

Four Types in Israel's Journey

F. B. Hole.

(Extracted from Scripture Truth Vol. 39, 1956-8, page 230.)

Not only do we discover four types of the death of Christ as we open Genesis and read the earliest records of the fallen human race, but again four types are seen as we follow the history of Israel, from the time of their departure from Egypt to their entrance into the land of promise. Indications of the power and significance of His death are seen more clearly in a prophetic way.

The first type is found of course in Exodus 12, when on that night much to be remembered, the Passover was instituted, and the firstborn were sheltered from the death-stroke that fell upon the Egyptians. What was instituted that night was ordered so that, "ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." (Ex. 11: 7). The fact that it was needful for the Lord to **put a difference** plainly infers that by nature **no difference** existed. Here then we see typified the "no difference" doctrine of Romans 3: 22, 73.

The difference was established by the blood of the slain lamb; but notice, that blood not only shed but also **applied** to the outside of the house for the eye of the destroying angel, while the inmates fed on the body of the lamb, roast with fire, with bitter herbs and with the absence of all leaven. Thus, the no difference statement of Romans 3 is at once followed by an unfolding of the propitiatory efficacy of the blood of Christ, to be realized by those who believe.

So also we have the Apostle Paul writing, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast . . . with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5: 7, 8). The type therefore gives some indication not only of the **objective** virtue of the blood of Christ, before the eye of God, meeting His claims so that the sinner is sheltered from judgment, but also of its **subjective** effects in the one who is sheltered - the meaning of His death inwardly digested with the bitterness of repentance, as well as faith, and the leaven of malice and wickedness put away.

These things being indicated in Exodus 12, Exodus 13 begins with the assertion of God's claim upon the firstborn, who had been sheltered from death. They were now to be "sanctified;" that is, set apart for God, as belonging to Him. Of each firstborn God said, "It is Mine." But for many a year Pharaoh had been saying of them and of all Israel — "They are mine; slaves to do my pleasure." Among men, when two parties claim the same object, conflict is bound to ensue.

So it was here. Hitherto it has seemed to be Pharaoh versus Moses and Israel, but now it is revealed to be Pharaoh versus Jehovah; and Exodus 14 relates the Red Sea episode when the people had to "stand still and see the salvation Of the Lord." That salvation furnishes us with the second type of the death of Christ, and we may say, of His resurrection also.

The decisive step in this story took place while Israel stood still. The angel of God, signalled by the visible pillar of cloud, having indicated the way, planted Himself between the Egyptians and Israel, so that to strike Israel they would have to face God. Then came the march through the Sea. To live, man must be immersed in air: immerse him in water and he quickly dies. But the waters of the Sea rising up like walls on either side of them, completed their security. No direct attack from the rear was possible because of the pillar of cloud, and none from the flanks because of the walls of water. By an act of God the waters of death were turned into a means of salvation and life, as the Angel of God with Israel passed through to the further shore. They were equally death and destruction to Pharaoh and his hosts. Consequently every harrassing fear vanished from the hearts of the Israelites. They were brought

into peace and they rejoiced in the hope of their inheritance in the land of promise, as Exodus 15 shows.

There is no difficulty then in seeing here a type of the death and resurrection of Christ bringing us into peace and the hope of glory, as stated in Romans 4: 24 - 5: 2. A type also of that deliverance from the world and from the power of Satan, who dominates the world, as stated in such scriptures as Galatians 1: 4, and Hebrews 2: 14, 15.

As however we read Exodus 15, we cannot help but be struck by the sad descent from the triumphant song of the early verses to the murmuring of the people, recorded before we reach the end. This people, redeemed by power from the hand of Pharaoh, revealed their perversity right through their wilderness journey. When we reach Numbers 21, we find a third type of the death of Christ, which has special reference to this.

To Nicodemus our Lord said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3: 6), and Israel's journey served to display its incorrigible character. In their terrible complaints, recorded in Numbers 21: 1, things came to a climax, and the people were bitten by the fiery serpents. Their poison burnt like fire in the bodies of those bitten, and so we have an apt type of what the New Testament calls, "sin in the flesh." And further we are told that, "sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death." This is prefigured in the fact that, "much people of Israel died."

The remedy that God ordained was the brazen serpent, made by Moses, and lifted up on a pole — a type of the crucified Christ, as so plainly claimed in John 3: 14. The brazen serpent was made in the likeness of a serpent which had the fiery bite, just as Christ came, "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8: 3), so that in His sacrifice "sin in the flesh" might be condemned.

Another feature of the Gospel is emphasised in this type — the necessity of faith. There was no obvious connection, such as human reason could appreciate, between looking at a brazen object on a pole and the cure of poison working in one's veins. Those who looked did so because they believed the word of God in the lips of Moses, bidding them so to do. We venture to think that those who did not look, and died, were the highly intellectual who could not demean themselves so as to act on instructions that seemed so completely irrelevant to their need. The child bidden by his mother to look, would do so in his simplicity; and so would those who were prepared in this matter to become as little children. So it is in the Gospel today.

How appropriately then does this type appear, as the wilderness journey of Israel was nearing its end. Sin being lawlessness, disobedience had been fully manifested as dwelling in their flesh, and there is prefigured the death of Christ as the condemnation of sin in the flesh. Had it not been condemned in His cross there would not have been for us that deliverance from its enslaving power, which the Gospel announces; connected also with the gift of the Holy Spirit, typified in the springing well. We may note too that it was after this that God defeated Balaam's machinations, and made him bless Israel instead of cursing them; and also declare that God "hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." Sin being judged, the saint is beyond condemnation, and may be viewed in the light of the purpose of God.

For the fourth type we pass on to the Book of Joshua, to consider Israel crossing the Jordan, to plant their feet on the land of promise. If Joshua 3 and Joshua 4 be read, we notice that here the ark of the covenant is prominent. There was no ark at the crossing of the Red Sea: there it was rather the Angel of the Lord, who had acted as Destroyer at the Passover, acting as a Deliverer through the waters of death. At Jordan the waters roll back before the ark, directly they were touched by the feet of the priests who bore it.

On this occasion Jordan was running in flood, yet the waters failed before the ark, and the bed of the river was dry until all the people passed over. But the people were identified with the ark, since, where it had stood, twelve stones were placed, representing the tribes just as twelve stones, taken from the spot where the ark had stood, were erected as a memorial in the promised land. In after days a God-fearing Israelite might stand at the spot and say: There, immersed in the waters our twelve tribes lie while at the same time we stand, as risen from the waters, in the land that was promised to us from God.

Here therefore we have a type of the death and resurrection of Christ with which the believer is so truly identified that he can be spoken of as not only "dead with Christ" (Col. 2: 20), but also "risen with Christ" (Col. 3: 1). We consequently are to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Nor is this all, for we are so truly identified with Christ in His risen life and glory, that as the Epistle to the Ephesians declares, God has, "made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2: 6).

At the end of Joshua 4, the people are found in the land that God had given them, but immediately we read Joshua 5, we find that there were kings of the Amorites holding the land, and that they had to be dispossessed. Israel was consequently committed to a time of conflict. This also is typical, for the Ephesian epistle, which shows the believer seated in Christ in heavenly places, ends with a chapter on conflict, indicating the need of spiritual armour for it. In our case it is not that we have to fight to get possession, but that, being in possession, we are in conflict to retain it. Hence in Ephesians 6, the "armour" is mostly defensive, against "the world-rulers of this darkness" (R.V.), whose aim is to dislodge us, and having done all we are to "stand."

To sum up: it is remarkable how comprehensively these four types prefigure the wonderful results of the death and resurrection of Christ. Their significance doubtless would not have been plain, until He had come and accomplished His mighty work, but we now read them in the light of the New Testament, and discern something of their meaning.

They set forth firstly, shelter from judgment in virtue of the blood-shedding of the Lamb of God. Secondly, salvation by His death and resurrection from the power of Satan and his world, so that we are brought to God. Thirdly, the condemnation of sin in the flesh, so that in the energy of the Spirit, given to us, we may be delivered from its thrall. Fourthly, our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, so that entering in spirit into our heavenly possessions, we may live our earthly lives with our minds and affections set on things above where Christ is.

Many of us may say we have heard these things often. Yes, but how have they affected us? What kind of life are we living?