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## Shadows

### Introduction

When an individual is outside, whither walking, driving or working, it is always best to be aware of that which is happening around them. In my final years of working for the phone company, often some part of my day was spent outdoors, at the side of a road.

One thing that always amazed me while I was doing this work was pedestrians, for some of the neighborhoods I found myself in might be referred to as “rough”. There was no way of knowing if the next person coming along might be high on drugs or alcohol, or just angry with life in general. I always scanned the sidewalk in each direction and made note of the foot traffic. Very often however, I was surprised when a person's slow and steady plodding had them arriving at my location sooner than I expected.

Now imagine for a moment you are standing, facing the sun while another person with their back to the sun is approaching. As sure and as steady as that person's approach may be, it will be their shadow that reaches you first. This was what brought to my mind the truth of “shadows” in the scriptures.

### The Law Was a Shadow

When Paul wrote to the saints at Colossae, he either told them or reminded them of something God had previously kept secret. It was one of several “mysteries / secrets” of God now made known, and it was that the person of Christ would indwell the believer. Furthermore, that the indwelling Holy Spirit would be the believer's hope and confidence of promised future glory (Eph. 1:13-14). Then added to this he informed them that the believer is 'complete' in Christ through His redemptive work on the cross at Calvary. When the Lord cried, “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30), it meant that there is now justification not based on the fulfilling of the law which man could not do (Rom. 8:3) much less for the accepting and keeping the philosophies and principles men had devised.

Very specifically, Paul tells us that the things of the Law were but a ‘shadow’ of something that was yet to come. That something, yet to come, is the person of Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one (Col. 2:16-17).

In the epistle to the Hebrews there can be read of:

- a) Persons (prophets and angels, of Moses and Israel)
- b) Happenings (of an entering into rest and the High Priest who entered into the Holy of Holies)
- c) Things (Old Covenant and the tabernacle)
- d) Sacrifices (the blood of bulls and the ashes of an heifer).

All of these builds to a crescendo where we see that Christ's once-and-for-all offering of Himself for sin is better . . . greater, even than any and all of the offerings and sacrifices for sin required by the Law. The sacrifices and rituals of the law had to be constantly repeated season by season, year after year, and the reason for the constant repetition was twofold:

- a) The weakness of the natural to keep the law (Rom. 8:3).
- b) The inability of the law to make man justified before God (Gal. 3:11).

### Why did God give the law when it was only a shadow?

When I was a little boy I had a garage and little toy cars. Of course they were not the real thing but they taught me lessons about real life, so with the law. It was God's elementary lesson book for the real thing, the Person and work of Christ at Calvary and His High priestly ministry.

- a) Paul informs the readers that the purpose of the law is also to be a tutor for us, to bring humanity to understand their inability to keep the law and lead those seeking justification before God to bring them to the all sufficient work of the Lord.
- b) It was never given to stop us from sinning, but to show humanity how “spiritually unclean” they were. The law is called a “mirror”. Now when anyone looks at their face in the morning and sees it in the mirror, they do not take the mirror off the wall and try to clean their face with it. The law, the ten

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commandments, makes man aware of how often he fails, and unfortunately for man, the law demands 100% perfection.

- i) “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. . . . But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10:1-4).
- ii) “Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience” (Heb. 9:6-9).

### The Superiority of The New Covenant

The covenant of law was by contrast a shadow of the New Covenant:

Old Covenant	New Covenant
Mediated by Moses	Mediated by the Lord (Heb. 9:15-18)
Ratified by the blood of animals (Heb. 9:19)	Ratified by the blood of the Lord (1 Cor. 11:25)
Characterized by “law” (Rom 7:1-5)	Characterized by “grace” (Jn. 1:17)
Leads to death (kills) (2 Cor. 3:7)	Gives life (2 Cor. 3:6; Gal. 3:11, 6:8)
Enslaves (Gal. 4:3, 9, 24, 25)	Makes man free (gives freedom) (Jn. 8:32, 36; Gal. 5:1)
Exposes sin (Gal. 3:19)	Provides forgiveness and justification (Rom. 4:1-8)
Brings a curse (Gal. 3:10)	Redeems from the curse (Gal. 3:13)
Is a shadow (Col. 2:14-17)	Is the reality (Heb. 10:1-18)
Brings the ministration of condemnation (2 Cor. 3:9)	Brings the ministration of righteousness (2 Cor. 3:9)
Had many high priests (Heb. 7:23)	Has only one high priest who lives in the power of an endless life (Jesus Christ) (Heb. 7:24-28)
Had an earthly priest (Heb. 5:1-4)	Has a heavenly priest (Heb. 9:24, 10:12)
Makes priests by law (Heb. 7:28)	Made Christ a priest by an oath (Heb. 7:12, 28)
Had an earthly tabernacle (Heb. 9:2)	Has a heavenly tabernacle (Heb. 8:2)
Priesthood was in the lineage of Aaron	Priesthood is a Melchisedec priesthood (Heb. 7:11, 21)
Priests (high priest) were sinners (Heb. 5:1-4)	The priest (Jesus Christ) has no sin (Heb. 7:26)

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Old Covenant	New Covenant
The law was written in stone tablets (2 Cor. 3:3)	The law is written in people's hearts (Jer. 31:33; 2 Cor. 3:3)
Brought sin to remembrance (Heb. 10:3)	God pledges to remember their sins no more (Heb. 8:12, 10:17)
Was written with ink (2 Cor. 3:3)	Is written with the spirit of God (2 Cor. 3:3)
Is for Israelites only (Deut. 4:7-8)	Is for all men (Lk. 22:20)
<p>It is an elementary observation but an important one, there are only these two Covenants specifically spoken of as the "Old" and the "New". The reason being, none of the other Covenants were done away with and replaced with that which is better.</p>	

**Conclusion**

How grateful I am to the God of grace that I am under the true and not the shadow. I can look back to the finished work of the Lord and by depending on His reconciling sacrifice and glorious resurrection, I can have perfect peace with God and now live under the "shadow".

*Based on notes from Brother Russell Hodgkin*

. . . . . *Rowan Jennings*