**John 1: Jesus – The Reality Of O.T. Shadows**

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**“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*.”** (**Colossians 2:16-17**)

Every OT ordinance or regulation, Paul seems to call a ‘shadow’ or a foreshadowing of things that would be completely fulfilled in Jesus; we can find in Jesus the fulfillment of all the OT. At least, that’s what’s being said in verses 16 & 17 of Colossians 2. In my Bible reading, I found no less than FIVE of these fulfillments in the first chapter of the book of John alone! Let me share them with you.

**Jesus, the Creator: John 1:1-3 – Genesis 1:1-3**

Within the first few verses of chapter one, John establishes the fact that Jesus (called ‘the Word’) is the OT Creator. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made”* (**John 1:1-3**). Most can see the similarities between this passage and **Genesis 1:1**, “*In the beginning God created…”* Nothing was created without Jesus! He is the Creator of heaven and earth!

**Jesus, the Tabernacle: John 1:14 – Exodus 25:1-9**

John then establishes that Jesus is the OT tabernacle (or ‘tent’) by pointing to the fact that Jesus is the ‘whole fullness of deity dwelling bodily’ (**Colossians 2:9**). ***“****And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth”* (John 1:14). Jesus is God in the flesh. Isaiah said they would call Him ‘Immanuel’ which means *‘God with us’* (**Isaiah 7:14**). That word ‘dwelt’ in verse 14 of John chapter one literally means ‘tabernacled or set up a tent.’ Jesus, when coming to earth as a man, set up the true tabernacle of God which is His body. The OT tabernacle, or dwelling place of God, is literally fulfilled in Jesus!

**Jesus, the Sacrifice: John 1:29 – Leviticus 16:15-19**

Jesus is also the fulfillment of every OT sacrifice that purged the sin or ‘uncleanness’ of Israel. *“The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’”* (**John 1:29**). God established animal sacrifice as a means to pay for the sin and disobedience of His people, teach them a lesson on the atrocities of sin (pictured by the slaying of the lamb) and to restore them to a right relationship with Him. So when John the Baptist calls Jesus the ‘Lamb of God,’ he means that Jesus will die in our place, bearing our sins, to reconcile us to God. Jesus is God’s plan for saving man for He will die for us to redeem us from Satan and sin.

**Jesus, the Anointed: John 1:41, 49 – Isaiah 9:6-7**

In Jesus’ day, the Jews were expecting a king to come, promised by prophecy in the OT. They referred to this king as the ‘Messiah’ or ‘Christ’ and John says this was Jesus. *“We have found the Messiah (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus… Nathanael answered Him, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’”* (**John 1:41, 49**). The term ‘Christ’ translates to ‘the Anointed One’ and everyone knew this referred to a king, because, when a king was chosen to rule over Israel, they would break a flask of oil and pour it over his head signifying the ‘anointing’ by God. Jesus is God’s chosen, anointed, everlasting King and Christ, promised and prophesied in the Scriptures!

**Jesus, the Way to God: John 1:51 – Genesis 28:10-17**

Our chapter closes with John mentioning Jesus’ allusion to Jacob’s ladder. In Genesis 28:10-17, we can read of Jacob’s dream which shows a ladder set up from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it – a direct access to God. *“Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man”* (John 1:51). Jesus is Jacob’s ladder! He is, as He says, ‘the way’ to God and no one gets to God the Father except through Him! (John 14:6).

When I noticed these things for the first time, my jaw dropped. These are the reasons why I know this is the word of God. No way can man in his finite mind write a book like this! This is God’s book! Jesus is the fulfillment of all things that He might be everything in God for us! *“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!”* (**Romans 11:33**). This is the GOSPEL: Jesus Christ is your Creator, He wants to dwell with you, He died as God’s holy Lamb to pay the price of your sin; He is now reigning, wants to be your King and calls you to follow Him, and He is the only access to God in heaven. And he says that if you want Him, to receive Him, you must *“believe and be baptized”* (**Mark 16:16**).