

## A GREAT SHADOW PASSED OVER THE OLD TESTAMENT

[Colossians 2:16-17](#) "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

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Shadow-pictures is an interesting and enjoyable game to play at parties. A flashlight and a white sheet are all the equipment necessary. After the room is darkened someone steps behind the sheet, and when the light is momentarily flashed on, the rest of the people are expected to identify the person outlined by the shadow on the sheet. The same thing takes place in nature on a grander scale. When our earth passes between the sun and the moon, our earth reveals its outline by its shadow on the face of the moon. The earth always casts a curved shadow, entering or leaving the surface of the moon, and this shadow alone led the ancients to believe that the earth was a huge sphere. Only a ball will cast a curved shadow in any position. Our text also speaks of a shadow made by a body. This shadow extended itself over the whole Old Testament, and revealed the outline of the body which created the shadow.



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### 1. THE MEANING OF THE, SHADOW

Our text states that certain laws and observances of the Old Testament "are a shadow of things to come." All the shadows are not mentioned in our text as that would make up too long a list. But the

laws concerning unclean animals, concerning food and drink; also the yearly, monthly, and weekly festivals are all mentioned as shadows in the Old Testament of the Bible.

To these we may add the Passover lamb, the burning of incense, the sacrifices of the animals, the sprinkling of blood upon the people, the Sabbath which means "rest," and many other observances given by God. There were many shadows which made up one great shadow.

Certainly the Lord did not give His people all manner of laws and rituals and ordinances merely to give them something to do. The laws were given with a reason and a purpose, they were given to teach and enlighten His people of old. Just as the shadow of the earth on the moon reveals the shape of the earth, so the Old Testament shadow gave an outline of someone who was coming.

Add to these shadows all the prophecies concerning the promised Savior and the outline becomes sharp and clear. Think of the wonderful chapter of Isaiah (53) > "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter" and "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

We know that a shadow is not as clear as the real thing, but it does give a good, general outline of a person or object, and can serve a useful purpose for a time.



To sum up, the shadow in the Old Testament was a general outline and description of the coming Messiah, or Savior from sin. The only way

anyone in the Old Testament was saved and went heaven, was by faith in the coming One fore shadowed by the ceremonies.

This was the central doctrine of the whole Old Testament. Every true Israelite believed this with his whole heart.

## 2. THE END OF THE SHADOW

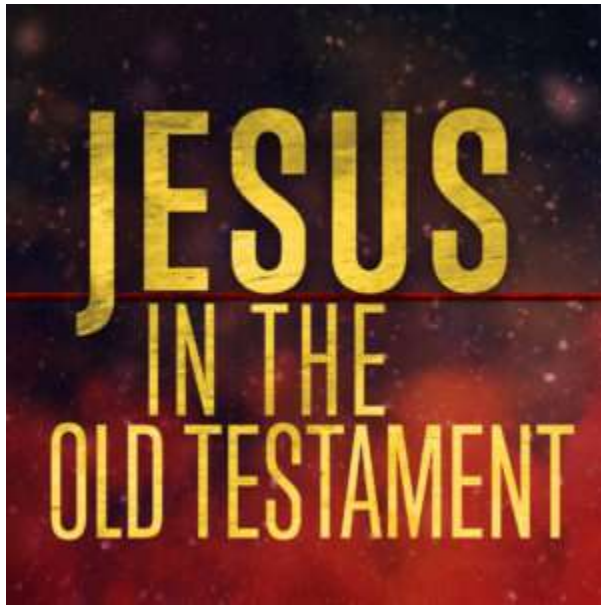
Christ our Lord kept every law of the Old testament, He never sinned or broke a single commandment of God. He kept the moral and ceremonial laws in our stead and thereby freed us from the law. For this reason Paul could write to the Romans and say (10:4), "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."

"But the body is of Christ," states our text. Christ is the body which cast the shadow over the whole Old Testament . Many of the ceremonies, rituals, and laws of the children of God were outlining the coming of the Savior, and gave them a good picture of what He would be like and what He would do.

To us in the New Testament, the picture is clear. We see Christ the Lamb of God carrying His cross, suffering and being crucified, we see Him dying and rising again for the sins of the whole world. We are told He did this to pay for our sins.

Eternal life is promised everyone who believes and trusts in this offering by the Son of God. The Israelites were saved because they believed in the coming "body" outlined for them in a shadow, we are saved by faith in the "body" which has arrived and paid for our salvation on the cross.

Of course, now that the body has arrived, the shadow is ended, gone forever. When Christ died on the cross, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom by the hand of God to show that the Old Testament with its shadow had passed away forever.



# JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

It is true that the Apostles still kept many customs and ordinances of the Israelites during the transitional period of the early Church, in order to gain them for Christ. The Apostles would go to the synagogues on the Sabbath day since that was the day when the people gathered for worship. But the Apostles did that only as a matter of "custom" not of necessity. The inspired Disciples of the Lord knew that the day part of the third commandment was no longer binding on the children of God in Christ.

As it became more and more evident that the Israelites as a whole were rejecting the gospel of Christ, the Apostles turned to the Gentiles. They also changed the day of meeting for worship. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead on the first day of the week was such an overwhelming and outstanding event, that the early Church and the Apostles began meeting on the first day of the week for worship in memory of the Lord's resurrection. We are told in [Acts 20:7](#), "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." Paul advised the Corinthians ([1Cor 16:2](#)), "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." The first day of the week became known very

early as "the Lord's day" ([Rev 1:10](#)). We also speak of the Lord's prayer and the Lord's Supper. Sunday is the Lord Jesus' great day.

And let us not forget our clear and emphatic text, "Let no man therefore judge you in respect of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come." Who wants to live in a shadow when the "body" has arrived? The Sabbath foreshadowed our eternal rest from sin and evil in Christ our Savior.

Since we, in the New Testament, are freed of all Old Testament rules and ordinances, the admonition of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians especially applies to us (5:1), "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." We should always guard our precious Christian liberty.

But we should not go to the other extreme and misuse our liberty ([1 Peter 2:16](#)), "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." Guided by the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we will know how to properly use our liberty.

Our lives should be one of thanks, thanks for the salvation which is by faith in Christ our Lord, and thanks that we are privileged to serve Him in liberty all the days of our lives. We are truly grateful that the great shadow over the Old Testament has passed away forever.

AMEN.

PRAYER. We thank Thee, heavenly Father, that we are children of the glorious liberty of the New Testament. Give us a special measure of Thy Holy Spirit that our lives may reflect this thanks and gratitude. We are the children of Thy full revelation, and we clearly see our Savior and His salvation for us. To Thee, O blessed Trinity, be honor and glory and praise now and throughout all eternity. Accept our thanks, for Jesus' sake. AMEN.