

Christ as Portrayed in the Four Gospels

in Connection

with Old Testament Parallels

or

A Short Introduction to

Biblical Symbolism and Typology

by

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INTRODUCTION

To the worst critics the four different gospels appeared to be contradicting accounts, which, because of their differences, leave us no absolute certainty concerning the Person of Christ. Many of these supposed contradictions, however, depend on their own standards. When these standards are proven wrong, the contradictions disappear. One of these is chronology. Very much ado has been made about harmonizing the gospels and much criticism has been leveled against some gospels for alleged discrepancies. However, the gospel writers are generally not very interested in the chronology of Christ's life at all. Matthew, for example, gathers many of the Lord's words and combines them in the Sermon on the Mount; whereas Luke often gives the occasion at which the various words were uttered.

Now this all has a purpose. But by raising our own standards we will altogether fail to recognize the design in the inspired writings. However, the believer who searches faithfully for what God has to say, will dig deeper and go far beyond the making of just surface observations. For just like the awed astronomer, he knows that the Creator has made many more stars, greater in glory and beauty, than so many that have been discovered already.

In this paper a number of remarkable parallels between the four gospels, as portraits of Christ and various O.T. ideas, are studied. Irenaeus spoke of one of these parallels in his defense of the canon. There should be four gospels he maintained, for the number four has a sacred significance. So there are four winds and four faces of the cherubim in Ezekiel and Revelation, namely the lion,

the calf, the man, and the eagle.¹

As regards the meaningfulness of the number four, it is interesting to see that the Bible speaks of ‘the four corners of the earth’ (Rev. 7.1). Thus the four corners of the sheet seen in Peter’s vision (Acts 10.11), seem to denote the *universal* acceptance of the gentiles from all over the world (unclean animals); besides the Jews of old (clean animals). So also the four horns of the altar of burnt-offering bespeak the efficacy of the offering as extending into all directions.

From the geographical direction to the ethnographical dimension is only a small metaphorical jump. Luke, a cultured Greek, addresses a cultured Greek. Matthew, himself a Jew, addresses Jews and appeals to them by means of various important, longstanding, Jewish concepts. Mark seems to be appealing to the disciplined Roman soldier, who loves immediate action in the service of the empire. And finally John awakens the deepest mystic element in religious minded people everywhere. Thus the inspired records combine their characters to form a universal appeal to the entire world.

The Cherubim Parallel

According to Irenaeus the four different cherubic faces symbolize four aspects of Christ’s Person and Work. The lion signifies His majestic bearing, the calf His priestly office, the man His incarnation and the eagle represents the Holy Ghost as flying over the Church. Stating that each gospel brings out one of these facets, he linked each cherubic face with a specific gospel. The gospel according to John, starting with Christ’s divinity and incarnation, is represented by the lion; Luke, setting out with Zacharias’ sacrifice and priestly office, is symbolized by the calf; Matthew,

¹. Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), p.43.

beginning with His human genealogy, is typified by the man; and, finally, Mark is denoted by the eagle, for his account is commenced with an announcement of the spirit of prophecy, quoting Isaiah.² This is not the usual arrangement that eventually obtained in the West. The order was changed as follows: John was taken to be signified by the eagle, Matthew by the man, Luke by the ox and Mark by the lion.³ A certain Lange interchanged the position of the man and the ox in the above given order.⁴

Many critics have spumed the linking of such connections as products of the imagination. And particularly today, when so many modems see no unique source of Inspiration behind both the Old and the New Testament, they must think that such ideas are Christian fancies arbitrarily imposed on ancient Jewish symbols. We will attempt to show however that these explanations not only make perfect sense, but that they must be ‘superinspired,’ so to speak, by the Holy Spirit, as the Editor, so that even the gospel writers themselves were not always fully aware of what they wrote; very much like David could not have understood his description of the Lord’s death in the twenty-second psalm.

But they must have had some intelligent goal in their respective records. Bellett compares this to historians, or biographers, who set out to describe the life of a person from a specific vantage point.⁵ So one author could write about Napoleon as a military genius, another as a man of state and again another as a husband and lover and still another as a scholar.

². F.W. Grant, *The Numerical Bible, Matthew to John*, (Neptune: Loizeaux Brothers, 1974), p.16.

³. Idem, p.17.

⁴. Ibid.

⁵. J.G. Bellett, *The Evangelists* (Oak Park, Ill.: Bible Truth Publishers, [g.d.]), p.3.

In case of the gospels it turns out that the order of the four cherubic faces in Revelation 4 corresponds to the four gospels in the order we have them, thus giving the key to interpret each.⁶ In this order the lion, bespeaking majesty, alludes to that “Lion from the tribe of Judah” (Rev. 5.5), whom we see revered in Matthew as the newborn King, receiving gold, frankincense and myrrh. The ox refers to Him, Who “took upon him the form of a servant,” (Phil.2.7) and as such we see Him plodding along in Mark, so much that it even was said: “And they had no leisure so much as to eat,” (Mark 6.31). The man designates that one, “born from a woman, born under law,” (Gal.4.4) of Whom it was said by the angel Gabriel, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,” (Luke 1.35). And lastly the eagle, soaring in its lofty course high above the world, is a fitting type of Christ, as the Son of God, “the one being in the bosom of the Father” (John 1.18) and the One “who did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man,” (John 2.24,25). That this relationship between gospel and symbol really exists is borne out time and again⁷, so that it can be said that like a golden thread it runs through the fabric of the individual gospel.

So Matthew, whose theme is Christ as the King Messiah, quotes the O.T. thirty-six times, more than any two gospels put together. Only Matthew mentions the name Emmanuel⁸, citing

⁶. Walter Scott, *Bible Handbook, New Testament* (Charlotte, N.C.: Books for Christians, 1977), p.109. I mention it here that in Rev. 4 the cherubim have each six wings, just as the seraphim in Is. 6. The cherubim in Ez. 1 have each four wings.

⁷. Most of the examples given come from W. Scott, op. cit., pp. 111 ff.

⁸. From Hebrew עִמָּנוּאֵל [im-mah-noo-ale]. i.e. ‘God with us.’

Isaiah's prophecy about the virgin giving birth.⁹ The genealogy given proves Christ's right to the throne; for He is the son of David, the king (Mt. 1.6). For, although born of Mary, He is seen here as Joseph's legitimate son, insomuch as Joseph did not repudiate his fiancée and accepted her child as his own. Matthew uses the term 'Kingdom of the Heavens' thirty-two times. And it was exactly this that the Jews anticipated. As to the entrance into Jerusalem, it is only Matthew who records the shout 'son of David.'

Mark appropriately omits any genealogy, for his topic stresses the *service* of Christ. The Greek word for *immediately* (also translated as 'straightway' and 'forthwith') occurs about forty times. Christ did not waste any time. As the servant Christ obeys the Father and does not know "of that day and that hour" (Mk. 13.32). A servant works all the time and does not abuse his freedom, lest his master "come suddenly and find you sleeping" (Mk. 13.36). In Mark Christ is not heard saying that He has the power to call a dozen legions of angels, or giving any grand claim as to possessing the power on earth and in heaven. In this gospel He is not called Lord and He does not address God as His Father, except for the painful Gethsemane experience.

Luke, accentuating Christ as the Son of Man, the seed of the woman, gives His mother's genealogy (Joseph being the son-in-law of Heli) and traces His lineage all the way back to Adam, "son of God" (Lu. 3.38), in this manner emphasizing the fatherhood of the Creator over all humans. In harmony with this Luke extends the quote from Isaiah 40 and includes the phrase "and *all flesh* shall see the salvation of God." Matthew went only as far as to remind Jewry of the One Who "will

⁹. עלמה [al-mah] (Is. 7.14) clearly means *virgin*, as is shown by its use in Gen. 24, Prov. 30.19 and elsewhere. The modernistic translation of 'young woman' is a late development of the Hebrew language, now in use in Israel. The Greek Septuagint translation of παρθενο [par-the-nos] also attests to its ancient meaning.

save his people from all their sins” (Mt. 1.21; cf. Ps. 130.4-8). At the commission of the twelve the injunction “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not,” is avoided. It is only Luke who gives the account of the Good Samaritan, who shows that all men are neighbors to one another. The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the account of the prodigal son are only given here. This all shows Christ as the unique man, who is concerned with all of mankind. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lu. 19.10). Truly Christ is the Son of Man (in the Greek ‘man’ here denotes the human being in general)!

John puts most of the weight on Christ’s divinity. Somebody called this gospel the divine picture album of Christ, every chapter showing a different aspect of Christ’s Person.¹⁰ The more you read in this gospel the more you see that for Christ it was indeed “no robbery . . . to be equal¹¹ to God (Phil. 2.6). Everything in this gospel manifests Christ’s supernaturality. He is shown as the believer’s everything, namely as the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Resurrection, the Word and so on and so forth. Only in this gospel the agony of Gethsemane is left out. But when they came to arrest Him in that garden, it is John alone who records that at His simple affirmation “It is I” an entire band of policemen fell backwards to the ground, so much they were overwhelmed by sudden divine power (John 18.6). And it is here that Pilate is told, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above” (John 19.11).

¹⁰. For instance (acc. to chapters) Son of God, Son of Man, The Great Teacher, The Great Soul-winner, The Great Physician, The Bread of Life, etc. Certainly, though John writes the simplest Greek, the words are most pregnant with meaning!

¹¹. The Greek word for *equal* is in the neuter plural, meaning *equal things* (ἰσα θεῶν, [ee-sa thè-ôy]); *equal things along with God* {the dative, third case of association}, thus implying His co-eternality, co-omnipotence, etc. being truly *co-equal*.

The examples given are only the tip of the iceberg. But let it suffice to show that both what is said and what is omitted (by that Great Editor, the Holy Spirit, Who alone supervised the work of the four inspired writers), all lends grandeur to this fourfold symphony of voices, lauding Christ's manifold Person.

The Prophetic Parallel

Just as Christ's fourfold ministry was symbolized by the ancient cherubim, so also the prophets left a four voiced witness which corresponds *exactly* to the four gospels.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous BRANCH, and a *King* shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”¹²

“ . . . , behold, I will bring forth my *servant* the BRANCH.”¹³

“ . . . , behold, the *man* whose name is the BRANCH, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord.”¹⁴

The three Branch prophecies correspond to the respective themes of the three synoptic gospels. There is no Branch prophecy that is in line with the character of the gospel according to John. It must be because in the synoptic gospels Christ's threefold *human* ministry is borne out. However there is a text that corresponds wonderfully with the themes of the Johannine account.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *The Mighty God*, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”¹⁵

¹². Jer. 23.5.

¹³. Zech. 3.8.

¹⁴. Zech. 6.12.

¹⁵. Is. 9.6 (Appropriate words have been italicized for emphasis).

John writes much to stress Christ's eternal Sonship and divinity. It must be pointed out how exact the inspiration of Holy Writ is in distinguishing between Christ's being *born* as a man, but *given* as the Son.¹⁶ He was the Son of God from all eternity, unique,¹⁷ and ever in the bosom of the Father. He did not *become* the Son, as if only born from the Holy Spirit. He always *IS* the Son. That is why it was appropriate for Isaiah to use the verb 'to give.' There is therefore certainly something to be said for the term 'plenary/ verbal inspiration!' The other titles of this verse can all be found in John.

A child is born	–	“The Word <i>became</i> flesh” (John 1.14);
A Son is given	–	“And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not (lit. “did not take hold of it,” John 1.5).” “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God . . .” (John 1.12);
The government shall be upon his shoulder;	–	“As thou hast given him power over all flesh . . . (John 17.2);
And his name shall be called Wonderful.	–	“Why, herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he has opened mine eyes. (Cf. Mk. 7.37; 12.11 Lu. 4.36);
Counsellor	–	All through the gospels Christ gives the best advice. Christ said: “But be not ye called Rabbi,” (i.e. ‘teacher’ Mt.23.8). “Ye call me master (i.e. ‘teacher’) and lord: and ye say well; for so I am,” (John 13.13). And so He says in Matthew also that we should call nobody our father and we should let nobody call us their leader. For all these things is the heavenly Father (Mat. 23.8);
The Mighty God	–	Thomas said, “my Lord and my God,” (John 20.28);

¹⁶. Compare Paul's “. . . and *gave* him as head over all things to the Church (Eph.1.22).” “As” is a more accurate rendering than “to be the.”

¹⁷. “Unique,” or “only in its kind” is the proper translation of the Greek “only-begotten.”

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|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Everlasting
Father | – | As the Creator Christ is the Father of all humans and has the power to give them eternal life. (Cf. John 1.3,10; 3.36); |
| The Prince of
Peace | – | “Peace I leave unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,” (John 14.27; cf. 1 John 4.18). |

These titles, of course, are also fulfilled in the other gospels, but in the fourth one *par excellence* because of Christ’s divinity as God the Son Who dwells in the bosom of the Father.

The Patriarchal Parallel

In the epistle to the Hebrews Melchizedek is pictured as a type of Christ as the supreme high priest (chap.7). So also many expositors¹⁸ have seen types of Christ in other O.T. figures, each leaving a special impress. In connection with the four gospels we only need to mention Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Starting with Joseph, we see him at rest in his father’s tent as the beloved son. However, when he was sent to his brothers the trouble began and he landed in Egypt. So Christ left the Father and soon, upon His incarnation, His earthly parents were told in a dream to flee to Egypt, to avoid death at the hands of the jealous Herod. Christ came down amidst His own people, the Jews, but they rejected Him. Hence the Kingdom of Heaven became the mystical one, which we find in the Church (Mt. 16.18). Joseph’s many colored coat was rent and daubed with blood and Christ was put on the cross by His own people. After much suffering Joseph was made king by Pharaoh over all Egypt. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name,” (Phil. 2.9). In the Sermon on the Mount Christ acts as the King, giving His own constitution. After His resurrection from the dead He said: “All power is given unto me in

¹⁸. C. Knapp, *Joseph A Fruitful Bough* (Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., [n.d.]); J.G. Bellett, *The Patriarchs* (Oak Park, Ill.: Bible Truth Publishers, [n.d.]), p.238.

heaven and in earth.” Is not Christ the true Joseph, resisting the world’s temptation to make Him king (John 6)? And just as the seductress turned against Joseph, when he had reproved her, so the Jews turned against Christ. Just as Joseph’s life is an excellent type of kingship, so Matthew shows Christ’s claim to the throne of David.

Although there is much more to be said about Joseph and his ancestors, we shall cut the comparison short, as it would go beyond the purpose of this short essay.

Jacob can be seen as a type of Christ, *serv*ing for His beloved, the Church. Jacob suffered a lot, often through his own fault, but Christ was disciplined for our sake.

Isaac is a clear picture of Christ as man and also as the husband of the Church. Isaac dwelt in the land and never left for Egypt. He was always with his father and lived in a tent like a true pilgrim. This typifies Christ’s heavenly interests and pilgrim character. In Luke we read Christ saying: “How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Lu.2.49).

And Abraham, of course, is the man of faith, pre-eminently so. In John, the gospel for the faithful believer, the word ‘to believe’ occurs about one hundred times. Christ is recorded as saying, “your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad,” (John 8.56). From Hebrews (11.10) we know that, “he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” This man of incredible faith knew exceedingly much and enjoyed much revelation; more than is recorded in Genesis, as is apparent from these two N.T. scriptures. Is it any wonder that Christ quotes the passage of the burning bush?

“And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spoke unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living, ye therefore do greatly err,” (Mk. 12.26,27).

It seems that N.T. people also can set forth Christ’s characteristics. It is very striking that Joseph of Arimathaea is called a *rich* man (or rather ‘human’ [ἄνθρωπο ; an-thro-pos]) in Matthew (27.57); in Mark an *honorable* counselor, designating his diligence in office (15.43); in Luke a good and righteous *man* (ἄνθρωπος, [aa-nèr]; the generic noun, denoting his masculinity), (23.50); and in John the only thing mentioned is that he was secretly a disciple of Jesus, giving his status as a believer (19.38). This all surely teaches us that we, being Christians, are to be types of Christ, living up to His Name! (As to this Joseph being rich, let us take this spiritually! I am afraid that many Christians in the West have been spoiled by materialism. This decadence must also be the reason behind the puffed up spiritual emptiness of the Laodiceans; the last church mentioned in Revelation 3. This surely is prophetic and applies to us today!) By the way, the O.T. predicted that the Messiah would be with the rich in His grave (Is. 53.9). And Jesus was laid up in this grave of Joseph that he had intended for himself.

The Color Parallel

In Matthew we read about Pilate’s soldiers putting a *scarlet* robe on Christ (27.28); in Mark it is a *purple* cloth (15.17); in Luke Herod’s soldiers put a *gorgeous* robe on Him (23.10); and in John it is *purple* again (19.2). This surely *seems* like a contradiction, unless the alternative MS in Matthew, which gives ‘purple’ as well, is the right one. However, this does not seem to be the case,

since the majority of MSS have ‘scarlet.’ The solution could be that Pilate’s soldiers had some kind of robe, made both of scarlet and purple, like the woman in Rev. 17 wears.

S. Ridout does not consider it unlikely that the soldiers put on different robes, “to pour out all their scorn, just as Herod also arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe”. Some expositors¹⁹ saw God’s hand in the different accounts of the mockery and made a connection with the door of the tent of the tabernacle. It was made of fine, twined linen, with blue, purple and scarlet on it (Ex. 26.27,36). Just like the four cherubim also this door, or veil, represents Christ; in this as the *access* to God. How significant that upon Christ’s death the veil was rent supernaturally from top to bottom (Mt. 27.41), denoting that access was now possible without the blood of animals, who were but types of Christ’s all sufficient sacrifice! (Cf. Hebr. 10.19-22).

Expositors agree on *blue* as to its connection with John, because it is suggestive of heaven and so it would stand for Christ’s divinity. Some connect *white* with Mark and others with Luke. But if these four colors, like the cherubim, really are to be seen as specific types of Christ’s Person and ministry, white is best connected with Luke. For fine linen stands for the righteous deeds of the saints (Rev. 19.8). And it is in Luke that we find Him as the righteous and perfectly good man. In Luke (1.35) He is referred to as ‘that Holy Thing.’ But others argue that white speaks of the *deeds* that are righteous and so apply it to Mark.

¹⁹. E.g. Henry W. Soltau, *The Tabernacle* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, Inc., 1965), pp. 5 ff.; S. Ridout, *Lectures on the Tabernacle* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1973), pp.40 ff.; E.C. Pressland, *Foreshadows* (Hong Kong: Christian Book Room, [n.d.]), pp. 4,5.

A similar disagreement occurs over the colors *scarlet* and *purple*.²⁰ Some apply scarlet to Matthew, because it is an emblem of royalty; others apply it to Mark, saying that it shows humility, for the color is produced by the death of countless little insects. And as to purple, some say it is a kingly color and connect it with Matthew and others see in it a worldly color and connect it with Luke, the gospel for the cultured. However, let us simply stick to Matthew, where it says that the soldiers put a *scarlet* robe on Him, mocking Him as the King of the Jews.

Besides scarlet, also purple bespeaks kingly glory (see Judges 8.26). However, when we think of it as *red* purple and the way the dye was prepared, we clearly see it as the symbol of the blood and great suffering of Christ. So the purple robe in Mark speaks both of His *passion* (“ . . . and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head . . . and they smote him on the head with a reed,” 15.17,19) and His *glorification* (“So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God (16.19).”

Such is Christ’s Person and so is His Work, like the veil of the tabernacle, one whole of interrelated aspects. And in the gospels we have them emphasized, individually for our sakes. For who could have penetrated and analyzed His Person; who could have laid bare the threads, had it not been for the fourfold revelation by the Holy Spirit!

“Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.”²¹

²⁰. These colors were made of the dye of worms, mollusks, the eggs of the kermes, or some similar way. These species could be blue or red tinted, producing red or blue purple.

²¹. Rom. 11.33.

“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.”²²

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.”²³

The Sacrificial Parallel

Though the few O.T. parallels that we just studied are beautiful to look upon, they are but the *visible* beauty of Christ. Once our attention has been drawn to His most salient characteristics, our interest must not slacken, but—on the contrary—be all the more aroused to find His *invisible* qualities.

In this context it seems expedient to make an apologetic comment in defense of symbolism, or typology. The epistle to the Hebrews, as well as other Scriptures—but this epistle in particular—witnesses to the fact that the material adumbrates the spiritual.

“For the law having a *shadow* of good things to come, and not the very image of the things”²⁴

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands; which are *figures* of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”²⁵

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth

²². 1 Cor. 2.10.

²³. Rom. 11.34-36.

²⁴. Hebr. 10.1.

²⁵. Hebr. 9.24.

there upon. For other *foundation* can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”²⁶

“What? Know ye not that your body is the *temple* of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”²⁷

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a *spiritual house*, a *holy priesthood*, to offer up *spiritual sacrifices* acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”²⁸

In these exceedingly important passages the Bible itself sets an example of epexegetis, namely that we must understand the O.T.²⁹ *spiritually* (i.e. in the first place; we must also learn to recognize the literal, historical and prophetic meanings). The O.T. temple is a *material* type of the N.T. one, the Church, whose foundation is Christ. Christians are living stones, spiritual stones so to speak and together they form a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices to God. Anything we do for God, through Jesus Christ, is a sacrifice: worship, prayer, gifts and a saintly living.

Of course there is a difference in the *value* of the sacrifice, just as in the time of the law one could offer a cow, a lamb, or only a couple of turtle doves. God seeks those that worship Him in *Spirit and truth* (John 4.23, 24). That is why we must grow in our spiritual understanding and make progress from the obvious to the more hidden spiritual truths. (The Bible speaks of the pure milk for the ‘babies’ in Christ and the solid food for the grown-ups in Christ; cf. 1 Pet. 2.2; Hebr. 5.12-14).

Many expositors have done that, by the grace of God and have built on the foundation laid before them. From the exegetical examples, such as quoted above, they have deducted marvelous

²⁶. 1 Cor. 3.10, 11.

²⁷. 1 Cor. 6.19.

²⁸. 1 Pet. 2.5.

²⁹. The biblical term ‘the law’ was often used as signifying the entire O.T.

conclusions. In this manner they have discovered that the four main sacrificial offerings in the Mosaic law signify four different aspects of Christ's work on the cross.³⁰ They found many clues in the way these sacrifices were offered. It would be too much for this essay to explain this all. May it suffice to give the main features.

The four offerings are dividable into two kinds: two were of a sweet savor for God and the other two were not. The former are the burnt and peace offerings, the latter the trespass and sin offerings. The first two are parallels of the gospels according to John and Luke, the last two of those of Matthew and Mark.

In John everything is divine perfection, so in the burnt offering. Everything had to be spotless, the head, fat, inwards and legs (Lev. 1.8, 9). These four parts seem to stand for Christ's *intelligence, will, motives and walk!* He set the perfect example of loving God with all one's heart, with all one's soul, with all one's strength and with all one's understanding and one's fellow man as oneself. Everything was perfect in Him. Just as the parts of the sacrifice were washed literally, so Christ was observed by God spiritually and proven faultless. And so the burnt offering was a sweet smelling offer for God, since God's holiness was perfectly honored.

The peace offering typifies the *communion* between God and believers as resulting from Christ's offer.³¹ For the breast of the animal was eaten by Aaron and his sons, who stand for worshiping Christians. In the gospel according to Luke we find the account of the prodigal son, who is restored to the household of his father (Luke 15). The fatted calf is killed (type of Christ; His *will*

³⁰. See for example Walter Scott, *Bible Handbook, Old Testament* (Charlotte, N.C.: Books for Christians, 1977), pp. 265 ff.; and F.W. Grant, op. cit. pp.26 ff.

³¹. Cf. 1 John 1.7.

was greatly developed!) and the result is communion between the father and his renegade son (who, by the way, is a type of the gentiles, the elder son signifying the Jews in their jealousy of Christ's concern for those outside the Jewish pale).

The sin offering, except for the fat, had to be burned outside the camp (Ex. 29.14). This designates the three hours of darkness, in which Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" (Mark 15.34). No mention of this is made in Luke and John, where Christ is presented as an offering for a sweet savor. Here we witness that awful rejection that the Holy One suffered in being made sin for us.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."³²

In the sin offering, then, we see Christ being punished as if he had been the very source of sin.³³ The fire of God's holy judgment had to punish Him in those moments, so that we could become God's righteousness. Take note that Aaron and his sons had to put their hands on the head of the animal (Ex. 29.10), so expressing their identity with the victim. Believers ought to do the same. Christ died for us, for *me* as well.

In the trespass offering we behold Christ paying for our individual sins, not just for original sin as a power in our lives. How this is in line with Matthew, the gospel of the King Messiah. When laws are broken legal fines must be paid. And as to us, Christ paid more than just for our sins.³⁴ So also the trespasser had to add one fifth to his amends (Lev. 5.16).

³². 2 Cor. 5.21.

³³. This holds only for humans, of course (cf. Hebr. 2.16).

³⁴. Christ paid for the entire corrupted cosmos that fell under the power of Satan (John 1.29; 1 John 2. 2). And on this basis there once will be a new heaven and earth.

It is interesting to see that in Matthew Christ's cry is reported as being "Eli, Eli," but in Mark as "Eloi, Eloi." Now this surely is a contradiction one may say. Mark is saying one thing and Matthew another, for it cannot be that Christ repeated the phrase (why not actually!?), one time with "Eli," and the other time with "Eloi." But what becomes a stumbling block for critics—just because they desire to find fault—becomes a source of initiation and adoration for the attentive believer. Matthew and Mark, as well as the other two gospel writers, are being inspired by the Holy Spirit, who is the Grand Conductor of this four voiced symphony, the Weaver of this four colored cloth. What appears to be the meaning of this minute difference (both 'Eli' and 'Eloi' mean 'my God') is a slight nuance. "Eli" (from אֱלִי) has the connotation of *power*, the Mighty One and "Elohi" (from ['Eloah'])³⁵ points out that God is unique—not tolerating any other god or goddess—and the sole object of adoration as being the only true God.³⁶ Now, the notion of 'power' is obviously in harmony with the character of the King Messiah and the idea of the unique and only true God is seen in the unique character of the *Servant Prophet* as portrayed in Mark. We see, then, Christ's own words (Mt. 5.18) confirmed that not "one jot or tittle" of His Word would pass away. Not only every word is inspired, but even *one* letter is *purposefully* different. Both Matthew and Mark were right from a spiritual point of view, because both aspects are true for Christ's manifold Person. And on the literal level the words denote the same Person—"My God."

³⁵. Grant (op. cit. p. 27) derives 'Elohi' from 'Elohim,' but this is a mistake as in that case the Lord would have shouted 'Elohai.' Note also that it is a Hebrew word and not Aramaic (in Aramaic it would have sounded as 'Elahi').

³⁶. R.H. Hakvoort, *Namen van God in het Oude Testament* (Den Haag: Initiaal, 1992), p.69.

By the way, this cry ‘my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ is a fulfilment of the twenty-second psalm, just like Christ knew He had to fulfill the Scriptures in saying, “I thirst” (John 19.28; see Ps. 69.21[of course He was also really thirsty!]). Some people have had the audacity to suppose that Christ’s cry showed His hopelessness and self-doubt and possibly even doubt in God’s existence. This is clearly nonsense, if not blasphemy, in the light of Psalm twenty-two, where—just as in Mark—we see Him as the sin offering. And it is *as such* that He shouts out, to express the solemnity of it all. He was not in any uncertainty about God. For in the third verse of that Psalm the answer to this lacerating cry is contained. “But thou art holy, o thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.” It is because of God’s absolute holiness that Christ was forsaken momentarily. God, in His divine purity, cannot connive at and have no contact whatsoever with anything involved in sin. May God inhabit the praises of the temple of ‘spiritual Israel!’

The Material Parallel

The staple building constituents of the tabernacle were gold, silver, copper and wood. The properties of these materials are wonderful types of the various facets of Christ’s Person, life and work. Gold, silver and copper have in common that they are durable and pure.

“As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.”³⁷

But gold is precious and rarer than the other two. It speaks of Christ’s *divinity* and accentuates the value of understanding Him. People make much ado about gold, go to any length to find it and pay huge amounts for it. But spiritual gold, so to speak, is much more precious.

³⁷. Prov. 27.21.

“... the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth . . .”³⁸

“... incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea **IF** thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; **IF** thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; **THEN** shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.”³⁹

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies:⁴⁰ and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.”⁴¹

The possessions of spiritual treasures are better than anything else. They are treasures that we lay up in heaven, as opposite to an earthly vault (Mt. 6.21; 19.21!). Very much gold was used in the tabernacle. Many things were covered with, or consisted of solid gold. So also our lives must be rich with spiritual gold, that is, must be inspired by a deep relation to Christ and God the Father.

Silver stands for the preciousness of Christ's *ransom*. He suffered for our iniquities (Is. 53.5). Christ was sold for thirty pieces of silver (Mt. 27.9). The foundational sockets of the thickly guilt boards were made of silver (Ex.26.19). We have already seen that Christ is the foundation. However many people today have thrown the silver away. They talk disparagingly about a slaughterhouse religion and preach salvation by works, or even no works at all. To them this foundation becomes a stumbling block. Just like many Jews in the O.T. apostatized from their own religion, so modernistic theologians have become an apostate, spiritual Israel.

³⁸. 1 Pet. 1.7.

³⁹. Prov. 2.2-5.

⁴⁰. Rubies are more precious than diamonds. The popularity of diamonds is due to a misconception; not so in the Bible (unless this difficult word means 'pearls' in the original Hebrew, or '[red] corals', as some think).

⁴¹. Prov. 3.13-15.

“As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”⁴²

Oh, may they come to realize that ‘whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder,’ (Mt. 21.44). For believers Christ is the rock of faith (Mt. 16.18), but for unbelievers He becomes the rock of offence (1 Pet. 2.8).

Copper is harder than gold and was used to overlay the wood of the altar. For the altar was made of wood of the Acacia, heavily plated with copper. This makes the wood fireproof. Here we see the symbolization of Christ’s perfect humanity (wood), which was fully capable of enduring God’s *judgment*. ‘He did no sin’ (1 Pet. 2.22); ‘in Him is no sin’ (1 John 3.5); and ‘He knew no sin’ (2 Cor. 5.21 [i.e. He did not experience it; of course He recognized it for what it was. He could say: “Who convicts me of sin?”]). If it had been otherwise, then, with all due respect, Christ would still have been in the grave today. But He had the power to lay His life down and take it up again (John 10.18). That is why He rose again on the third day, having endured on the cross the pouring out of all God’s just anger over our sins.

Wood is not only used as a symbol connected with copper (judgment). By itself it stands for His *humanity*, His growing up and His human relations to others. On His way to the cross He told the women that were weeping over Him, “For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” (Lu. 23.31).

So once again we have seen an O.T. parallel of four types with their N.T. antitypes. It is good to be aware that, for instance, Christ’s divinity is not only found in John. We find this spiritual gold also in the other gospels. For necessarily they corroborate one another. But in drawing these

⁴². Rom. 9.33 (quotation of Is.28.16; the end is more a paraphrase).

conclusions the criterion is what is the most pronounced aspect of a particular gospel. So we find more gold and blue and ‘eagleness’ in John than elsewhere. With the others a similar thing happens.

The question is whether WE build with gold, silver and precious stones on this foundation. The Israelites offered these as gifts (Ex. 35.5). Do we offer spiritual gifts that are truly gold, silver and precious stones? Or do we offer God but hay and stubble? It will be burnt when all our works are tried in the fire before Christ’s bema seat (1 Cor. 3.9-15). Are our lives living sacrifices (Rom. 12.1) that truly reflect Christ’s Person? Or are we like Israel at the time of Malachi, when people did not care what kind of sacrifices they offered? And many even deliberately gave imperfect sacrificial victims so as to save money.

“But cursed be the deceiver which has in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.”⁴³

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.”⁴⁴

Many ‘theologians’ today dare use the denigrating term of ‘butcher theology.’ They bring the Lord’s death down to the level of the animal, literally so. Let them be warned by the Lord, for they bring a curse upon themselves.

“But let a man⁴⁵ examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”⁴⁶

⁴³. Mal. 1.14.

⁴⁴. 1 Cor.11.26,27.

⁴⁵. The Greek has ‘anthropos’ here for man, i.e. man in the sense of a ‘human,’ ‘person.’

⁴⁶. 1 Cor. 11. 28, 29.

Another possibility is that we are like Israel in the time of the kings, when many offered sacrifices to strange gods. Such people have set up other gods for themselves. These gods can be beautiful, cut out of wood, or maybe even wrought out of silver or gold. But they are *strange* gods and the worshipers thereof make themselves strangers to the Lord, so that He will say at the great judgment:

“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”⁴⁷

The Coverings Parallel

The tabernacle had four different coverings for a roof (Ex.36.8-19). The outermost one consisted of badgers’ skins, or (in all likelihood) seals’ skins, the second one of red dyed rams’ skins, the third of goats’ hair and the fourth and innermost of fine linen.

Seals’ skins are tough and make for an excellent protection against the elements. However, they are also ugly.

“ . . . he has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . . wounded for our transgressions . . . and with his stripes we are healed.”⁴⁸

⁴⁷. Mat. 7.23.

⁴⁸. Is. 53.2-5.

The Jews wanted the Kingdom then and there. They were not expecting a Messiah that would suffer and die. Even the disciples did not understand this, though Christ had told them on various occasions. Only one person in the whole world, a woman, understood—Mary, the sister of Martha. May the Church be more like her, offering the most pure balsam in worship of His death (John 12.1-8).

“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”⁴⁹

Many people are interested in Christ as a moral teacher, a sage, or even as a kind of liberator and revolutionary. But the real Christ is unattractive to them, just like the seals’ skins, just like Mark pictures Him as the obedient servant. They do not want a savior that had to die for their sins. They reject Him as such altogether. Let them be warned because of the following:

“And I saw the heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”⁵⁰

The One that humbled Himself, like Joseph, even unto death and that the death of the cross, has been exalted above every name, so “that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2.11). Christ *will* come back as the King. Since His ascension He sits at God’s right hand, but He will return to separate, as the judge of the spiritually living and the spiritually dead, “His sheep from the goats” (Mt. 25.32).

⁴⁹. John 6.66.

⁵⁰. Rev. 19.11-16.

The dye of the second covering, as a type of blood, stands for severe judgment. Christ is the King, but in His mercy and grace He gives the world a long time to convert to God. But a king cannot be patient for ever—neither will Christ.

The third cover consisted of goats's hair. According to Ridout⁵¹ the cloth of goats's hair was probably the same as what was called sackcloth. It was black, or blackish and was used by mourners. Hence the expression "to repent in sackcloth and ashes" (Mt. 11.21). Christ, being the Son of Man, was perfectly humane, divinely humanitarian. And just because of that He was also a mourner, Who lived in true separation from evil and deeply pitied all humans. They are His handiwork; He loves them, perfectly so.

And lastly comes the cloth of fine linen. It had the cherubim on it, wrought with scarlet and red and blue purple. Once a believer has been initiated, having gone through the initial difficulties of acquiring Christianity, of putting off the old man, Adam, that is the old nature; then he or she is ready to be truly a priest or priestess *within* the tabernacle. There the gold shines round about, reflecting the glitter of the candle lights. From the inside this miraculously woven tapestry could be wondered on. People outside cannot see Christ's glories. They have all kinds of ideas, the one more wrong than the other. But on the *inside* they can be seen. However, who is willing to sacrifice the material world in order to gain that far more precious one that consists of true spirituality? It does not mean that we must become hermits, giving up all our possessions. What it requires is repentance, belief and separation. Not merely regret over our mistakes, or a well meant opinion about Christ, or literal separation. Truly spiritual repentance, living faith and a holy walk is asked by God. Who is willing to penetrate the heart of Christendom, to search for Christ's marvelous

⁵¹. Samuel Ridout, op. cit. p. 96.

honors? Let them enter this spiritual temple. Let them peruse over the writings of pious expositors, Christians worthy of *the* name.

CONCLUSION

When we have searched the Scriptures and have uncovered the gold, silver and precious stones—heavenly treasures—is our faith not strengthened, just like that of Christ’s disciples when they had witnessed His turning the water into wine (John 2.11)?⁵² For truly the divine inspiration is proven by analyses as have been made by the authors quoted in this essay. Because this kind of harmony can be found in the entire Bible. No group of humans could ever have wrought such a harmonious master piece. There would be too much to think of, too much to deliberate on. When believers witness the miracles of inspiration, their faith is rooted more in Christ.

But critics, being in the flesh, cannot understand the things of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2.14; Gal. 5.17). They not only fail to attain to a truly spiritual level, but they cannot even accept the superficial glories of Christ, the distinct characters as presented by the writers of the four gospels. Many of them keep themselves busy with questions as in how far Matthew would have borrowed from Mark, but they do not realize that the gospels are too important for mere borrowing. A writer just would not have dared tamper with the original. Being either direct eyewitnesses and/or having their knowledge from other eyewitnesses, they did not need to borrow anyway. Driven by the Holy Spirit they pursued their respective goals and all to show Christ’s multiple glories. The result is not a hopeless tangle of discrepancies, but a marvelous harmony.

Can there be any doubt about Christ’s sinless humanity and absolute divinity? Not for those who have seen the Bible through the magnifying glass of the Spirit. For them the gospels and indeed the entire Bible are like Christ’s extraordinary garment (John 19.23), woven from top to bottom into

⁵². In the Bible water, particularly ‘living’ or ‘streaming’ water, is mostly a type of the efficacy of the Holy Spirit in applying the Word of God to the heart. The result is joy and the end-result is eternal joy—often pictured by wine.

one piece, the warp and woof dispensing of any seam, the threads meeting one another around and around in perfect artistry. And if even one little tread were unpicked, it would eventually destroy the whole texture, being a unique unity, made up of its respective, constituent parts, which reciprocally functioning, form the one entity. Therefore it causes much pain to us, to see some people tearing this master piece apart, or others simply ignoring it. For one day they will have to face the Great Artisan, Who inspired it through the Holy Spirit.

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”⁵³

“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you mayest be rich; and white rayment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”⁵⁴

“And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”⁵⁵

“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.”⁵⁶

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”⁵⁷

⁵³. 2 Cor. 5.20.

⁵⁴. Rev. 3.18.

⁵⁵. Rev. 22.17b.

⁵⁶. Prov. 23.23.

⁵⁷. Is. 55.1.

APPENDIX

This schema shows the intricate interrelation between types and antitypes and the individual differences, or similarities, between types.

Cherubim (Ex. 36.8; Ez. 1)	Lion (Majesty; Prov. 30.29-31)	Ox (Diligence; Prov.7.22; 14.4; Jer.11.19)	Man (Human[e]ness; Prov.3.4; 20.7)	Eagle (Soaring; Ex.19.4; Deut.32.11,12; Prov.30. 19)
O.T. Proph. N.T. fulfillm.	Jer. 23.5 <i>KING</i> Mat. 2.2	Zech.3.18 <i>SERVANT</i> Mark 15.3-5	Zech.6.12 <i>SON OF MAN</i> Luke 2.52	Is. 9.6 <i>SON OF GOD</i> John 1.1 (cf. Acts 8.32-35)
Patriarchs	Joseph (King) Gen.41.41-44. Gen.29	Jacob (Servant)	Isaac (Sonship) Gen.22, 24	Abraham (Believer in God) Gen.15.6
Colors (Ex. 36.8)	Scarlet (Royalty) Mat.27.28	Purple (Glorified suffering) Mark 15.17	White (Righteousness) Lu.23.11; Rev.19.8	Blue [purple] (Heaven) John 19.2
Offerings	Trespass Off. (Restitution) Lev.5.16	Sin Offering (Expiation/Substit.) Ex. 29.10	Peace Offering (Communion) Num. 18.18	Burnt Off. (Perfection) Lev. 1.3
Materials (Ex. 35.5)	Copper (Judgment) Rev. 1.15	Silver (Ransom) Mat.27.9	Wood (Humanity) Lu. 23.31	Gold (Divinity) Mat. 2.11
Coverings (Ex. 36.8-19)	Rams' skins (Judgment) Rev. 19.13	Seals' skins (Unattractive Protection) Phil. 2.7,8	Goats' cloth (Separation and Mourning) Lu. 4.1	Fine linen (Glory and Initiation) Jo. 17.5, 8-10.

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[See also: <http://www.is888.info>]