

Heb. 7:11-28; Heb. 8:1-13; The Shadows of Christ in the Law I. The Purpose of these Shadows II. The End of these Shadows

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, why do we need the Old Testament? Perhaps you have heard someone say- I am a NT Christians. The OT is too old or too harsh- with all that blood and all those names- can't we just skip it? Well, today we are going to see how the OT and the NT relate. Certain aspects of the OT Law are no longer binding- that is why we can eat pork and no we no longer celebrate Feast of Unleavened Bread. But Jesus Himself said in Mt. 5- I have not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. So how does Jesus fulfill the Law without doing away with the Law in its entirety? Today we see this theme: Jesus Christ fulfills the shadows of the OT Law.

I. The Purpose of these Shadows

In our first point we are going to consider the purpose of the OT shadows. If Jesus was going to fulfill- and even bring to an end many aspects of the OT- why do we need an OT at all? If Jesus was the perfection and completion of the Law- why not just skip the Law? Why didn't Jesus come earlier- perhaps Jesus could have been born instead of Moses? In that way we could have skipped the whole OT era and got right to Jesus and the gospel- right? Well, the first reason why we have these shadows of the OT Law is because God was dealing with mankind- and specifically His people- with sensitivity and understanding. During the OT age, the Israelite people were young and immature. Heb. 6 says that OT lays the foundation- teaching these elementary doctrines of Christ. Hosea 11 says that Israel was called out of bondage like a child. In other words, God began His covenantal relationship with Israel as a father relates to his little child. The OT ceremonies were like baby talk to a toddler- God was dealing with His people in a sympathetic and understanding way- teaching them with signs and ceremonies that they could understand. Coming out of idolatry to worship the One true God is a process. This way of dealing with mankind was built upon- the OT would be the foundation upon which the New would be build. Another reason for this shadow of the OT was given was to pave the way for the coming one- Jesus

Christ. The OT forms the context and backdrop upon which the Christ-child would be born. For example, Heb. 8:1 says that OT priests were pictures- setting the stage- so that we might have a context in which to understand the person and work of Jesus as our perfect high priest. Each priest was temporary- serving with limited means and for a short period of time- but their work was getting the people ready for Christ- so that when He came the people would more easily understand the concept of a priest. Heb. 7 then continues to compare and contrast the priesthood of Jesus to the Levitical priest. Jesus is the perfect priest as 7:24 states- because He lives forever. The death of the Levitical priests would raise the idea of a lasting perfect priest. The imperfect sets the stage for the coming of the perfect- the death of the one who ministers creating the desire for one who will not die! One who would live forever- continuing to intercede- so that He might save to the uttermost as 7:25 puts it. So these signs, pictures, sacrifices and ceremonies of the OT Law were good as far as they went- but these did not and could not endure. As 8:2 says, there is a holy tent set up by God- not build by human hands. The OT priest and the temple are like little pictures- miniature reproductions of the truth and reality in glory. That is why the OT rites, rituals and ceremonies are called shadows- they simply reflect the true object which remains in glory. A shadow remains true in its outline- even if it is dim and dark. But it also true that you cannot remove the shadow from the reality! They are directly linked! God does not change His mind- nor does He change his standard. Specifically seen in the Moral aspect of the Law, we see that there are continuing applications to this Law. Art. 25 puts it like this- we continue to be regulated in our lives- living according to God's will. There are principles even found in the ceremonies and rituals concerning holiness and godly living that are still instructive today!

These ceremonies would also instruct man concerning his need. In 8:5 we read that these priests served a copy or a shadow. They pointed the way- opening the door- painting a picture of what was needed- without providing the remedy. But remember- they still served God there. These were not vain trinkets! When we look at the altar, sacrifices, blood atonement and ransom- the Israelites would be

struck by the seriousness of sin! The forgiveness and pardon for those sins would be impressed upon them! Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness! So they saw all this blood- all this death around them- and they were to see how they each deserved death for their own sins. This truth would humble them. In this way, the purpose of these shadows is to prepare for the coming reality. Our BC art. 25 puts it this way- the truth and substance of these remains in Jesus Christ. Not only did these teach Israel and us about what is necessary, they also functioned as a temporary instructor or teacher. Gal. 3:24 says that the Law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith! It was not only for the purpose of giving us an idea, they really did function as priests and prophets at that time. Their work was not without purpose or benefit! Through these ceremonies, God was pleased to work so that true faith might be kindled in their hearts. These were real means of grace in Israel- they were living sermons that pointed to the perfect mediator. Although not fully developed and robust, these OT saints who embraced the OT teaching with a heart of faith- did really receive forgiveness of sins! These were justified by faith in Christ- although not seeing Christ perfectly and fully. God was pleased to use the shadow of Christ to open their hearts and eyes. And this is really important to note- if the OT saints could see and believe in Jesus Christ and they only had a shadow to see- how much more must we who have the reality must embrace Jesus Christ! John 8:56 says that Abraham looked forward to the day of Jesus- and rejoiced to see it! Abraham believed in and rejoiced in the coming Savior- and Abraham only had shadows! How great should be our joy when we see Jesus in all His living and glorious color! So when we read the OT, we can see and learn about the manner and purpose of Jesus' work. As we study the OT, if we listen carefully, we can hear the gospel! For example, even the tabernacle was built according to the reality in heaven as 8:5 says. There is a pattern in glory that Moses would follow. Christ not only serves in the heavenly tabernacle- He is the heavenly temple! Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up again in 3 He says in John 2. That pattern- that heavenly temple- is Christ! It is in Christ that fellowship and peace between God and man is made possible. So

when you study the tabernacle, you see in detail who Christ is and what He would do. As Jesus said in Luke 24:44, everything written about me in the Law, Prophets and Psalms must be fulfilled. But as Gal. 3:25 concludes, now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

II. The End of these Shadows

The Shadow was good for a time, but the shadow passed when reality came. Think for a moment about having a picture of someone you love. I carry a picture of my wife in my wallet. Now would I keep looking at that picture when my wife is sitting in the next room? No- the picture's use is trumped by the person's actual presence. So it is with the shadows of the OT Law- these pass away when perfection comes. As we read in Heb. 8:13- the old covenant is becoming obsolete and growing old- it is ready to vanish away. Or as our BC article opens, we believe that the ceremonies and symbols of the Law have ended with the coming of Christ. Since the foreshadowing has come to an end, the use of these ceremonies and rituals should be abolished. To say this another way, we are no longer to live as if we lived during the OT- nor should we seek to serve God by way of these rituals and rites. In the OT, we find 4 categories within the ceremonial law- holy people, holy places, holy things and holy seasons. First of all, we should not look for any other prophets, priest and kings- or any other holy person- since Jesus is the perfect prophet, our heavenly high priest and our eternal King! And since share in the anointing of Christ, as LD 12 says, we all share in Christ's office. Living in the age of the Spirit as we do, means that there are no longer holy people who are set apart from others in regards to their offices. Being an elder or a pastor does not make us more holy. The fact is, we are all holy people- a royal priesthood and a holy nation. Secondly, there are no longer holy places. This church building is no more holy than your home. The church is the body of Christ- the people who are called by the name of God. We can worship God rightly wherever we find ourselves, worshipping God not only in Jerusalem but right here- as we come to worship the One true God in Spirit and in truth as John 4 says. So one place is not more holy than another. This applies to seasons as well. We are not bound to the seasons of New Moons, feasts

and Sabbaths. Although the principles of rest and worship on the Lord's Day remains, we are no longer obligated to the Jewish cycle of Holy Convocations. Lets read Col. 2:16-17. These are shadows- their substance is in Christ! Finally, we see that there are no longer set apart, holy objects. Neither are there holy things- such as altars, articles of clothing and pots and dishes. Neither are there unholy things- like unclean food and unclean homes. Rather we can enjoy what God has made as I Tim. 4:5 says- because these gifts are created good by God and are received with thanksgiving, for it made holy by the Word of God and prayer. So you can go home and enjoy a bacon sandwich- or a pork loin without fear! You can eat hot dogs with no regret- and you can use any dish you like! Now this is particularly important today- as a reminder that there are no longer holy object and set apart priests. When we come to celebrate the Lord's Supper in a few moments, you will note that I am not a priest- and this table is not a holy altar. The blood of the Covenant has been shed- once for all as Heb. 7:27 states. No other blood needs to be shed. Thus circumcision and Passover- being bloody rituals- have ceased. But the main teaching of purity, provision and communion continue to be embraced in Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

To conclude, rightly understanding the place and function of the OT helps us appreciate and understand the purpose and work of Christ. As Heb. 10:1 says, the Law was a shadow of the good things to come! For us, Jesus is the good thing that has come- the mediator of the New Covenant has arrived! Jesus is the perfect High Priest and the only atoning sacrifice for our sins! The OT sacrifices could not purify the conscience, since they dealt with food and drink and external washings as Heb. 9:9. Now we have entered the time of Reformation- Christ blood and Spirit cleanse the heart and purify the Soul. Let us give thanks for the clarity and power of Christ who is the reality to the OT shadow!