

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*The Mystery of Christ.*"

On Sunday mornings we have been working our way through Luke's gospel verse by verse and we find ourselves at **Luke 16:16**, but I'm going to provide quite a bit of background information, so this verse makes sense.

Let me begin by explaining what a mystery is, biblically...

A mystery is something that can never be figured out no matter how much time you had or no matter how hard you tried.

For example, if you looked at a difficult math problem you might say, "This is a mystery to me," but given enough time and effort you could discover the answer. But in Scripture, a mystery is something concealed until God chooses to reveal it.

In **Colossians 2** Paul talks about a mystery. Look with me at verse one to see how much he wants his readers – including us – to understand this mystery...

**Colossians 2:1 For I WANT YOU TO KNOW HOW GREAT A STRUGGLE I HAVE FOR YOU AND FOR THOSE AT LAODICEA AND FOR ALL WHO HAVE NOT SEEN ME FACE TO FACE, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of GOD'S MYSTERY, WHICH IS CHRIST.**

Verse 2 says Christ is God's mystery. And this brings us to lesson one...

### Lesson One: Christ was a mystery.

Here's the question...

Why is Christ called a mystery?

Because He was concealed and then revealed. He could not be known until God chose to reveal Him.

Look a few verses earlier at the end of **Colossians 1:26**...

**Colossians 1:26 the mystery HIDDEN FOR AGES AND GENERATIONS BUT NOW REVEALED TO HIS SAINTS.**

Christ was a mystery that was hidden in the past, but God has revealed Him to New Testament saints. Look at the next verse...

**Colossians 1:27 To them God chose TO MAKE KNOWN how great among the Gentiles are the riches of THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY, WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory.**

The words **God chose to make known** mean God revealed the mystery of Christ.

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Now consider this for a moment...

I have been talking about Christ being a mystery throughout the Old Testament, but many of you probably know that the New Testament says the Old Testament is about Christ!

Listen to these verses:

- **Luke 24:27 Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] expounded to them in all the Scriptures THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF...All things must be fulfilled which were written IN THE LAW OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS AND THE PSALMS (a way to refer to the Old Testament) CONCERNING ME.”**
- When Philip understood the mystery of Christ, he wanted his friend, Nathaniel, to as well. **John 1:45-46 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom MOSES IN THE LAW AND ALSO THE PROPHETS WROTE, JESUS OF NAZARETH, the son of Joseph.”**
- **Hebrews 10:7 [Jesus said,] “Behold, I have come—in THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME.”**

So is Christ concealed or revealed in the Old Testament?:

- On one hand we have the New Testament saying Christ was a mystery in the Old Testament.
- On the other hand, we have the New Testament saying the Old Testament is about Christ.

Which is it?

It is both!

Christ was hidden in the Old Testament, but what if He was completely hidden without any way to look forward to Him?

Nobody in the Old Testament would be able to be saved, because we are saved by grace through faith in Christ. So God provided two ways for people to look forward to Christ in faith...even though He was concealed.

And this brings us to lesson two...

**Lesson Two: Old Testament saints (Part One) looked forward to Christ in faith through prophecies and shadows.**

The Old Testament was filled with prophecies of Christ. He fulfilled around 350 prophecies in His first coming.<sup>i</sup>

As people believed these prophecies and looked forward in faith to the Messiah fulfilling them, they were justified, or declared righteous, by faith.<sup>ii</sup>

Who is the premier Old Testament example of believing God’s promise, or prophecy, and being justified or declared righteous by that faith?

Abraham!

**Genesis 15:6 [Abraham] believed the Lord, and [the Lord] counted it to [Abraham] as righteousness.**

Two thousand years before Christ came, Abraham was justified by faith in God’s prophecies to him.<sup>iii</sup>

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Second, Old Testament saints could look forward to Christ through shadows and types.

You are in Colossians. Look at **Colossians 2:16...**

**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.**

This refers to commands in the Mosaic law, or Old Covenant, that are no longer binding for today, so Paul does not want any Christians feeling condemned about not obeying them.

And look what he says about them...

**Colossians 2:17** These are A SHADOW of the things to come, but the SUBSTANCE BELONGS TO CHRIST.

Elements of the Mosaic law contained shadows of Christ, but He is the **substance**.

You don't have to turn there, but listen to one more verse making this point...

**Hebrews 10:1** The law has but a SHADOW of the good things to come instead of the true form of these REALITIES.

The law contained the **shadows**, but the **realities** are found in Christ.<sup>iv</sup>

**Shadows** are a fitting way to describe types of Christ, because:

- Shadows are pointing to something else.
- A shadow is evidence that something is casting it, or in the case of Christ, it is Someone.
- Shadows provide an idea of what something looks like without completely revealing the object.
- Nobody looks at a shadow and believes it is the real thing. Nobody sees the shadow of a tree or car and thinks it is a tree or car.
- Shadows have no substance. They are not the reality. In **Colossians 2:17**, Jesus is the **substance** and in **Hebrews 10:1**, He is the **reality**.

The New Testament identifies many shadows and types of Christ. For example:

- **John 3:14** compares Jesus with the Bronze Serpent: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”
- **John 6:32-33** compares Jesus with the manna: “Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”
- **First Corinthians 10:4** compares Jesus with the rock that accompanied Israel in the wilderness: “[Israel] drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.”<sup>v</sup>

Certain practices served as shadows of Christ:

- Each sacrifice looked forward to Jesus, the true and greater Sacrifice for sins.
- Hebrews 4:1-9 says the rest people enjoyed on the Sabbath was a picture of the true and greater rest that is found in Christ.
- Briefly look at **Colossians 2:11**...

**Colossians 2:11** In him also YOU WERE CIRCUMCISED with a circumcision made without hands (it is not physical), by putting off the body of the flesh (referring to the sinful flesh), by the circumcision of Christ,

Circumcision has its fulfillment in Christ because He helps us put off, not physical flesh, but sinful flesh.<sup>vi</sup>

And as people engaged in these practices in faith that looked forward to Christ they were saved by faith.

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One other reason the word shadows is so fitting, is it describes how Old Testament saints saw Christ: in a veiled, shadowy way. And this brings us to lesson three...

**Lesson Two: Old Testament saints (Part Two) strained to understand the mystery of Christ.**

Imagine you're standing in a dark room and there is an object you are struggling to see. You can make out some of the details, but some remain obscured. This is what it was like for Old Testament saints as they looked forward to Christ in faith.

Please turn to **1 Peter 1**. This is a unique section of Scripture that gives us insight into the lives of Old Testament prophets and what it was like for them as they tried to see Christ through prophecies and shadows.

**1 Peter 1:10 Concerning this salvation** (this means the salvation that has been made available to us in the New Testament), **the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours (or ours) SEARCHED AND INQUIRED CAREFULLY,**

The prophets struggled in the darkness of the Old Testament to see Christ.

**1 Peter 1:11 inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ** (this is another name for the Holy Spirit) **in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.**

The prophecies and shadows let them know the Messiah was there, but they couldn't make Him out. They knew something great was coming, but they didn't know exactly what it was. They wondered:

- Who is the Christ?
- What will He be like?
- When will He come?

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One of the reasons things were so confusing for Old Testament saints is contained in the words **the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.**<sup>vii</sup>

You had the Holy Spirit revealing to the prophets both the sufferings and glories of the Messiah. This created an almost paradoxical Messiah:

- Would He suffer or be glorified?
- Would He be accepted or rejected?

These seem mutually exclusive.

The answer is, yes:

- He is the Messiah of **Psalm 22** and **Isaiah 53** that suffers
- And the Messiah of **Psalm 2** and **Isaiah 45** who is worshiped and exalted.

The solution is two comings, which allow the seemingly mutually exclusive prophecies to be harmonized...but two comings were one of the other Old Testament mysteries.<sup>viii</sup>

**1 Peter 1:12a It was revealed to them** (the Old Testament prophets) **that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven,**

Pause right here.

The prophets knew when they recorded their prophecies that they were not primarily for them, but for us. They knew they would never fully understand the mystery of Christ.

Look at the rest of the verse...

**1 Peter 1:12b things into which angels long to look.**<sup>ix</sup>

Angels don't have God's foreknowledge or foresight. They don't see history in advance. Revelation is progressive or unfolding for them like it is for us. And even they **long to look** in and understand the mystery of Christ that has been made known to us.

Think of Jesus's words...

**Matthew 13:16 Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear** (in other words, we understand the mystery of Christ). **17 For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.**

Old Testament saints longed to see the grace that would be made available to us in the Church Age. The New Testament has given us revelation of Christ they could only dream of having.

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Hopefully you can see the larger purpose of the Old Testament...

It lead people to Christ!

When we understand this about the Old Testament, it takes on an entirely new meaning. And this brings us to lesson four...

### **Lesson Three: Think of the Old Testament as a key versus only a rulebook.**

Some people wrongly believe the Old Testament is little more than a rule book of dos and don'ts. Yes, the Old Testament contains the law, but we should think of it as a key that unlocks the mystery of Christ.

Go ahead and turn to **Galatians 3:23**.<sup>x</sup>

**Galatians 3:23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.**

**Before faith** doesn't mean there was a time when there was no faith. Instead, it means before we came to faith in Christ.

At the end of the verse notice the word **revealed**. We come to faith when the mystery of Christ was **revealed** to us.

Before that **we were held captive by the law** in that we had to keep it to be saved. Until you put faith in Christ you are attempting to be saved by the law whether you know it or not.

**Galatians 3:24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.**

We were kept by the law until we were justified, or declared righteous, by faith.

**Galatians 3:25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian** (or under the law),

This describes the purpose of the Law: it brings us to Christ so we can be justified or declared righteous by faith in Him.

At that point the Old Testament has served its purpose in being a key that unlocks the mystery of Christ.

So, if you learned everything the Old Testament could teach—if you could recount every story, recite countless verses—but you didn't find Christ, then you have you have missed the treasure.

You are looking at the shadow of a tree while saying, "Look at that amazing tree!" In the language of **Hebrews 10:1**, you are missing the **reality**. In the language of **Colossians 2:17** you are overlooking the **substance**.

Think of what Jesus said to the religious leaders...

**John 5:39 [Jesus said], “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is THEY THAT BEAR WITNESS ABOUT ME, 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.”**

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Now we are finally ready to read **Luke 16!** Go ahead and turn there.

**Luke 16:16 “The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it.**

This verse is largely about a basic division in God’s plan.

**The law and the prophets** is a New Testament way to refer to the Old Testament.

Why did it only last until John?

Consider that when the Old Testament ended with Malachi there were 400 years of silence until John the Baptist spoke. John ministry was the dividing line. He is the transitional figure between the Old and New Testaments.

And this brings us to lesson five...

**Lesson Four: John’s ministry solved the mystery of Christ.**

John MacArthur wrote, “*John the Baptist’s ministry marked the turning point of redemptive history. Prior to that, the great truths of Christ and His kingdom were veiled in the types and shadows of the law, and promised in the writings of the prophets.*”

John removed the veil. Listen to this...

**John 1:15 (John bore witness about [Christ], and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”)**

John says, “*This is the One I have been telling you about! He is no longer veiled!*”

**John 1:29 [John] saw Jesus...and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**

No veil or mystery whatsoever.

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Think of the Old Testament like one big promise. When God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ and brought the kingdom of God from heaven to earth the time of promise and prophecy was over and the time of reality and substance began. In the Old Testament people looked forward in faith to the coming kingdom, but in John’s day the kingdom arrived.

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Consider this statement Jesus said about John that makes a similar point...

**Matthew 11:11a Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist.**

This doesn’t mean John was greater morally or righteously than everyone who had been born up to this point. Instead, he was greater in what He experienced. He saw Christ physically while people in the Old Testament only saw Christ in faith.

But now listen to this. As great as John was, look who is even greater...

**Matthew 11:11b Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.**

John was great, but believers after John are greater, because they can enter the kingdom of God that has been brought to earth.

As you read the Gospels, you notice they didn't preach the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, because He hadn't died, been buried, and resurrected yet.

So what did they preach?

In **verse 16** notice the words **since then** (or since John) **the good news of the kingdom of God is preached,**

The kingdom arrived, so that's what was preached...and it says...

**everyone forces his way into it.**

What exactly does this mean that people were forcing their way into the kingdom?

- It almost sounds like if people tried hard enough they could enter
- But if they didn't try hard enough they couldn't enter

It is similar to **Luke 13:24** which says...

**Luke 13:24 "STRIVE TO ENTER through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, WILL SEEK TO ENTER AND WILL NOT BE ABLE.**

Again, this sounds like people try hard to enter, but some people would not be able to enter because they didn't try hard enough.

That's not really what Jesus is saying. Instead, when the kingdom of God came people faced a choice:

- In the language of **Luke 16:16** would they try to force their way in?
- In the language of **Luke 13:24** would they strive to enter?

And this brings us to lesson six...

**Lesson Six: (Part One) The kingdom of God brought a choice in Jesus's day...**

When the kingdom of God arrived, it was all about urgency and desire:

- There were those who urgently desired to enter the kingdom and they forced their way into it
- And there were those who couldn't care less about entering.

It is important to understand Jesus said this to the religious leaders. He presented a contrast:

- He used the zeal of some people trying to enter the kingdom to rebuke the religious leaders who didn't care about entering.
- He pointed out that some people wanted so badly to be part of the kingdom, but they had Christ and the kingdom of God in their midst and they rejected both.

Now back in **Luke 16:16** look at the phrase **the law and the prophets were UNTIL JOHN.**

Do you see what this could cause people to wonder?

- Is the law done away with?

- Is the law meaningless or irrelevant?

To prevent people from thinking this, look what Jesus said in our last verse...

**Luke 16:17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void.**

Unfortunately, this might be one of the most misunderstood verses in Scripture. It is commonly quoted by people who want to convince you that the Mosaic law, or the old covenant law, is still binding. They will say, “*You must keep the Old Testament law, because Jesus said it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot to become void.*”

But there are two possible ways to interpret the **law [not becoming] void**:

- One possibility is the law is not voided and is in effect today.
- The other possibility is the law is not unfulfilled, as though Jesus said, “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the law to be UNFULFILLED.”

The second interpretation harmonizes with Jesus saying exactly this elsewhere...

**(NKJV) Matthew 5:17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but TO FULFILL. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all IS FULFILLED.”<sup>xi</sup>**

Notice what Jesus did and didn’t say:

- He did say He came to fulfill the law
- He did not say He came to enforce it.

And the context makes this clear:

- Jesus is not talking to the religious leaders about the law applying today.
- He is talking to them about fulfilling the law when He came the law being. It would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the law to be unfulfilled by Him in His coming...therefore they should recognize He is the Messiah.

Whenever we face two possible interpretations, we always let the Bible interpret the Bible and we hold to the interpretation that harmonizes with the rest of Scripture...which in this case is the second interpretation that Jesus fulfilled the law versus kept it binding.

There are so many places in the New Testament letting us know that we are no longer under the Mosaic law. For example:

- In Acts 10-11 we see the food commands are no longer binding
- In Acts 15 we see that circumcision is no longer required
- We know the sacrifices are no longer required
- There is no more earthly priesthood with Christ serving as our great high priest
- There is no more earthly physical temple with believers becoming the temple of God

Because Jesus fulfilled the law perfectly we must make a choice just like they had to make a choice in Jesus’s day...and this brings us to the last part of lesson six...

**Lesson Six: (Part One) The kingdom of God brought a choice in Jesus’s day (Part Two) and ours.**

With Christ’s first coming the prophecies have been fulfilled and the types and shadows have become clear:

- The mystery of Christ is solved: Jesus is the Messiah.

- The substance and reality is found in Christ.
- We are no longer in the dark. The Old Testament truths are revealed in the bright light of the gospel.

So, we face a choice, just like the people in Jesus's day.

Entrance into the kingdom was not automatic for the Jews, God's covenant people, which means it is not automatic for the Gentiles, or for us.

There is an urgent call to decide for or against Christ.

Will we be like those in Christ's day who force our way into the kingdom by exercising faith in Christ, or will we be like the religious leaders and disregard it?<sup>xii</sup>

If you have any questions about anything I've shared this morning, I will be up for after service and out consider it a privilege to build a speak with you.

Let's pray.

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<sup>i</sup> For example, He would:

- Be from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10)
- Receive King David's throne (2 Samuel 7:12-13)
- Be spat upon and beaten (Isaiah 50:6)
- Be silent in the face of accusations (Isaiah 53:7)
- Spend a season in Egypt (Hosea 11:1)
- Ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9)

And the list goes on. And on. And on. Jesus fulfilled around 350 prophecies in His first coming.

Consider the account of God sending Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch:

**Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus (Acts 8:30-35).**

The Ethiopian didn't know who the verses were about because Jesus was still a mystery to him. When Philip helped him see Christ, Jesus moved from being concealed to revealed. The mystery was solved.

<sup>ii</sup> "353 Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus Christ." <http://www.accordingtothescriptures.org/prophecy/353prophecies.html>

<sup>iii</sup> Now you are all sharp Christians who know your Bibles and understand the gospel, so I know what you are asking

7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify[c] the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."

#### <sup>iv</sup> <A>How Important Are Types and Shadows?

Types and shadows allow us to interpret some prophecies. Take for instance Jesus's resurrection on the third day. In Luke 24:46, Jesus said, "Thus *it is written*, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead *the third day*." In 1 Corinthians 15:4, Paul said, "[Jesus] was buried, and that He *rose again the third day according to the Scriptures*." Jesus said, "It is written" in the Old Testament that He would "rise [on] the third day." Paul said, "the Scriptures" prophesied Jesus would be raised on "the third day." While most Christians know it was prophesied that

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Jesus would be raised from the dead on the third day, few Christians can find the prophecy in the Old Testament. Why is that? This prophecy is fulfilled through two types and shadows.

Two thousand years before Jesus was crucified on Mount Moriah (which is Jerusalem is located according to 2 Chronicles 3:1) another father, Abraham, brought his son, Isaac, there to sacrifice him. Genesis 22:4 says, “*On the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.*” This is the day Abraham arrived at Moriah and received Isaac back from the dead. Hebrews 11:19 says, “*God was able even to raise [Isaac] from the dead,* from which, figuratively speaking, Abraham did receive him back. Abraham received the command to sacrifice Isaac on the first day and reckoned him dead, so when the Angel stopped him he “figuratively” received his son back from the dead on the third day.

The second type and shadow is Jonah, who “was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights” (Jonah 1:17). His “resurrection” out of the fish on the third day is a type and shadow of the resurrection on the third day. Jesus confirmed: “As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40).

When Philip understood the mystery of Christ, he wanted his friend, Nathaniel, to as well. In John 1:45-46 we read: **Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”**

Nathanael didn’t believe anything good, especially not the Messiah, could come from Nazareth, but according to Matthew 2:23 multiple prophets declared the Messiah would be from there. Nazareth is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament, so which verses does Matthew have in mind? Matthew isn’t referring to specific verses but is instead summarizing a theme of prophetic expectation that the obscurity and lowliness of Nazareth is a type and shadow of Jesus’s lowliness and humility. As Nathanael’s words to Philip indicate, Nazareth was despised, rejected, and detested by men, like the Messiah (Psalm 22:6-8 and Isaiah 49:7; 53:3). With Nazareth as a type and shadow of the Messiah, Jesus could be called a Nazarene.

Because of Nathanel’s familiarity with types and shadows, he solved the mystery. Because of Philip’s ignorance of types and shadows Christ almost remained hidden from him. Types and shadows are so important because without them we can’t correctly understand some prophecies and solve the mystery.

### <A>Failing to Solve the Mystery Is Missing the Feast

Let me give you an analogy to keep in mind so you do not “settle for the scraps.” Imagine that you prepare a delicious feast for your friends, but when they arrive, they sit on the floor and eat the crumbs that fall from the table. If you read the Old Testament but fail to see Christ, you are eating the crumbs. You have missed the wonderful feast that has been prepared for you.

John 12:20-21 says, “There were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “*Sir, we wish to see Jesus.*” This should be our hearts’ cry! My desire for you as you read this book is that the mystery will be solved, and you will Jesus.

In the following chapters we’re going to embark on a wonderful adventure, examining types and shadows that look forward to and reveal the substance and reality, “the mystery of God, which is Christ,” contained in the Old Testament. During this time, I pray you grow in your love and thankfulness for the Savior who loves us and gave Himself for us.

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- **Romans 5:14** compares Jesus with Adam: “Adam is a type of Him who was to come.”
- **First Corinthians 5:7** compares Jesus with the Passover Lamb: “**For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.**”
- **Hebrews 10:20** compares Jesus’ body with the veil in the temple that when “torn” on the cross revealed the access believers have to the Father: “[**We have**] a new and living way [**to God**] which [**Jesus**] consecrated for us, through the veil, [**which**] is, His flesh.”

<sup>vi</sup> Miracles in the Old Testament prefigured some miracles Jesus would perform in a greater way:

- Moses unleashed ten judgments on one nation (Exodus 7–12), but Jesus will unleash twenty-one judgments on the whole earth: “And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!’” (Revelation 6:15-16).
- God took Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11), but Jesus ascended to heaven on His own (Acts 1:9).
- Elisha fed one hundred men with twenty loaves (2 Kings 4:42–44), but Jesus fed 5,000 and 4,000 men with five and seven loaves (Matthew 14:13–21 and 15:32–39).
- Elisha cleansed one man of leprosy (2 Kings 5:1–14), but Jesus cleansed ten men (Luke 17:11–19).
- Elisha knew what Gehazi had done (2 Kings 5:26), but Jesus knows what all men have done (John 2:24).
- Elisha’s death gave one person temporary life (2 Kings 13:21), but Jesus’ death gives many people eternal life (Romans 5:18).

vii The Holy Spirit revealed the **sufferings of Christ** to the prophets, and they recorded them in passages, such as these:

- **Psalm 22:6-16 I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads...I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint;**
- **Isaiah 50:6 I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.**
- **Isaiah 53:3-5 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not...he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.**

The Holy Spirit also revealed the **subsequent glories**:

- **Psalm 2:6-9 Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”**
- **Isaiah 45:23 By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.’”**
- **Isaiah 52:13 Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.”**

viii How did they do this **searching and inquiring**?

They studied Scripture, including each other’s writings. We see a very interesting example with Daniel when he learned the length of the Babylonian exile by reading Jeremiah’s writings...

**Daniel 9:2 I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord TO JEREMIAH THE PROPHET, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.**

So Daniel understood the exile would be seventy years from reading Jeremiah.

Another reason Daniel is so interesting is because he also reveals that the prophets didn’t fully understand everything.

The second half of the book of Daniel records many visions he received. Listen to what he wrote when he was talking to an angel...

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**Daniel 12:8 I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, “O my lord (he is speaking to an angel that was with him), what shall be the outcome of these things?” 9 He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.**

Basically, the angel told Daniel, “*These things aren’t for you. They’re for the last days. Keep them sealed up until then. They are for people in the future. You are not serving yourself. You are serving them.*”

Which is exactly what the next verse says...

<sup>ix</sup> It sounds strange to say angels look down on us with interest, but this is far from the only New Testament verse discussing this truth:

- Ephesians 3:10-11 says one of the reasons God’s doing what He’s doing with us is to “make known His manifold wisdom...to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”
- In 1 Corinthians 4:9 Paul said, “I think God has...made us a spectacle...to angels.”
- In 1 Corinthians 11:10 Paul even seems to describe angels being offended when women look or act inappropriately in church.

<sup>x</sup> Verse nineteen begins with a question that many people would answer incorrectly...

### **Galatians 3:19a Why then the law?**

People who believe the Old Testament is a rulebook would respond something like, “To tell you what you shouldn’t do so you can be good enough to get to heaven.”

The law (or Old Testament) serves the opposite purpose! It shows us we are NOT good. When we become familiar with the law and what it requires to be good, or righteous, we see we **Romans 3:23 all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**

**Galatians 3:19b It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.**

The New Testament was written in Greek, and the word for “**transgression**” is *parabasis*, which means, “going over.”

People transgress when they know where God has drawn the line, but they step over it anyway. But people can only transgress if they know where the line is drawn. The law reveals the line, and thereby also our transgressions: “for by the law *is the knowledge of sin*” (Romans 3:20).<sup>x</sup> When we look at the standard the law sets, we see how far short we fall from keeping it.<sup>x</sup>

So this is where we see the Old Testament serving as a rulebook. But despite how important the law is, it does not serve the same purpose throughout our lives. Paul said it lasts **until the offspring should come** referring to Jesus.

Skip to **verse 23**...

<sup>xi</sup> A jot refers to the smallest Hebrew letter the *yohd* like an accent mark or an apostrophe. The tittle is a tiny extension on a Hebrew letter, like the seraph in modern typefaces. Christ fulfilled the law so perfectly, He could say not one jot or tittle was erased.

<sup>xii</sup> Done:

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- Moody
  - Wiersbe
  - ESV expository commentary
  - ESV study Bible
  - JM
  - Nelson
  - Life application