



How Old Testament Shadows Point to Christ

Throughout Israel's Scriptures, the Lord ordered real people, events, and institutions within His unfolding work of redemption. Some were also appointed to foreshadow a greater fulfillment in Christ. Adam, for example, is called "the figure of him that was to come" (Romans 5:14); Israel's wilderness experiences are written "for our examples" and "for our admonition" (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11). Such patterns are not fanciful likenesses imposed upon the text. Their meaning rests upon the connections Scripture itself reveals, under the wisdom of the God who declares the end from the beginning. The earlier things retain their historical truth and particular place in God's dealings with Israel, while pointing beyond themselves to the salvation accomplished in His Son. Reading these shadows in the light of their revealed substance honors both the testimony of the Old Testament and the glory of Christ. Thus, the faithful reader receives these patterns with reverence, discerning in them the unity of God's purpose and the sufficiency of His redemption.

Throughout Scripture, the Lord unfolds one gracious purpose of redemption, using persons, ordinances, and events to prepare His people for Christ. The New Testament calls such earlier forms "a shadow of things to come," while affirming that "the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17). A shadow is neither false nor worthless: it is given by God, bears the outline of what is coming, and directs the eye beyond itself. Yet it is not the substance; the reality and fullness are found in the Son. Thus the law's sacrifices could point toward atonement, but could not perfect the conscience or accomplish what Christ's offering achieved (Hebrews 10:1). This reading does not erase the first setting or turn every detail into a hidden prediction. Rather, it receives each pattern in its historical place and attends to the purpose God gave it. As the risen Lord showed from Moses and the prophets, Scripture bears witness to Him (Luke 24:27), and our hope rests in His finished work.