salvation from death. Moses was instructed to make a serpent of brass, set upon a pole, to which if the people bitten by the serpents would look they would be healed. Christ uses this as a striking illustration of His own death on the cross, revealing that just as the serpent lifted up brought life to Israel, so Christ lifted up would bring life to everyone who believed in Him.

The smitten rock of Exodus 17:5-7 constitutes the next type which will be discussed. As in many other instances in the Old Testament, the rock is typical of Christ. Express confirmation of this type is given in 1 Corinthians 10:4. Because of the need for water for Israel, Moses was commanded to smite the rock in Horeb. God promised that water would come out to satisfy their thirst. Moses obeyed and the water gushed forth. It represents the fact that Christ smitten and crucified provided the water of salvation which completely satisfies. As in the case of Israel, so the believer in Christ after the cross receives this gift of God though unworthy and the supply is given freely and abundantly to all who will partake. The water itself speaks of the fullness of ministry of the Holy Spirit which is made possible by the death of Christ. Of interest is the fact that when Moses struck the rock twice in Numbers 20:11 instead of speaking to it, a later incident than that in Exodus, he is severely punished by God for disobedience and unbelief. The rock once smitten need not be smitten again. The death of Christ need not be repeated for abundant life-giving water.

Noah's ark has represented to the people of God of all ages the work of God in delivering His own from judgment. That the ark of Noah has typical significance can hardly be questioned. It is frequently mentioned in the New Testament in various connections (Matt 24:37-38; Luke 17:26-27; Heb 11:7; 1 Pet 3:20; 2 Pet 2:5). Its historic setting in the deliverance of Noah and his family from the flood which engulfed the world is fraught with much meaning. In general, the ark represents the deliverance of the people of God from the judgment which overtakes the world—an illustration of the truth stated by Peter, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pet 2:9). The ark was constructed by divine commandment and is a product of divine, not human, wisdom. Like the cross of Christ, the ark was foolishness to Noah's generation. The ark had only one door and those passing through it were made safe, just as those who come through Christ the door enter into salvation and safety. The ark was constructed with only one window and that apparently in the top or roof of the ark. Those in the ark could only look up, speaking spiritually of faith and dependence upon God. The ark also represented the fact that safety is for those who enter into it. There was perfect safety inside, but no amount of human effort could have saved one outside the ark. Of interest also is the fact that the Hebrew word for *pitch* ••• (Gen 6:14) is translated atonement elsewhere in the Old Testament and 100 times appears with this or similar meaning—*merciful, forgive, reconciliation, purged, cleansed*, etc. As Noah and his family were covered by the ark from the judgment of God, so the sinner is protected from judgment for sin if he avail himself of the atonement provided.

In the New Testament application is made of the historic use of the ark with various spiritual meanings. The suddenness of coming judgment is illustrated by the fact that the rain came the very day Noah entered into the ark (Matt 24:38; Luke 17:27). The ark was a monument also of the faith of Noah—"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb 11:7). The relatively few who are saved is referred to in 1 Peter 3:20, in spite of the longsuffering of God in waiting: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." The salvation provided in this instance—salvation by water—is not a proof of baptismal regeneration, as the water never touched Noah or his family. Rather it is an illustration of the fact that the very judgment which condemned and destroyed the world was an act by which Noah was separated from the sins of his generation. As it prefigures the death of Christ, it speaks of the fact that not only are believers redeemed from the guilt of sin but also separated from the present power of sin.

Both from the Old Testament historic setting and the New Testament use of the incident, it is clear that in Noah's ark and its use we have an illustration of the principles of God's dealing with the world and with the believer. The deliverance of Noah will have a large-scale repetition in the deliverance of the church before the time of tribulation which will overtake the world and also the preservation of some who believe in that tribulation time. Exceedingly precious to the believer in times of apostasy and approaching judgment is the promise of God that He will deliver.

The field of typical things in the Old Testament is, of course, almost exhaustless. It is not possible here to include them all, but the principal types as presented will serve at least to illustrate this rich area of revelation which has been so greatly neglected in traditional theological treatment of the person and work of Christ. The study is its own apologetic for giving attention to this important subject.

Dallas, Texas

(To be continued in the January-March Number, 1949)

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# Series in Christology

by John F. Walvoord

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## Chapter 9

### Part 5: The Incarnation of the Son of God

[Author's note: With deep regret the series of articles on Christology are brought to a close with this Number, in order to comply with many requests for a series on the millennial issue. We hope at a later date to follow up the Christological articles published, which completed the treatment of the Old Testament contribution, with a detailed study of the New Testament records.]

{Editor's note: Footnotes in the original printed edition were numbered 14-16, but in this electronic edition are numbered 1-3 respectively.}

## II. Christological Typology (Continued)

### Typical Institutions and Ceremonies

In addition to the many typical persons, events, and things which foreshadow the person and work of Christ in the Old Testament, there are typical institutions and ceremonies. As Jesus Christ is the central theme of revelation, it is not strange that most types should speak expressly of Him and this is true in the types under consideration. Many of the types previously considered are also related to typical institutions and ceremonies. In the discussion to follow, unnecessary duplication will be avoided.

The important typical institutions and ceremonies include the Old Testament priesthods, the sacrifices, the feasts of Jehovah, the cities of refuge, and the Sabbath. These are representative of this field, at least, and will provide another glimpse of the beauties of the person and work of Christ.

*The sacrifices.* It is necessary only to mention here that the sacrifices previously considered under typical things<sup>1</sup> are in themselves typical institutions. The sin offering, trespass offering, meal offering, peace offering, and burnt offering occupy a central place. These and other offerings are an integral part of the Levitical ritual which was revealed and required by God. All of the sacrifices point to the person and work of Christ as the New Testament makes very clear. For the devout heart seeking to know more of the love and grace of God the Old Testament sacrifices provide a rich area of meditation and study. In any case they make the essential requirement of shed blood to stand out boldly in the divine pattern of salvation for lost man and erring saints.

*The Old Testament priesthods.* In previous discussion both Aaron and Melchizedek were found to be types of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Both the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthods are types of the priesthood of Christ. The earliest kind of priesthood in the Old Testament followed the pattern of the patriarchs. In this system the father or head of the family was also its priest. In a general way even this priesthood anticipated Christ, but in Aaron and Melchizedek there is a full and detailed revelation.

The argument in the Epistle to the Hebrews in support of the superiority of Christ to the Aaronic priesthood is based on the anticipation in Melchizedek. As to order of priesthood, Melchizedek in type brings out the fact that Christ is supreme over all other priesthods, introducing a new order entirely; that His priesthood is eternal, i.e., had no successors, no beginning or

ending; that the priesthood of Christ is untransmitted and untransmissible (Heb 7:24); and that it is based on resurrection anticipated in the elements of memorial, bread and wine. The importance of this revelation will be brought out in later consideration of the priesthood of Christ.

In its detail the Aaronic priesthood provides light on the work of Christ as priest and His spiritual qualifications for the office. Aaron anticipated the priesthood of Christ both by similarity and contrast. As Aaron ministers in the earthly sphere, Christ ministers in the heavenly (Heb 8:1-5). Christ served realities rather than shadows (Heb 8:5), administered a new covenant rather than the Mosaic covenant (Heb 8:6). Christ in His sacrifice offered a final sacrifice for sin once for all instead of a daily sacrifice (Heb 7:27). In all these things Christ fulfilled what Aaron anticipated. There are also many similarities. Like Aaron, Christ ministered in sacred things (Heb 5:1), was made a priest by God Himself (Heb 5:4-10), was a true Mediator (1 Tim 2:5), was a part of humanity as the Second Adam as Aaron was a part of Israel, offered sacrifice to God, and on the basis of sacrifice offered intercession (Heb 7:25). There can be no question that the Aaronic priesthood not only was an *ad interim* dealing of God but that it was also designed to portray in type what Christ was as priest and what He did.

The consecration of the priests for the most part anticipates the priesthood of believers in the present age rather than the priesthood of Christ, but in the case of Aaron the typology seems to point to Christ. The induction into the priest's office for Aaron began with washing with water (Lev 8:6). While it may not exhaust the meaning of the baptism of Christ, it is significant that His public ministry began with water baptism. Following the washing with water, Aaron was clothed with his priestly garments, which speak of the prerogatives and office of the priesthood of Christ. He was also anointed with oil, which has its antitype in the descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ after His baptism. In the case of Aaron (*contra* other priests), these aspects of induction into the priestly office preceded the sacrifice, even as they preceded the sacrifice of Christ. For other priests the sacrifice came first, as for believer priests in this age.

*Feasts of Jehovah.* The importance of the feasts of Jehovah in Israel's religious life cannot be overestimated. These seven feasts as outlined in Leviticus 23 and given further treatment elsewhere were the backbone of the Levitical system. Most of them have a definite typical meaning in relation to Christology.

The Passover was the first and in some respects the most important feast. It was celebrated in the first month, and signified deliverance from the judgment which overtook the Egyptians. The lamb which was sacrificed clearly was a type of Christ. In the New Testament Christ is declared to fulfill the spiritual meaning of the Passover and those who come into the safety of His shed blood are called to a holy life (1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pet 1:19).

The second feast, the feast of unleavened bread, which immediately followed the Passover, speaks of Christ as the Bread of Life, the holy walk of the believer after redemption, and of communion with Christ. The absence of leaven typically represents the sinlessness of Christ and the believer's fellowship in that holiness. The prohibition of work during the feast brings out that the holy walk of the believer like his redemption is not a result of human effort, but is a divine provision.

The feast of first fruits celebrated for Israel the new harvest in the land and their deliverance from Egypt. The typical truth is that of the resurrection of Christ: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.... But every man after his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor 15:20, 23). The feast occurred on the "morrow after the sabbath" (Lev 23:11), i.e., on the first day of the week, even as Christ was raised on the first day of the week. Like the feast of first fruits, the resurrection of Christ anticipates the harvest which is to follow, the resurrection of the saints.

The feast of the wave loaves, coming exactly fifty days after the feast of first fruits, without question foreshadowed the day of Pentecost at which time the two loaves, typical of Gentiles and Israel, are united into one body, the church (Eph 2:14). It does not have special Christological significance, however, except as a result of the work of Christ. The feast of trumpets, likewise, speaking of the regathering of Israel to the land, does not refer specifically to Christ.

The feast of the day of atonement represents in large measure the work of Christ on the cross. The sacrifices and preparation

of the high priest, of course, were not necessary for Christ, but the sacrifices and ceremonies for the people are foreshadowings of the work of Christ. The day of atonement centers on the work of the high priest, even as the work of salvation centers in Christ. The high priest properly prepared and clothed would perform the ceremonies required on behalf of the people. The sin offering of the goat was presented first, the goat killed, and the blood was brought into the holy of holies and sprinkled upon the mercy seat (Lev 16:15). Then the live goat was allowed to escape in the wilderness after the sins of the people of Israel were confessed with the hands of the high priest on the head of the goat. The whole transaction speaks of Christ as our substitute, dying and cleansing by shed blood, and putting away our sins from before God, as represented by the scapegoat. The blood of Christ opens the way into the holiest of all and the seat of the ark of the covenant, representing God's holiness, becomes a mercy seat. This thought is clearly indicated in the New Testament (Rom 3:25; Heb 9:7-8, 23-28). Other aspects of the day of atonement speak also of the work of Christ. The goat of the sin offering was carried outside the camp and burned, even as Christ was sacrificed outside Jerusalem (Heb 13:11-13). In addition to the sin offering, a burnt offering was provided (Lev 16:24), speaking of the obedience and devotion of Christ in His death and constituting a ground for merit for the believer—justification. Most significant is the contrast between the Aaronic high priest entering the holy of holies once a year and the open access afforded every believer priest in this age to the very presence of God in heaven. The day of atonement provides, then, not only a temporary form of worship for Israel, but it is also a beautiful and suggestive type foreshadowing the wonders of the work of Christ on the cross.

The feast of tabernacles seems to have a double meaning. It referred to Israel's deliverance from Egypt and constituted a memorial of this event. It was also prophetic of the future regathering of Israel and will be observed in the millennium (Zech 14:16-19). In contrast to the other feasts which speak of the finished work of Christ, this feast represents the unfinished work of Christ and the plan of God for the future regathering of dispersed Israel and their blessing in the land of Palestine. Present world events seem to be the beginning of this work of God to be completed after the return of Christ.

*Cities of refuge.* In the Mosaic law provision was made for the protection of those who innocently had taken the life of another. Six cities of refuge were established, three on either side of Jordan, and placed in the hands of the Levites (Num 35; Deut 19:1-13; Josh 20). If judged innocent of wilful murder, the party responsible could have deliverance from the avenger of blood as long as he remained in the city of refuge. It was provided that at the death of the high priest, he could return to his home, but not before. The cities of refuge are obviously a type of refuge in Christ. The sinner there finds refuge from judgment for sin and is made free by the death of the high priest. God is frequently spoken of as a refuge in the Old Testament (Ps 46:1; 142:5 ; Isa 4:6) and also in the New Testament (Rom 8:33-34; Heb 6:18-19). While God has always been the refuge of His saints, it was not until the death of the high priest, fulfilled in Christ, that complete freedom was provided.

*Sabbath.* As an institution in Israel, the Sabbath had a central place. It was a day of complete rest and was supplemented by other Sabbath days, and Sabbatic years. For the most part these observances were for Israel and stand in contrast rather than similarity to the Christian observance of the first day of the week. The typical significance of the Sabbath is, therefore, relatively minor.<sup>3</sup> The Sabbath uniformly is a symbol of rest. This is its first meaning as found in the rest of God after creation, and this was carried out for Israel. In the New Testament it is used as a type of the rest of faith of the Christian who has ceased from his own works and is resting in the work of Christ. In Hebrews 4:1-11, the principal passage in the New Testament on this theme, the contrast is plainly made between the day of rest of the Sabbath and the rest of faith in Christ: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (Heb 4:9-10).

Taken as a whole, it is proper to conclude that the typical ceremonies and institutions of the Old Testament have as their main theme the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, imbedded in the religious life of saints before Christ, are found the principal elements of the New Testament revelation concerning Christ. Beautiful as are the types they are exceeded by the antitype, and devout souls can long for that future complete revelation when we shall see Him face to face.

<sup>1</sup> *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 105:420, pp. 404-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 105:419, pp. 287-88, 292-93.

<sup>3</sup> For a complete discussion of the meaning of the Sabbath, cf. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, IV, 100-113.

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