

Reference: VARIOUS

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Christ in the Old Testament 8. Symbols

Purpose: To show how Christ is represented symbolically in the OT and what can be learned from it.

1. Introduction

Who can remember the five ways of finding Christ in the OT?

Prophecies, Theophanies, Symbols, Types, Ceremonies

This time – Symbols

Again, far from exhaustive treatment!

What can we learn about Him from these symbols?

2. Noah's Ark

Genesis 6:13-18 Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch. 15 This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. 16 You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. 17 Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish. 18 But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you.

Matthew 24:37-39 For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

How is the Ark a picture of Christ?

It saved Noah from God's judgment for sin

It required faith and obedience on Noah's part

He had to enter the Ark and trust in it for salvation

3. Jacob's ladder

Genesis 28:10-19 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. 11 When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. 12 He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." 16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." 17 He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." 18 Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. 19 He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz.

John 1:47-51 47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." 48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." 49 Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." 50 Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." 51 He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

So How is the ladder a symbol of Christ?

Spans the gap from earth to heaven - was man and God

Made open the way from earth to heaven

He is the Way - the door and the gate to heaven

One through Whom the angels minister to God's people

God's blessings come to us - our services rise to Him, by Christ

He is the conduit

4. The rock from which water came

Exodus 17:6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

How is the rock in the wilderness a symbol of Christ?

It watered and refreshed the Israelites in a barren land

It was sufficient for all their needs

How was the water obtained from the rock?

It was struck....

So Christ waters our souls in the desert of this world

Anyone think of a related passage?

John 4:10-14 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." 11 She *said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? 12 You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?" 13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

5. Manna

Exodus 16:13-16 That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. 14 When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. 15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. 16 This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an omer a for each person you have in your tent.'"

Exodus 16:31-35 The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey. 32 Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Take an omer of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they can see the bread I gave you to eat in the desert when I brought you out of Egypt.'" 33 So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar and put an omer of manna in it. Then place it before the LORD to be kept for the generations to come." 34 As the LORD commanded Moses, Aaron put the manna in front of the Testimony, that it might be kept. 35 The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.

Numbers 11:7-9 The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin. 8 The people went around gathering it, and then ground it in a handmill or crushed it in a mortar. They cooked it in a pot or made it into cakes. And it tasted like something made with olive oil. 9 When the dew settled on the camp at night, the manna also came down.

John 6:28-40 Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" 29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." 30 So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? 31 Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." 35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. 36 But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. 38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him

who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. 40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

How is the manna a symbol of Christ?

Manna came but was unrecognised - so Christ

Manna came down from heaven

Manna was white - pure

Manna was a gift - undeserved (people had been grumbling!)

Manna was sweet to the taste

Manna was nourishing and given abundantly - completely sufficient

Had to be gathered, prepared and eaten - so with Christ

Had to be eaten regularly and fresh (old blessings won't do)

Of no value if not taken in the appointed way

Despised by the rabble Num 21:4-9

6. Serpent in Wilderness

Numbers 21:4-9 They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; 5 they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"

6 Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. 7 The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." 9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

John 3:10-16 "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? 11 I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, f that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

How is the brass serpent a symbol of Christ?

snake bite = sin - fatal

serpent lifted up - Christ crucified

They that looked to the serpent and believed lived - had to look

They that look to Christ are forgiven

Only the serpent could heal from the snake bite

Only Christ can heal from sin

7. Tabernacle Furnishings:

All the furnishings speak of Christ

Here are just a few examples

7.1. *All the outer curtains*

Blue, Purple and scarlet yarn

Blue – heaven

Purple – royalty

Scarlet – blood

7.2. *Veil*

Hebrews 10:19-22 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

How is the veil a picture of Christ's flesh?

It was rent in two to open the way for us

7.3. *Ark*

Gold – divinity

Wood – humanity

Establishment of the Law

7.4. *Mercy Seat*

Exodus 25:17-22 You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. 18 you shall make two cherubim of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at its two ends. 20 The cherubim shall have their wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be turned toward the mercy seat. 21 You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you. 22 There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.

Romans 3:23-25 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation (mercy seat) in His blood through faith.....

How is the mercy seat like Christ?

Where was it placed?

Between the place where God appeared and the place of the Law

How was God's wrath against His people turned aside?

Sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat

The law demanded death for sin; therefore, the blood of the sacrifice was placed on the mercy seat (Exodus 25:22; Leviticus 16:13,14), showing that death had taken place. God looked upon the mercy seat and saw blood — life — and was satisfied. Since calvary, God looks upon our Mercy Seat, which is Christ, and is satisfied. Therefore, the underlying thought of propitiation is satisfaction

8. What other symbols?

Tree of life – life is in Him

Burning bush

Etc. etc.

9. Conclusions

Look for Christ in the OT! Use the principles we have been seeing

This is no dry and dusty tome but is full of life and light

Praise Him for giving us such insights into Christ in His Word!