

A shadow of things to come

5-09-2023

By SN

The Old Testament can be referred to as a "shadow of things to come" because it contains various prophecies, symbols, and types that foreshadow the coming of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the New Covenant. Paul the Apostle made this point in Colossians 2:16-17 and Hebrews 10:1, emphasizing that the Old Testament rituals and practices were meant to point to the greater reality of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Here are some examples:

The sacrificial system: As mentioned earlier, the Old Testament detailed a complex system of animal sacrifices for the atonement of sins (e.g., Leviticus). These sacrifices served as a shadow, pointing to the ultimate and perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who would offer His own life as a one-time, all-sufficient atonement for humanity's sins (Hebrews 10:10-14).

The Passover: In Exodus 12, God commanded the Israelites to slaughter a lamb without blemish and apply its blood to their doorposts to protect them from the angel of death. This event foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus, the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29), whose blood would protect believers from eternal death and bring about salvation (1 Corinthians 5:7).

The Tabernacle/Temple: The Tabernacle (and later the Temple) was a sacred space where God's presence dwelt among the Israelites (Exodus 25-27). This structure and its rituals served as a shadow of Jesus, who would be called "Immanuel" (meaning "God with us") in the New Testament (Matthew 1:23). Additionally, Jesus referred to His own body as the true temple (John 2:19-21), signifying that He is the ultimate meeting point between God and humanity.

Prophetic promises: The Old Testament contains numerous prophecies about the coming Messiah (e.g., Isaiah 53, Micah 5:2, Zechariah 9:9). These prophecies foreshadowed various aspects of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection, and were fulfilled in the New Testament (e.g., Matthew 1:22-23, Luke 24:44-47).

The Law: The Mosaic Law given to the Israelites (e.g., the Ten Commandments) served as a shadow of the higher moral principles that Jesus would teach in the New Testament (Matthew 5-7). Jesus also stated that He came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17), signifying that He is the ultimate expression and embodiment of God's righteous standard.

In summary, the Old Testament can be seen as a shadow of things to come because it contains various prophecies, symbols, and types that point to the greater reality of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant. These examples demonstrate the continuity between the Old and New Testaments and the divine plan of salvation throughout history.