

Shadows and Substance - Colossians 2:16-17

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[0 : 0 0] verses 18 through 23. So today just Colossians 2, 16 through 17. I'll read and then pray and then we'll get into the word here. Colossians 2, verse 16.

Therefore, do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come.

The reality, however, is found in Christ. Let's pray. Father, as we get into your word this morning, would you open our eyes that we would see? Would you open our ears that we would hear?

Would you soften the soil of our hearts? Would you pierce us with the seriousness of our sins? Would you strike us with how gracious you've been? Would we accurately see Christ our Savior in your word this morning? Would we hold fast to him in confidence? In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Well, there's some there's some interesting stories in the Old Testament. I don't know if you've ever sat down and just read the Old Testament. A lot of people will start Genesis and Exodus and then you kind of get into Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. And sometimes you find some stories that you just scratch your head and say, well, that's kind of a weird story. I don't know if you've ever read any of those. If you've understood all of them completely the first time, then come see me afterwards and I will be amazed. Sometimes, though, when I was just reading the scriptures, I would I would read something in the Old Testament and say, huh, why would that be in the Bible? If this is if this is God's word and it is and this is what he's given us and he has, then why are certain things in there?

[1 : 5 1] In Leviticus 10, we find this this odd story, which I'll just summarize real quick and then we'll get into Colossians from there. But Leviticus 10, Israel's at the foot of Sinai. They've come out of Egypt.

The tabernacle has been put in place. The Mosaic covenant is in place. The nation is ready to offer sacrifices to God as he's prescribed. And then we read in Leviticus 10 that the two men named Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, Aaron being Moses's brother, they offered unauthorized sacrifices before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. So he's given a list of of sacrifices to offer.

And he's named Aaron, the priest. And then two of Aaron's sons come to give a sacrifice other than what God has commanded. And it says in Leviticus 10 to that fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them and they died. Then Moses said to Aaron, this is what the Lord has said among those who are near me, I will be sanctified. And before all the people, I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

And then it goes on from there to say that that God tells them don't mourn their death because of how they died. Don't don't mourn them or the wrath of God will come upon the congregation. And I remember reading that and thinking, that's just that seems so strange. Why is a story like that in the Old Testament? And we're at the point of Colossians now where Paul's going to start to draw from a lot of Old Testament stories and and concepts and and bring them forward into the reality of what it means to live as God's people in a certain time, in a certain place, namely as his people, Christians under the new covenant here where he's put us. And so last week we saw Paul use a cultural example as he spoke of the the slavery of human tradition and magical superstition compared to the citizenship we have as God's people, that is as Christians. And now this week, Paul's going to start making Old Testament references to New Testament realities as he allows the drama of the Old

Testament to produce the doctrines of the New Testament. OK, and that's important to understand that the drama of Scripture produces the doctrines of Christian life and the the doctrines of Christian life are what lead us into doxology or worship. All right. They go hand in hand. So as we see drama unfold in in the Old Testament in the Gospel narratives in the Book of Acts, then we see the doctrines coming out of that. That leads us into worship and out of a heart of worship is how we live lives of discipleship. And so what we're going to do today is we're going to look at the reality of the shadows of the Old Testament. And then we'll see the difference between shadows and substance, followed by what it means to be a people of substance. All this in an effort to fix our eyes on Jesus and and his saving grace as we move towards the Lord's Supper. So the reality of shadows, the difference between shadows and substance and what it means to be a people of substance. First, the reality of shadows.

[5 : 06] And we have to remember that that the Bible is is one big story. OK, it's one big story of creation, fall, consecration, redemption and consummation. It's one story moving through. But that bigger story is made up of smaller stories which foreshadow a nearby reality in the bigger story.

OK, the smaller stories foreshadow a nearby reality. So if I were to put my hand, if I put my hand in front of the projector, we see a shadow and the shadow is very much real. Right. It's a real shadow. But the shadow is pointing towards a substance.

OK, the shadow is not the same as the substance, but it does indicate that there is a substance nearby. And Scripture does this all throughout the shadows of the Old Testament in the smaller stories.

The shadows point to a nearby reality. And that reality or that substance is Jesus. So as we work through all these Old Testament stories, Paul says these things are shadows.

And the substance is Christ. That's why Jesus says in John 5, you can study the scriptures diligently because you think in them you have eternal life.

[6 : 33] But the scriptures testify about him. He is the way. He is the truth. He is the life. He is the substance.

That all those shadows are pointing towards. So far, we've seen in Colossians that that Jesus is the image of the invisible God, that he's the Lord of all creation and Lord of new creation, that in him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, that by him we have been reconciled into his kingdom.

He is the full treasure of God's wisdom and knowledge. And then here in Colossians 2, 16 through 17, Paul says he is the substance that all shadows are from.

And so Paul writes again in verses 16 and 17 in Colossians 2, he says, Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon, a celebration, or a Sabbath day.

So if we pause and we think, what is he talking about? He's talking about Old Testament shadows. He's talking about Old Testament regulations on what you eat and what you drink.

[7 : 45] Old Testament religious festivals. The new moon celebrations. Actually, the Israelites have added that. They've added this whole celebration of the new lunar moon every month.

And then Sabbath days. Several rules have been added to the Sabbath day other than what God originally commanded. Paul says, Don't let anybody judge you by those things.

Verse 17, These are a shadow of the things that were to come. The reality is found in Christ. What Paul is claiming here is that all of the Old Testament regulations and traditions, again, they're shadows.

They point to the substance. Just like if I put my hand in front of the projector again, the shadow indicates that there's a substance there. And all of these shadows pointed to Jesus. Okay, now the best way that I can think of to illustrate this is to look at one of these today and see where the shadows are and how Christ is the substance.

So I'm going to ask you to turn to Leviticus 16. It's the third book of the Bible, page 118, if you have one of the church Bibles. And Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus.

[8 : 59] And we're going to look at this so that we can more accurately understand why Paul is saying, don't go back to it. How it's been fulfilled in Christ. How the way as Christians is forwards, not backwards.

And again, we want to see the drama of Scripture produce the doctrines, which from there produces our worship. Okay, so Leviticus 16 is the day of atonement.

And it's one of seven original festivals from the Mosaic Covenant. Okay, it's commanded by God to the nation of Israel to be celebrated once per year in order that Israel may have annual purification from sin so that they might remain in God's presence.

So biblically ordained by God for the nation for annual purification of sin so they may remain in God's presence. And what we're going to see from some of the shadows of this is that sin is far more serious than we tend to realize.

It's far more serious than we tend to realize. That's going to be very important going forward. It infects both people and places. And only God gets to decide what the penalty for sin will be.

[10 : 21] And those concepts are going to be laid out here. Sin is far more serious than we realize. And only God gets to decide what the penalty for sin will be. That's what went wrong with Nadab and Abihu that we first looked at.

They didn't realize how serious their sins were. And they thought they could come up with their own way of approaching God. They thought they could come up with their own type of dealing with sin.

Their own methods. Now Leviticus 16, we won't read every verse, but the first few verses here are interesting. The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the Lord.

That's what we referenced at the beginning of the sermon. And the Lord said to Moses, Tell your brother Aaron he is not to come whenever he chooses into the most holy place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark or else he will die.

For I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover. And this is how Aaron is to enter the most holy place. And what he's going to give is first he's going to give this description of how purification is made for the priest.

[11 : 35] And that's important to understand that under the Old Testament, under the Mosaic law, the priest had to be purified. Again, sin is far more serious than we realize.

Even the priest, even the best of the nation, had to have purification for their sins before they could even think of offering a sacrifice for other people.

And so we see these bathing and these clothing things that must occur. All part of the purification for the priest's sin. As well as the bull that's then sacrificed for the purification of the priest.

Then after that we see purification for the place. As you move through verses 14-19, you'll see that there's a way to purify the place in which the priest is working.

Remember sin, again, it's more serious than we realize. It affects both people and places. And so the tent of meeting, the altar, and the most holy place, they're purified.

[12 : 40] The instruments of redemption, if you will, must be pure. Both the priest and the place. And then in Leviticus 16, verses 20-22, we see now there's a purification for the people.

With regards to the scapegoat, which is a concept we want to know, a scapegoat, in Leviticus 16-20, we read that when Aaron has finished making atonement for the holy place, the tent of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat.

And he's to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites, all their sins, and put them on the goat's head.

He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. And then verse 22, the goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place, and the man shall release it in the wilderness.

And so, on this annual Day of Atonement, the priest is purified. The place is purified.

[13 : 52] Sacrifice is made for the people, and then literally all the sins for that entire year are pronounced out loud on the head of this goat. And so, if we bring that into today, and we think about what would this look like if we were to even try to do what Paul says not to do and go backwards.

What would it look like to have a Day of Atonement here at Carygoline Baptist? We would all go home, we would write down our sins as best we could remember for the entire last year. So July 2018 until July 2019, we would sit as a family.

And we'd say, what have we done wrong in the last year? There's 613 commandments in the Old Testament. We would probably go through each of them and write out which ones we've done wrong.

And then we'd all come together, and after the priest had been purified, after the place had been purified, all those sins would be collected and literally read out loud by the priest onto the goat.

And we would hear sins of lust, gluttony, greed, laziness, anger, jealousy, pride.

[15 : 08] It would go on and on. We would hear our specific sins read out loud. And we'd probably cringe because we would know that was ours.

He's talking about our sin right there. And maybe we would have a moment of pride when we thought, oh, I haven't done that one. Then we could already add that to our list for the next year. All those sins would be read out loud and pronounced on that scapegoat.

And then someone from the church would take that goat maybe to the cliffs of care. And a little bit of pride when we thought we'd see small friends here and see running down here next time. Thank you. We love you. We thought we were going to get aroundnor and we think as much as you do, keeping theetees comportment sempre like to the■■■■, as it does or... help us, in turn, Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.