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Presentation Transcript
Pentecost – The Shadow of Things To Come
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In Colossians 2, Paul said something interesting for us today. Let's read it – Colossians 2, beginning in verse 16:

Colossians 2:16 – *Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*

We've already covered the mistranslation of the term *the substance belongs to Christ*. If you want to know more about that, you can find that in a presentation titled *Understanding Colossians 2*. It's a part of the series *The Law of God*. The date, if you want to look it up was July 30, 2021. You can find that on the liferesource.org site – just by searching the title or using the presentation button at the top of the home page.

But what did Paul mean by *shadows of things to come*? Can you explain it? If you can, good. But if you can't, buckle up. There's something to be learned here that's really important. What is a *shadow* when it's about something in the Bible?

Biblical shadows are found throughout the Bible. If we want to understand what God has for us in the Bible, we need to know about shadows. A shadow is an instructional tool that God uses to let us in on what He's planning to do next – and sometimes to let us know what He's done in the past, too – what it means for us in the present. What might they have to do with the Day of Pentecost? Well, we'll see. So, let's jump into that.

First of all, let's start with a real shadow. When I was a child, my brother and I were playing Capture the Flag one day, along with some other kids. I was hiding around the side of a shed. I didn't want to peek around the corner, because I didn't know where he was and I didn't want him to see me, if he was there. Well, as it happened, he was moving slowly in my direction around the other corner of that same shed. So, as he approached, without sticking my head around to see him, I could see his shadow on the ground. That's the way a biblical shadow works. Something

in the present casts a shadow on some future event or development. A shadow, then, is a notification that something is going to happen – something that we should not forget – that we can be forewarned of, in some cases.

That's what the biblical festivals do, for example – picture things that God is going to do, or will be doing in the future, or that He's doing now. In the case of annual festivals, they're annual reminders to make sure we stay on course with what He's doing.

Let's look at some biblical examples of shadows. The first one would be the fourth commandment – the shadow of the Sabbath day. What does the weekly Sabbath foreshadow? Well, it's set in the context of a week, so six days of work, one day of rest. We know that in the Bible, there are approximately 6,000 years of human history. And then Christ comes and there's a thousand years of God's rest. So, there's the picture. It pictures the millennium. Did you know that? So, it's a good idea not to forget it. But you might if you don't keep the Sabbath. That's what it's for. The shadow is to remind us of something to come. So, if we observe the Sabbath, we're more likely to remember Christ's return.

In Luke 1:78 and 79, Jesus, said something. He said:

Luke 1:78-79 – *...because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

So Jesus is here explaining to us that every morning when the sun comes up, we're to remember that He, Jesus Christ, will come to shine the light of God – the truth of God – on all people and give us rest from the faults and beliefs that are present in the world.

Here's another one in 1 Corinthians 10:1 through 6. Paul said:

1 Corinthians 10:1-6 - *For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea – he's talking about when Moses took them out of Egypt, right? – and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.*

So, everything that happened to ancient Israel – when Moses led them out of Egypt, through the desert, across Jordan, into the Holy Land – is a shadow of every person's journey into the Kingdom of God. That shadow is a warning for us – that, if we lose faith like they did, we might gain entrance either. So, for those who only want to hear encouraging things, be encouraged to hold faith.

So, the sun comes up as a shadow of Christ to come. Moses is a foreshadow of Christ, who has come already and will come once again. Moses' shadow, for us, looks back and shows us how God worked with them and how He will work with us through Christ. There's even a warning there for us to steer away from unbelief.

So, Paul was talking about the biblical festivals, and he said they were a shadow of things to come. Those biblical festivals are, for my money, the most intricate, the most elegant shadows of all scripture – masterpieces of God's shadow system of education. From our location in time, every one of them foreshadows something Jesus Christ is doing now or will do later. And together, they comprise God's seven step plan of our salvation. Let's consider what they foreshadow.

I'm not going to go through every one of them today or this would get too long, but I will cover a few of them. Leviticus 23, verses 4 through 8 – the chapter where all of the holy days and the festivals and the Sabbath day are all mentioned in the same place – no one given more weight than the others. It says in verse 4:

Leviticus 23:4 – *These are the appointed feasts of the LORD, the holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at the time appointed for them.*

So, a lamb was to be killed on Passover and the blood painted on the doorposts of their homes, so that the death angel, when it came through to kill the firstborn of all Egypt, would steer clear of their homes. John the Baptist called Jesus the Lamb of God who came to save His people from their sins. So, the lambs killed on Passover to free them from Egypt foreshadowed Jesus' death to free us from sin. So, in the shadow, Egypt represents the slavery to sin that we experience. I mean, if you think about how intricate and elegant that really is – that all that was laid out ahead of time – it's pretty amazing! And yet, most people today, when they think of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, that just sounds Jewish to them and their minds close. They see the Kosher matzos in the grocery store and they relate that to Judaism.

But this festival isn't about Judaism at all. It's about what *Christ* is doing. So, the festival of what the Jews call Passover season has two holy days in it – one at the beginning of the Days of Unleavened Bread and one at the end. Even the term *holy day* is foreign to most Christian ears. But, if we keep reading, we find five or more festivals – holy days – Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, the festival of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, and then what's called The Last Day in the bible. It came right at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles. These were all harvest festivals the ancient Israelites observed to show appreciation to God for the blessings He gave them. They were an agrarian society, so all the wealth came from the ground.

Notice something else. Since every one of these festivals was a shadow of something to come – since all seven festivals show us something Jesus Christ is doing now, or is doing later – would it

be smart to seem them important to Christians? The Bible has some pretty serious warnings about adding to it or leaving things off. Modern Christianity has left off God's salvation plan. They have dropped the annual reminders of what God is doing with us. If you think about it, it's shocking!

Think with me about this for a few minutes. I've heard ministers say that there is a litmus test to tell for sure if someone is a Christian or if a church is a Christian church, rather than some obscure cult, or some cult that's not a part of Christianity. Do you know what the one big thing modern Christianity believes is the most important things to identify a Christian legitimacy? Do you know what it is? It's the trinity. And yet that doctrine can't be proven out of the Bible. It's supposition. Think about how many times the Bible mentions Jesus and God together – dozens and dozens of times in the New Testament. So was that Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James and Jude snubbing the third member of the Godhead when they talked only about God the Father and Jesus Christ? How many times does it say the Holy Spirit was poured out on people? Or, as in Acts, settled on the individual heads of the believers appearing like flames of fire? Now, I know there is a Holy Spirit, but any time we start pouring concrete around what God is like, we need to remember that none of us has ever seen God in person, nor are we made of spirit so we cannot yet understand that.

So, there is, however, a couple of concrete litmus tests that are in the Bible – not supposition, but spoken plainly – that we can count on to talk about what Christians should do and believe. Let's look at one. It's in 1 Peter 2:21. Peter said:

1 Peter 2:21-23 – *For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps. He committed no sin – that means He didn't break God's law – neither was deceit found in His mouth. Paul said in Romans – I think in the fifth chapter – “Let God be true though every man a liar.” When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly.*

So, He came and set us an example about how to live the New Covenant way. And we, in sincere love for Him, because of His sacrifice, want to show our love to Him by following His example and being like Him. So, Christians obey Christ. They do what He did. They follow His example and they believe what He believed, and they walk their walk the way He walked. Would anybody argue with that? Okay, so that would be like a litmus test of what a Christian is.

Here's the second one: In Jude 3 and 4 – this is a one-chapter book, so there's no chapter, just verses – Jude says:

Jude :3-4 – *Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation – that's what he wanted to write about – I found it necessary to write – instead – appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. So, the picture painted in the*

New Testament, showing what they believed and what they did, is a picture we are to follow. It's never going to go out of style. It's not going to be overtaken by technology. It can't be improved on. It's perfect just the way Christ delivered it. Notice, continuing what he said: *For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

To not follow the example set in the New Testament church and portrayed in the New Testament itself is to deny Christ. It's to "go off the trolley" and completely deny Jesus Christ. He came, He delivered the law, and He left. He said everything He needs to say to us. There it is. Are we going to follow it or not? That's the second litmus test that you can bank on.

Some say Jesus observed the festivals because He was a Jew and that's what Jews did then. Well, once He died, then the New Covenant came into effect, so we don't have to do that old Jewish stuff. That's how they think. Jesus Himself created all that, by the way. There is truth to that. It's just that some people don't understand what is a part of the New Covenant and what isn't. What was made unnecessary by His death were the sacrifices, because, as Paul explains to us, He was the sacrifice, and with that, temple rituals, washings, sacrifices, and the priesthood, because He is now our High Priest. He's called that in the New Testament. So, the Aaronic priesthood is no longer necessary.

Now, does that mean it's done away with? We learn in the Old Testament and everything that was a part of that law is going to be observed again when Christ returns. So, it's just set aside temporarily because of the situation – not done away with.

We saw that Jesus went to the Feast of Tabernacles at the temple. We know He observed the Passover. He told us to observe the Sabbath and He observed that Himself. So, there it is. The New Testament church observed it. After Christ died, we're left with a picture of what Christians are to observe today and the shadows of things to come that are part of our worship.

The New Testament church observed the Sabbath for 350 to 500 years after Christ – did you know that? That's a long time – before the Catholic Church finally opted out of it. That shows us that it's to be kept today. It doesn't matter what they did 500 years later. It's what they did at the beginning that is the litmus test. So, God wants us to remember that there is coming a Sabbath observance for the whole world. That's what Paul said. And, in the New Testament, we see evidence of all but one of the holy days mentioned by name as being observed by the New Testament church.

Let's read what Paul said about the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The apostle Paul tells us that he was taken into Arabia, after he was called on the Damascus Road, and taught personally by Jesus Christ for three and a half years. If anybody ought to know what we should do, he would be one of them. So, in 1 Corinthians 5:6, he says:

1 Corinthians 5:6-7 – *Your boasting* – he’s talking to the Corinthian church – *is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?* You put just a little package of leavening in a lump of dough and it leavens the whole thing. That’s what he’s saying. He’s using the example of leavened bread. And he said: *Clean out the old leaven* – in verse 7 – *that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed.* So, now leavened bread is an example, or a shadow, of sin, and unleavened bread is a shadow of living a life free of it.

So, the festival of Unleavened Bread is about living sin free. It wasn’t back to the Jews, but it was a *shadow* of something that was to come. So, here he is taking the church to task – Paul is – for being slack in their observance of the festival and explaining that the unleavened bread of old is a shadow of sincerity and truth that comes with the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant. So, that’s pretty telling, isn’t it? There’s a lot more there, if you want to read it.

What about Pentecost? That’s what we’re observing today. In ancient Israel, this day was to celebrate the spring harvest of the nation. When I lived in Arkansas years ago, there were quite a few farmers in my congregation. And in the spring, they would start talking about winter wheat. That was wheat that was planted in the winter time, and it was a smaller crop than they raised in the summer. But, they would plant winter wheat and then they would harvest it in the spring. So, Pentecost is a spring festival.

But notice this in the New Testament – Acts 2, verse 1. After Christ has been killed, and resurrected from the dead, and spent time with His disciples, and has ascended to heaven, it says:

Acts 2:1-4 – *When the day of Pentecost arrived* – that’s called the Feast of Firstfruits in the Old Testament, but they called it Pentecost in the New because it means to count fifty days after the Sabbath that falls during Unleavened Bread. And that takes us to Pentecost. *When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.* So, there they are – observing Pentecost. *And suddenly, there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Then Peter stood up and preached a powerful sermon, explaining from the Bible what they were seeing. And he says in Acts 2:37:

V-37-38 – *Now when they heard this* – Luke is telling us this. When these people heard this sermon Peter preached – *they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

V-41 – *So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

So, the first people to be inducted into the Israel of God – the Church of God – the body of Christ – were inducted on Pentecost and given the Holy Spirit in a new way for the very first time. What was once a harvest festival to thank God for a good spring harvest started with a growth surge – a harvest of souls of three thousand, one hundred and twenty people on the very first day. Anyone with eyes to see can know, today it pictures the beginning of God’s first harvest of children for His family – the family of God. And that starts with His church. They’re going to be the saints that resurrected first at Christ’s return.

So, how can people who are quick to celebrate their birthdays and anniversaries drop the birthday of the church? In the fall, just before the Feast of Tabernacles – picturing the millennium – the thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth – there is to come another holy day, the Day of Atonement. The Jew call it *Yom Kippur*. We’re missing one here – we’re leaving out one called the Feast of Trumpets – *Rosh Hashanah* to the Jews – but we’ll get to that another time. We’ve covered it many times already and it’s on our Website at liferesource.org.

Let’s look at this one – the holy day of Day of Atonement. People today see no connection between its observance and Jesus Christ. They think it’s Jewish. Yet Paul uses the way ancient Israel observed Atonement as a detailed shadow of Christ’s sacrifice – His replacement of the Aaronic priesthood and all the sacrifices that they did. Let’s read it – Hebrews 9:11.

Hebrews 9:11-14 – *But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come – see, there’s that shadow. The high priest was a shadow of Christ coming – then through the greater and more perfect tent – tent means...that’s a tabernacle – (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) – so, the tabernacle of old and the temple of old pictured something that was to come – greater – he entered once for all into the holy places – the holiest place of all in the temple – the holy of holies. The high priest only went in there once a year. And guess what day that was. Well, it was on the Day of Atonement. And it says He went in *not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption*. So, all the sacrifices that were offered by the nation of Israel were a shadow of Christ’s blood that He was going to shed for us. It pictured His death. Verse 13: *For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.**

So, he’s using their own holy day to show them that it was merely a shadow of something much greater that had now arrived – the death of Christ as the great sacrifice for them and a New Covenant with a new priesthood.

Hebrews 9:15, continuing:

V-15 – *Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.* So, Paul, right here, is explaining what their Day of Atonement foreshadowed. It was *always* about Jesus Christ from the very beginning. They just didn't understand it.

But he's not done yet. Let's read more – Hebrews 9:23:

Hebrews 9:24 – *For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. The temple pictures where God is – where His throne is. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own – they did this every year – for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

So, this holy day – the Day of Atonement – foreshadows a time when the entire world will know God, repent of their sins, become at one with Him through His sacrifice. It was so, much, much bigger than they understood back then!

Further, all these days foreshadow something Jesus will accomplish and that makes them a seven-step picture of God's salvation plan. Isn't that just the most amazing thing? And yet, because most of Christianity long ago gave up the holy days, they're in a state today – a state of misdirection about what will happen once we die. And it's a case of billions of people for everyone to see and experience. We either use it or we lose it. Jesus kept those days. The early church kept those days. Jesus asked the question, "Brethren, when I return, will I find faith on the earth?" That's a question that He asked each one of us. So, what is your answer? What is your answer to that question? Are you willing to do what they did back then? Well, if you are, you'll be observing those days that He observed.

And so, with that rehearsal of God's holy day salvation plan, let me say to all you here today, "Happy Pentecost!"

Now, don't forget to check out our Website, liferesource.org. I want to take time to thank so many people who've donated to help support this ministry. Can't do it without you. We're thankful to God, too, for laying it on your hearts to donate to us.

Until next time, this is Bill Jacobs for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, family and the

Church of God.