

Teaching 4 of 11

The Shadow and the Real Thing

When your father walks up the road, you don't hug his shadow.

“These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.”

Colossians 2:17

At sunset a long shadow stretches across the road, the shape of your dad coming home. A moment later he walks up. You don't bend down and hug the shadow. You run and hug your dad.

Food, feasts and the Sabbath

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.

Colossians 2:16

Yearly feasts, monthly new moons, the weekly Sabbath. Paul says let no one judge you about any of them. The Sabbath is right there in the list.

σκιά

skia (skee-AH)

A shadow: the dark shape cast by something real.

σῶμα

sōma (SO-mah)

The body: the real, solid thing that casts the shadow.

Why? They are a σκιά *skia*, a shadow. The substance, the σῶμα *sōma*, the real body that casts the shadow, is Christ.

The debt was nailed down

Just before, Paul says Jesus canceled “the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross” (Colossians 2:14). Your debt is gone. That is why no one can judge you over food or days.

A shadow cannot clean you

Hebrews says the Law “has but a shadow of the good things to come” and its yearly sacrifices could never make anyone perfect (Hebrews 10:1). A picture of a sandwich cannot fill you up. But “by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14). One time, for all time.

Old and worn out

In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Hebrews 8:13

παλαιόω

palaiōō (pah-lie-OH-oh)

To make old; to wear out.

The word is παλαιόω *palaioō*: to wear out, like old shoes. And it did vanish. In AD 70 Rome burned Jerusalem and tore down the temple. The priests had nowhere to serve, the sacrifices stopped, and the tithe system that fed the temple ended. The shadow was gone. The real thing, Jesus, the true temple, priest and Lamb, lives forever.

The church settled it

ζυγός

zygos (zoo-GOS)

A yoke: the heavy bar put on an ox to make it pull.

When some said non-Jewish believers must keep the Law of Moses to be saved, the apostles met in Jerusalem. Peter asked why they would put on believers “a yoke... that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear” (Acts 15:10). A ζυγός *zygos* is the heavy bar on an ox’s neck. Then he said, “We believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 15:11). Their letter to new believers listed a few simple things. The Sabbath was not on it. Tithing was not on it.

Maybe you have spent years staring at the ground, checking the calendar and counting coins. Lift your eyes. The real thing has come. Run to Him.

Remember this

The Sabbath, the feasts, and the food laws were shadows that pointed to Jesus. He is the real thing, and no one may judge you over a shadow.