

Four Types in Genesis

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Moved by the opening words of the Lord's prayer, recorded in the first verse of John 17, the late Sir Edward Denny wrote a beautiful short poem, which he entitled, "The Hour." The opening verse is,

One hour there is in history's page
Pre-eminent o'er all the past
'Twill shine and shine from age to age,
While earth, while heaven itself shall last.
The closing verse runs,
Christian, 'tis thine alone to know
And prize it more than all beside;
So bright with love, so dark with woe
The gracious hour when Jesus died.

In so writing he expressed the spirit that breathes through the whole Bible; for the first type of the death, that signalled that hour, was given the very day that sin entered into the world, and in the last New Testament book, recording God's ultimate victory, we are never allowed to overlook "the Lamb," in whose sacrificial death the foundation of the victory was laid.

For the moment, let us consider the four earliest types of the death of Christ.

The first is found in Genesis 3: 21, The record is very brief. Having pronounced judgment on the serpent, on the woman, and on Adam, the Lord God covered the guilty pair, who had found their own hand-made fig-leaf aprons of no value, with coats from the skins of animals. Now, though not stated in so many words, this clearly implies DEATH — the death of the animals that furnished the skins. When this was done, there stood before God two guilty sinners, covered by that which spoke of the death of a victim.

The word used here in the Hebrew is the ordinary one for **clothing**, but it is well for us to note that the Hebrew word, signifying a **covering**, is the one used for "**atonement**" throughout the Old Testament. In the light of the Gospel truth revealed in Romans 3: 25, this is significant, for as the margin of our Bibles shows, the word, "remission" in that verse is really, "passing over." Until propitiation was actually and eternally made by the death of Christ, God was passing over the sins of the saints, in view of what Christ would accomplish. Their sins were covered from His holy eye by the offering of the appointed sacrifices.

So the first of these atoning sacrifices was made by the hand of God Himself. It was provisional and typical of the great Sacrifice to come. It foreshadowed the death of Christ in what we call its simplest and most primitive aspect: that of providing a **covering**, which enables a sinful man to stand before a holy God.

But immediately we pass from Genesis 3 to the next chapter another type confronts us, which carries our thoughts a step forward. Being sinful, we need, as we have seen, the covering which averts

the judgment stroke that we deserve, but we need more than this. Sin has raised a barrier between us and God and, separated from Him, we shall never be happy. Is there any way by which approach to God may be realized?

Not understanding the dire effects of sin, Cain evidently thought that approach to God was quite a simple matter, to be attained by presenting to God the best fruits of his own labour. Abel on the contrary had some sense of the fact stated in Romans 6: 23, "The wages of sin is **death**," for he brought, "of the firstlings of his flock and **of the fat thereof**." The words we have printed in black type reveal to us that these firstlings or lambs had **died**. It was by faith that he did this, as is stated in Hebrews 11: 4; and by it he got evidence that he was right with God and accepted in his approach.

This second type has carried us a distinct step forward. It is one thing to be effectually covered from any stroke of judgment that otherwise would come from the hand of God: it is another, and yet more wonderful, to be able to approach God and find acceptance there. Moreover, here the action was Abel's as the fruit of his faith; whereas with Adam and his wife the action was wholly God's, and nothing is said as to faith on the part of the guilty pair. Thus far then we have seen the death of Christ typified as averting judgment on the one hand, and as the righteous basis of approach to God on the other.

But now we have to move forward to Genesis 8: 20-22, where is recorded Noah's sacrifices after the judgment flood had subsided. The clean beasts and fowls had been taken into the ark by sevens, and now the seventh of each is offered as a burnt offering. The record is that "the Lord smelled a sweet savour," or as it literally is, "**a savour of rest**." As a result of this a new order of things was established, though the evil imaginations of men's hearts were unaltered, and blessing descended on Noah and his sons.

In this third type therefore we have our thoughts further enlarged as to the significance of the death of Christ. In it God has in the fullest sense discovered "a savour of rest." When His millennial rest is reached, and when even beyond that He rests in those new creation scenes, predicted in Revelation 21: 1-6, all will be secured on no other basis than that of the sacrificial death of Christ; even as on the same basis the old fallen creation will have been removed.

We may say, therefore, that just as the first and second types have portrayed the death of Christ, meeting our needs — whether as covering our sinful nakedness or enabling us to approach God in acceptance — so this third type has indicated that same death as meeting the necessity of the heart of God Himself; even the establishment in righteousness and holiness of an incorruptible order of things, the old corrupted order having been judged and removed for ever.

In Genesis 22, we have the fourth of these early types of the death of Christ, granted before the law and its sacrifices were given. It is characterized by great fulness in its details. Let us note a few of them.

First, in this picture there appear both a father and a son — Abraham and Isaac. Isaac is called, "thine only son" (verse 2); though Abraham's son Ishmael had been born years before; and again in Hebrews 11: 17, he is called "his only begotten son." The type is made the more striking by the fact that Isaac was a child supernaturally born, for both parents were dead from a reproductive standpoint.

To the sacrifice, it is recorded, "they went both of them together," the great display of **faith** being on the part of Abraham, while Isaac, the son, was marked by **subjection**. It was Abraham who told the servants that he and the lad would "come again" to them, for he accounted, as Hebrews 11 tells us, that God was able "to raise him up, even from the dead." The only remark of Isaac recorded being the

question as to, "where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

The moment came when the son was bound to the altar ready to be offered and no word is recorded as coming from his lips, prefiguring the One who, as Isaiah prophesied, was to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and who would be dumb as a sheep before its shearers.

Viewed, as we have been viewing it, the type ceases at this point, for the death stroke on the son never fell. Abraham's hand was arrested and instead his eyes fell on the ram, caught in the thicket by its horns. The record is that "Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering **in the stead of his son.**" So here from another viewpoint we see a remarkable type, for the words "in the stead of," are equivalent to, "as a substitute for," and thereby we are permitted to see that the application and efficacy of the work of Christ would be on the principle of **substitution.**

The strength of a ram lies in its horns, and by its horns the **ram was** held, and brought to its substitutionary death as an offering to God. So here really we have a double type, and dropping the first part, which we have considered, we now look at Isaac as he was, a sinful lad, and see him exempted from death by the offering of a substitute. The cords that bind the sacrifice to the altar, spoken of in Psalm 118: 27, were, in the case of our Lord, the strong cords of His invincible LOVE. The strength of **that** brought Him to the place of sacrifice, when as the Substitute He died, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God " (1 Pet. 3: 18).

This fourth type completes the picture, granted in those far-off days, of God's way of blessing through the death of Christ. How far the types were understood by the early saints, if at all, it is impossible for us to say, but in the light of the New Testament they should speak loudly to our hearts. It is remarkable that there are four of them, foreshadowing such truth as was suitable to those days, just as we have four Gospels, completing for us the picture of the Lord Jesus when revealed on earth. We can view Him four-square, so to speak; observing Him from all four points of the compass of truth.

So it is in these four types that we have briefly considered. His sacrificial death was prefigured as the only way in which sinful man can be covered from judgment; as the only basis of approach to God and acceptance with Him; as the foundation on which God's eternal rest will stand. And fourthly in a twofold way: not only as to be faced by the Son in subjection and obedience to the Father, but also as really brought to pass on the principle of substitution.

Let each of us therefore more and more rejoice and worship, in that we can say with adoring hearts — not in the light of the typical shadows only, but rather in the light of the accomplished sacrifice of our Saviour — "The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2: 20). We shall never forget, "The gracious hour when Jesus died."