

The True Joshua



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *1 Cor. 10:1–13; Matt. 2:15; Josh. 1:1–3; Acts 3:22–26; Heb. 3:7–4:11; 2 Cor. 10:3–5.*

Memory Text: “Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come” (*1 Corinthians 10:11, ESV*).

In the book of Joshua, there is a sense that the life of its main character points beyond itself to a reality that is much greater than the man himself. We see this principle all through the Bible, such as with the land of Canaan, a symbol of our eternal hope in a new earth. And, of course, the earthly sanctuary service pointed to a greater reality: “But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation” (*Heb. 9:11, NKJV*).

But the question arises: In what way does Joshua point to a future fulfillment? How can we be sure that such an interpretation of the book is legitimate? What are the biblical principles that control the application of the book of Joshua to New Testament realities and to end-time events?

This week, we will look at principles of biblical interpretation concerning typology. We will study how the Bible itself contains indicators of typology and how the life of Joshua foreshadows the ministry of the Messiah and points to symbolism fulfilled in the church as well as in the consummation of human history.

* Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, December 6.

Biblical Typology

Study the following Scriptures that refer to types and try to define what biblical typology is: Rom. 5:14, 1 Cor. 10:1–13, Heb. 8:5, and Heb. 9:23.

These biblical passages use the term “type” (Greek *typos*) or “antitype” (Greek *antitypos*) to refer to the way the New Testament writer defined the relationship between an Old Testament text or event and its meaning in his own time or in the future.

Typology is a specific interpretation of persons, events, or institutions that prefigure Jesus or other realities contained in the gospel. The type corresponds to the antitype as a mold or a hollow form that reflects the original form, even if the latter, the antitype, more fully fulfills the purpose of the type. Thus, the biblical type was shaped according to a divine design that had existed concretely, or conceptually, in the mind of God, and it serves to shape future copies (antitypes).

It is crucial to understand that the writers of the New Testament did not randomly attribute a typological meaning to some Old Testament texts in order to make a point. An Old Testament type is always validated in the prophetic writings before it acquires an antitypical fulfillment in the New Testament.

Look at how David appears in the Old Testament and then how he is prefigured in the New. What lessons can we learn about how typology works from this example?

a. David (*Ps. 22:1, 14–18*): _____

b. The new David (*Jer. 23:5; Isa. 9:5, 6; Isa. 11:1–5*): _____

c. The antitypical David (*John 19:24*): _____

By looking at these texts, we discover that the Old Testament itself provides the key for identifying and applying types in the Scriptures. That is, New Testament writers, whose Scripture was the Old Testament, were inspired by the Holy Spirit to use the Old Testament types to reveal “present truth” (*2 Pet. 1:12*), especially about Jesus and His ministry.

Type and Antitype

Interpreters of the Bible cannot arbitrarily decide on what constitutes a biblical type or how that particular type is fulfilled in the New Testament and beyond. The Bible itself provides some controls and principles as to the application of biblical typology.

Similarly, the New Testament unfolds the antitypical fulfillment of a type in three distinct phases: (1) in the life of Christ (the Christological fulfillment), (2) in the experience of the church (the ecclesiological fulfillment), and (3) at the end of time (the eschatological fulfillment).

We can find these types and antitypes all through the Bible, and they are very helpful in showing readers how to understand the Bible and what truths the Word of God is teaching about Jesus, salvation, and the ultimate hope that we have.

Look at the following Old Testament types: Israel, the Exodus, and the sanctuary. How is each fulfilled in the three antitypical phases: the Christological, the ecclesiological, and the eschatological?

1. Israel

- a. Christological phase (*Matt. 2:15*)
- b. Ecclesiological phase (*Gal. 6:16*)
- c. Eschatological phase (*Rev. 7:4–8, 14*)

2. The Exodus

- a. Christological phase (*Matt. 2:19–21*)
- b. Ecclesiological phase (*2 Cor. 6:17*)
- c. Eschatological phase (*Rev. 18:4*)

3. The Sanctuary

- a. Christological phase (*John 1:14, John 2:21, Matt. 26:61*)
- b. Ecclesiological phase (*1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 2 Cor. 6:16*)
- c. Eschatological phase (*Rev. 3:12, Rev. 11:19, Rev. 21:3, Rev. 21:22*)

“Since Scripture has a single divine Author, the various parts of Scripture are consistent with each other. . . . All the doctrines of the Bible will cohere with each other; interpretations of individual passages will harmonize with the totality of what Scripture teaches on a given subject.”—Raoul Dederen, ed., *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), p. 65.

What do you do when, at times, you find it hard to understand the meaning of certain passages?

Joshua, the Type

In the light of biblical typology, what is the significance of the multiple parallelism between the lives of Moses and Joshua? See *Exod. 3:1, 2; Josh. 1:1–3; Num. 13:1, 2; Josh. 2:1; Exod. 3:5; Josh. 5:15*.

As we discovered in the first week, Joshua was presented as a new Moses who, in the life of the second generation, repeated the most significant steps of the Exodus from Egypt. Just as Moses was, Joshua was commissioned by a personal encounter with the Lord. Under the leadership of both Moses and Joshua, Israel's fame among the nations inspired fear. Moses led Israel in crossing the Red Sea, and Joshua led Israel in a miraculous crossing of the Jordan. Both leaders were reminded of the necessity of circumcision and the importance of the Passover. Manna began to fall in the time of Moses, and it ended with Joshua. Both were commanded to take off their sandals. The outstretched hand of both signaled victory for Israel. Moses gave instructions for the division of the land and the institution of cities of refuge. Joshua fulfilled the instructions. Both gave a farewell address to the nation and renewed the covenant for the people at the end of their ministry.

Study Deuteronomy 18:15–19, Deuteronomy 34:10–12, John 1:21, Acts 3:22–26, and Acts 7:37. Who fulfills the prophecy of Moses about a prophet like himself? How does Joshua fit into the picture?

Joshua's life was a partial fulfillment of the prophecy made by Moses (*Deut. 18:15, 18*). However, the prophecy made by Moses was not fulfilled in its ultimate sense. In its ultimate sense, the prophecy could be accomplished (or fulfilled) only by the Messiah. The Messiah knew the Father intimately (*John 1:14, 18*); He was true and revealed God truthfully (*Luke 10:22, John 14:6, Matt. 22:16*). God indeed put His words in His mouth (*John 14:24*). So, both the life of Moses and that of Joshua become types of the coming Messiah, Jesus.

How central is Jesus to your own walk with the Lord? Why must Jesus, and what He has done for you, be the foundation of your whole Christian experience?

The True Joshua, the Antitype

The story of Joshua must be seen through the prism of typology. The wars Joshua conducted are historical events, constituting an essential segment of Israel's history. The goal of these wars is to settle the Israelites in the Promised Land, where they can enjoy their allotted inheritance in peace and establish a new society based on the principles of God's law.

Later, Old Testament authors, such as Isaiah, present the work of the Messiah as also consisting of allotting the "desolate inheritances [to His people]" (*Isa. 49:8, NIV*), using the same terminology that is so frequent in the book of Joshua. As the task of Joshua had been to apportion the land to the Israelites, so the Messiah, portrayed as the new Joshua, assigns the spiritual inheritance to a new Israel.

Read Hebrews 3:7–4:11. How does the New Testament confirm that Joshua, the new Moses, is himself a type of Jesus Christ?

The authors of the New Testament presented many aspects of the ministry of Jesus Christ in terms of Joshua's work. As Joshua stepped into Canaan after 40 years in the wilderness, so the "antitypical Joshua," Jesus, entered His earthly ministry after 40 days in the wilderness (*Matt. 4:1–11, Luke 4:1–13*) and His heavenly ministry after 40 days in the wilderness of this earth (*Acts 1:3, 9–11; Heb. 1:2*).

After Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan (His "crossing of the Jordan" [*Matt. 3:13–17, Mark 1:9–11*]), the gospel writers quote from Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1, from a Messianic psalm and from a song about the Suffering Servant of Yahweh (*Matt. 3:17, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22*). Consequently, through His baptism, Jesus is presented as the Divine Warrior who will—through a life of faithful obedience, even unto death—wage the wars of Yahweh against the evil forces. His life and death on the cross brought about the casting out of Satan, led the conquest over our spiritual enemies, offered spiritual rest to His people, and allotted an inheritance for the redeemed (*Eph. 4:8, Heb. 1:4, Heb. 9:15*).

What does it mean to be able to "rest" in what Christ has done for us? That is, how can we have assurance that Jesus has defeated Satan in our behalf?

Joshua and Us

Joshua, as a type, points beyond the ministry of Jesus Christ to a fulfillment in the life of the church, Christ's body. In what sense do the wars Israel fought under Joshua foreshadow the spiritual struggles of the church? How are they different? See *1 Tim. 1:18*, *2 Tim. 4:7*, *Eph. 6:10–12*, *2 Cor. 10:3–5*, and *Acts 20:32*.

The writers of the New Testament recognize the ecclesiological (church) fulfillment of the Joshua typology. The members of Christ's body, the church, are involved in a spiritual warfare against evil forces; nevertheless, they enjoy the rest of God's grace (*Heb. 4:9–11*) and the blessings of their spiritual inheritance.

What do these texts say about the ultimate fulfillment of the Joshua typology? *1 Pet. 1:4*, *Col. 3:24*, *Rev. 20:9*, *Rev. 21:3*.

The final and complete fulfillment of the Joshua typology will be accomplished at the second coming of Jesus Christ (apocalyptic/eschatological aspect).

Joshua's life reflected so much of God's character that certain aspects of his life took on a prophetic character foreshadowing the activity and person of the Messiah.

For us, today, the Messiah has already come. His ministry does not need to be prefigured, but we still have the privilege of reflecting His character—the glory that Christ longed to share with His disciples (*John 17:22*) and that can become ours by contemplating the character of Christ (*2 Cor. 3:18*). The more we contemplate Jesus, the more we reflect the beauty of His character. This is so foundational to what our daily walk with Christ should lead to. This is why time in the Word, every day, is so important. This is why, too, we should also spend time dwelling on the life and character and teachings of Jesus. By beholding, yes, we do become changed.

Joshua, the type, asked the Israelites: “ ‘How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers has given you?’ ” (*Josh. 18:3, NKJV*). How would Jesus, the antitype of Joshua, phrase that question today?

Further Thought: “Christ’s mission was not understood by the people of His time. . . . The traditions, maxims, and enactments of men hid from them the lessons which God intended to convey. These maxims and traditions became an obstacle to their understanding and practice of true religion. And when the Reality came, in the person of Christ, they did not recognize in Him the fulfillment of all their types, the substance of all their shadows. They rejected the antitype, and clung to their types and useless ceremonies. The Son of God had come, but they continued to ask for a sign. The message, ‘Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,’ they answered by demands for a miracle. . . . The gospel of Christ was a stumbling block to them because they demanded signs instead of a Saviour. They expected the Messiah to prove His claims by mighty deeds of conquest, to establish His empire on the ruins of earthly kingdoms. This expectation Christ answered in the parable of the sower. Not by force of arms, not by violent interpositions, was the kingdom of God to prevail, but by the implanting of a new principle in the hearts of men.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 34, 35.

“The church needs faithful Calebs and Joshuas, who are ready to accept eternal life on God’s simple condition of obedience. Our churches are suffering for laborers. The world is our field. Missionaries are wanted in cities and villages that are more certainly bound by idolatry than are the pagans of the East, who have never seen the light of truth. The true missionary spirit has deserted the churches that make so exalted a profession; their hearts are no longer aglow with love for souls and a desire to lead them into the fold of Christ. We want earnest workers. Are there none to respond to the cry that goes up from every quarter: ‘Come over . . . and help us?’”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 156.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ How does biblical typology help you better understand the ministry of Jesus Christ on your behalf?
- ❷ In what respect is our spiritual warfare like the conquest of Canaan, and how is it different?
- ❸ Contemplate on the ultimate fulfillment of the Joshua typology. How does the picture of a world without pain, suffering, and death give us real hope in the daily struggles of life?
- ❹ Joshua reflected the character of God to the extent that he foreshadowed the ministry of Christ. What are some practical ways that you can allow Jesus to reflect His character in you more completely?

Trusting in God's Timing

For four years, Kim Sun argued with his parents about the Bible every time he came home to South Korea on vacation from his theology studies at the Adventist University of the Philippines. After graduating, he kept touting Adventist doctrines as he studied for a master's degree in theology in South Korea. The arguments grew so intense that his parents' church organized a prayer vigil for his parents, who served as a church deacon and deaconess. About 100 people prayed that the parents wouldn't be swayed into leaving their church. Finally, Mother asked Sun to stop discussing the Bible.

Sun was dismayed until he heard a preacher say that God has an individual plan for each person. He realized that his plan for his parents might not be God's plan. He decided to pray and trust God's timing. He didn't talk to his parents about the Bible for two years.

In the meanwhile, Sun completed his master's and got a job with the church. He dreamed of becoming a pastor, but he didn't receive a job offer.

As time passed, Mother began to wonder if her own beliefs were blocking her son's dreams. She overheard someone ask Sun if his parents were Adventist, and he replied that they belonged to another denomination. She asked Sun directly, "Would it be helpful to you if we joined your church?"

Sun understood that his parents were worried about his future, but he didn't want them to become Adventists for his sake. "It wouldn't be helpful," he said. "You need to study the Bible for yourselves and then decide."

Sun introduced his parents to a pastor in their area, and they started Bible studies. None of Sun's Bible arguments had convinced them over five years. But as they studied the Bible, they saw Jesus' love in truths that they hadn't noticed previously. After two months, they joined the Adventist Church.

Sun was so happy! He was the first Adventist in his family, and now his parents had joined him. He remembered the joy that he had experienced several years earlier when a man's life was changed after he introduced him to Jesus in the Philippines. He remembered his desire at the time to become a full-time missionary.



Sun decided to return to the Philippines as a missionary with the 1000 Missionary Movement, an organization that is part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

Kim Sun is associate director of the 1000 Missionary Movement, whose headquarters in Silang, Philippines, were constructed with the help of a 1996 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. Read more next week.

Part I: Overview

Key Text: *1 Corinthians 10:11*

Study Focus: *1 Cor. 10:1–13, Matt. 2:15, Josh. 1:1–3, Acts 3:22–26, Heb. 3:7–4:11, 2 Cor. 10:3–5.*

Typology is one of the main ways the New Testament authors use the Old Testament. It is rooted in history and theology. In the Old Testament, types are like historical previews that anticipate the realities brought about by Jesus. In this sense, typology is a form of prophecy, through events, rather than through words. Typology also is grounded in theology because God guides events, selects specific individuals, and establishes institutions that prophetically foreshadow the redemptive realities triggered by Jesus. Like prophecy, typology points to God’s sovereignty over history.

Despite the importance of typological interpretation of Scripture, many Christians are not familiar with the topic. The study of Joshua offers an excellent opportunity to learn about biblical typology and to consider the criteria for identifying types in the Old Testament, their fulfillment in the New Testament, and the practical relevance of typology in the present-day Adventist journey.

Through typology, which highlights God’s patterns throughout Scripture, people can grasp His sovereignty over history and His enduring mercy toward humanity, despite the persistent sinfulness of His children. History is the platform upon which God unveils His love for humanity. This revelation unfolds through various stages, intricately tied to the unique expressions of the eternal covenant between God and His creation. These expressions form the backbone of typology. The patterns found in Joshua’s typology highlight God’s desire to save His people so that they may enjoy His presence and rest, without fear, in His incredible love.

Part II: Commentary

Definition

It is not an exaggeration to affirm that “historically, Seventh-day Adventism is not only a prophetic movement; it is also a typological movement.” Since the beginning of Adventism, “typology was a method used to evaluate, experience, and understand Adventism identity, role, and message in salvation history.”—Erick Mendieta, “Typology and Adventist Eschatological Identity: Friend or Foe?” *Andrews University Seminary*

Student Journal, vol. 1, no. 1 (Spring 2015), pp. 45, 46. There are two kinds of typology: vertical and horizontal. Vertical typology concerns the relationship between the heavenly and earthly sanctuary. It is the most widely known and studied within Adventism. Horizontal typology involves the relationship between the Old and New Testaments, and it is one of the primary ways to discern Jesus within the writings of “Moses and all the prophets” (*Luke 24:27*). This typology is the focus of our lesson for this week.

The traditional understanding of typology can be summarized in the following definition: “the study of persons, events, or institutions (the types) that God has divinely designed to prefigure their end-time fulfillments (the antitypes) in Christ and in the gospel realities brought about by Him.”—Richard M. Davidson, *In the Footsteps of Joshua* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1995), p. 26. Such a definition is not arbitrarily imposed on Scripture but rather it emerges from the survey of the passages wherein the Greek term *typos* (type) occurs in the New Testament (*1 Cor. 10:1–13; Rom. 5:12–21; 1 Pet. 3:18–22; Hebrews 8, 9*), as shown in the seminal work of Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Typos Structures* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981).

Identifying Joshua Typology

According to Davidson’s definition, there are four criteria for identifying types and antitypes: historicity, correspondence, prefiguration, and escalation. First, types are historical realities documented by the Old Testament. When the New Testament author looks back at the Old Testament to find types, he seeks events, persons, or institutions rooted in history. For instance, there is no typological import in parables (*compare with Josh. 9:7–15, 2 Sam. 12:1–4*). In typology, God is acting in history, creating patterns of prophetic import to be later recognized by His people and prophets. From the New Testament perspective, there is no doubt that Joshua is a historical character. In his final speech, Stephen recounts Joshua’s role as Israel’s leader during the conquest, during which time the tabernacle of testimony was brought to Canaan (*see Acts 7:44, 45, NASB*). Joshua also is mentioned in Hebrews 4:7, 8 as the one who brought temporary rest to Israel.

Another fundamental step in identifying typological relationships between the Old and New Testaments is the presence of legitimate correspondences. These correspondences must be historically valid, genuine, and not simply coincidental or imaginative. In addition to the correspondences mentioned in Wednesday’s study, Joshua and Jesus share the same name, which is differentiated in Hebrew and Greek, as in English. This does not appear to

be incidental for two reasons. Primarily, this appellation is the first in the biblical canon with a theophoric element, specifically, a particle referring to God's name. Joshua's name is the combination of the Hebrew verb *ysh* ' (to save) and the particle *yo* (jo), which is an abbreviation of Yahweh (usually translated as "the LORD"). Second, Joshua is not his original name. Moses, probably under divine influence, changed his name from Hoshea (salvation) to Joshua (Yahweh is salvation) (*Num. 13:16*).

The third element to be considered is prefiguration. God prophetically designs legitimate types that could be recognizable even before their fulfillment, at least in their basic contours. This element reinforces the notion that the New Testament authors are not creatively inventing connections between the Testaments. The prophetic element of the Old Testament type has already been inscriptured in the biblical text. For this reason, the original audience could have grasped this predictive import through clues left by the inspired authors. Once most of the clues were found, as the readers compared one previous revelation with a more recent one, it is only natural that the types would become more evident as the canon grew.

Two important points need to be emphasized again here. First, only the Christ event could reveal the Messianic import of the Old Testament in full force. Second, in the history of interpretation, some types were recognized only in retrospect. Yet, these facts do not preclude the existence of prophetic import in the original context and the possibility of recognition of this import by the original audience. Identifying these textual warrants serves as an interpretative control, preventing the reader from imposing on the text something that is not there. Without such controls, typology easily degenerates into allegory. Allegory was the predominant method of biblical interpretation during the Middle Ages. Unlike typology, allegory finds spiritual meanings in the Old Testament that are foreign to the author's intention and the original context.

An additional textual warrant, validating the Joshua typology in the Old Testament, may be mentioned here: the unique character of Joshua's connection with the mission of the Angel of the Lord, the preexistent Christ in the Pentateuch. Davidson suggests that "the descriptions of Joshua's mission and that of the Angel of the Lord contain numerous parallel expressions, using exactly the same Hebrew words. Both Joshua and the Angel of the Lord were to 'cross over before' and 'go before' Israel and 'bring them into the land' and 'cause them to inherit' it (cf. Ex. 23:23; Num. 27:17, 21; Deut. 3:28; 31:3, 23)." Davidson also underscores the direct connection between Joshua (the postexilic priest) and the Messiah in Zechariah 6:12, in which "the prophet equates the name of Joshua with the Messiah": "Then speak to him [Joshua], saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH!" ' "—Davidson, *In the Footsteps of Joshua*, pp. 29, 30.

The final criterion for identifying typology that is to be mentioned here is escalation. The concept of escalation is well illustrated by the metaphor of “shadow,” used by the author of Hebrews to explain the relationship between the Levitical system of offerings and sacrifices, including festivals and rituals, which pointed to the Jesus event. Escalation involves an elevation or intensification from type to antitype: a crescendo from local to universal, from provisory to definitive, from temporal to eternal, and the human to the divine sphere.

This progression is evident in the Joshua typology. Just as Joshua led the conquest of Canaan and provided temporary rest for Israel, the new Joshua commands the heavenly army in the cosmic battle against “principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (*Eph. 6:12, NKJV*). His victory is definitive and gives eternal rest to God’s people.

Scriptural typology is a fascinating area of biblical study and should not be restricted to scholars. In his dialogue on the road to Emmaus, Jesus tenderly rebuked the two men for failing to read the Scriptures typologically: “ ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (*Luke 24:25–27, NKJV*). May Seventh-day Adventists avoid making the same mistake today.

Part III: Life Application

God’s Consistence Today

The different types are grounded in historical patterns that have been influenced by divine interventions, as a result of God’s promises. They demonstrate God’s faithfulness in His interactions with humanity and His supreme authority over history. Typology is not just a method for interpreting the Old Testament in relation to Jesus; it is also a way to interpret history.

How do you think God’s consistency and control over history can help you to deal with the uncertainties of human existence?

Types Today

On the one hand, the study of typology helps us understand who Jesus is and what God is doing through Him. It shows how such individuals as Moses, Aaron, and David foreshadow the roles of the Messiah as priest, prophet, and king. Similarly, institutional types, such as the sacrifices and religious festivals like Passover, reveal the substitutionary nature of His mission.

Typological events also point to the things Jesus will accomplish on behalf of His people. On the other hand, typology reveals God's expectations regarding His children.

Considering these two aspects of typology, what do the following types reveal about Jesus, and how can you use their examples to model your life according to God's will?

- 1. Isaac lying down on the altar in submission** (*Genesis 22; compare with Heb. 11:17–19*)

- 2. Joseph as the deliverer of his family in his interaction with his brothers** (*Genesis 44–45*)

- 3. Moses as the deliverer and intercessor of Israel** (*Exod. 32:30–34*)

- 4. David as the chosen (messiah) king in his interaction with Saul** (*1 Samuel 24, 26*)
