

# MEMORIALS AND SHADOWS ANIMAL SACRIFICES OF THE MILLENNIUM

by  
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## Introduction

Assumptions are often dangerous things. Even when they are true, the circumstances that prompted them are often troubling. We need to address them.

This article addresses a theological assumption that has bothered many believers for some time. Simply stated, it is that the animal sacrifices in the Millennium are memorial in nature, and look back to the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is an easy assumption to make: the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross is the once and for all sacrifice that fulfilled the inadequate Old Testament sacrifices (Hebrews 10:4, 10). The efforts to reconcile Hebrews with Ezekiel 40–48, and various other Old Testament prophetic passages usually make this assumption.

This article will not be the final word concerning the millennial animal sacrifices, although it will conclude with thoughts on the subject. This article will examine the nature of memorials and survey memorials that God has established in both testaments. The nature of shadow-doctrine and typology we will also examine by noting what the New Testament teaches concerning Old Testament shadows and types.

## Terminology

*Old Testament sacrifices* refer primarily to all animal sacrifices as revealed in the Old Testament—those Israel historically offered in times past. *Millennial sacrifices* refer to animal sacrifices that await historical fulfillment in future times. *New Testament sacrifices*, or *Church Age sacrifices*, refer to the

non-animal sacrifices that believers practice in the present dispensation.

The term *memorial* should be well known and naturally understood. The nature of the assumption in question, however, requires that the term *memorial* receive some treatment. Christians should also understand the terms *shadow* and *type*, but as they are central to the issue of Old Testament animal sacrifices, we will also discuss them.

### Previous Works

An article, by Jerry M. Hullinger, notes the assumption concerning the millennial sacrifices and presents an alternative to the memorial view.<sup>1</sup> His article follows several others on this topic.<sup>2</sup>

Hullinger notes that with the exception of Peters, most dispensationalists utilize the memorial view to explain the sacrifices in Ezekiel 40–48. Hullinger recognized that this solution reconciles Hebrews with Ezekiel, yet objections exist.

Hullinger's first objection is ultimately the biggest one. That is, Ezekiel nowhere hints that the millennial sacrifices will be memorial in nature. His second objection centered on the Hebrew verb *kipper* (to cover, to atone) and developed an excellent survey of the concepts of atonement and cleansing.

This article goes back to objection #1: *Scripture does not state that the millennial sacrifices will be memorial in nature.* The argument of silence is often weak, but concerning this issue, it may actually be an advantage. The silence itself may speak volumes.

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<sup>1</sup> Jerry M. Hullinger, "The Problem of Animal Sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48," *BSac* 152 (July–September 1995): 279–89.

<sup>2</sup> John L. Mitchell, "The Question of Millennial Sacrifices," *BSac* 110 (July–September 1953): 248–67; *BSac* 110 (October–December 1953): 342–61; Clive A. Thompson, "The Necessity of Blood Sacrifices in Ezekiel's Temple," by *BSac* 123 (July–September 1966): 237–48.

## The Purpose of Old Testament Sacrifices

The purpose of Old Testament animal sacrifices is clear, unlike the millennial sacrifices. Old Testament animal sacrifices are shadow doctrines, looking forward to a literal fulfillment in reality—the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Shadows have a basis in historic reality, but shadow doctrines teach the reality in prophetic anticipation of the reality yet to be revealed.

Shadow doctrine resembles typology. “A type is best defined as a historical person, event or object which, as designed by God, has an essential feature which corresponds to another person, event or object yet future. The term ‘antitype’ is used to describe that future fulfillment.”<sup>3</sup> Both shadows and types appear at a point of time before their reality (or antitype) become manifest.

The burnt offerings of the Mosaic Law were shadows pointing ahead to Jesus Christ. Isaac lying on the altar was a type pointing ahead to Jesus Christ. God is eternal and timeless, yet He reveals His truth progressively to finite creatures within the dimension of time.

Many regard millennial animal sacrifices as memorials, but non-millennial animal sacrifices as shadows. Thus, this article must examine the nature of both memorials and shadows. The conclusion should clearly distinguish between what some assume, and what is understood. The conclusion should also lend itself to the *possibility* that the millennial animal sacrifices (like the non-millennial animal sacrifices) are not memorials looking back, but shadows looking forward.

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<sup>3</sup> Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard F. Vos, and John Rea, eds., *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia* (Chicago: Moody, 1975; electronic ed. by Logos Research Systems, 1996).

## Old Testament Remembrance

Both Testaments discuss the activity of remembering in general and the subject of memorials in particular. One may conduct fruitful word studies on the “to remember” family of words in the Old Testament and the New Testament. We will summarize these studies.

An immediate observation is that the first five uses of the verb *remember* emphasize God’s activity. He remembered Noah (Genesis 8:1), and promises to remember His covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:15–16). God also remembered Abraham (Genesis 19:29), and Rachel (Genesis 30:22).

Two things are at once apparent: (1) Remembering is primarily the work of God, and not the work of man, and (2) remembering is more than the remedy/ antidote for forgetting—it is more specifically a matter of *calling someone, or something, to mind with regard to the Eternal Plan of God*.

In conjunction with the idea that remembering is primarily the work of God, the first human use of the verb is interesting: Joseph urged Pharaoh’s cupbearer to remember him, though he failed to do so (Genesis 40:14, 23). When it comes to establishing and maintaining a memorial, mankind falls terribly short, while God Himself accomplishes the activity perfectly.

The first use of the noun “memorial” comes when the Lord reveals Himself to Israel as the eternal I AM (Exodus 3:14–15). The name of Yahweh was known prior to this;<sup>4</sup> however, its *significance* (a memorial-name for *'ehyeh*, I AM) was not understood before this time.

Observe that in the establishment of a memorial-name (*'ehyeh*, I AM), the Lord revealed explicitly to Moses the significance of the previously known name, Yahweh. *Explicit*

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Genesis 2 where *Lord* occurs 11 times.

*revelation* is a key feature in the establishment of memorials, as will be observed throughout the remainder of this survey. Additionally, the text determines and states the *duration* for this memorial. The memorial name for Israel was to be *to all generations*. The establishment of a time frame (temporary or eternal) is another key feature of memorials. The aspects of explicit revelation and determined duration are characteristic of all memorials in the Old and New Testaments.

The first use of another noun for “memorial” comes when the Lord established the Passover as a festal, celebratory, memorial (Exodus 12:14). We should give careful attention here because the Passover is one of the most clearly defined memorials in Scripture and it involves an animal sacrifice. God explicitly reveals and establishes the Passover memorial. He determines what is to be memorialized and how it is to be memorialized. The Lord spells out the who?, what?, where?, when?, why?, and how?, with precise detail.

The precise day was determined as the fourteenth day of the first month (Exodus 12:2, 6, 14). Preparations actually began on the tenth day of the month with the selection of the sacrificial lamb (Exodus 12:3). The precise menu was laid out, complete with side dishes, cooking instructions, and a procedure for disposing of the leftovers (Exodus 12:8–10). The Lord also established particular activity for this memorial. The people must smear the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintel (Exodus 12:7). They must eat the meal

*with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste* (Exodus 12:11).<sup>5</sup>

The Lord also established the duration:

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<sup>5</sup> *New American Standard Bible* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

*Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance (Exodus 12:14).*

Indeed, they will observe the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, throughout the Millennium, along with all the animal sacrifices that they offer at that time (Ezekiel 43:21). One may wonder whether the millennial observances of Passover will commemorate the Exodus in the same manner that the Old Testament observances of Passover did. To contemplate this concept, we must observe that the Passover was a memorial *and* a shadow. Most memorials were simply that and not shadows. Passover stands out in this way. As a memorial, Passover looked back to the Exodus. As a shadow, Passover looked forward to the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

In the Millennium, therefore, Passover will have a double memorial, with the greater deliverance taking pre-eminence. Jeremiah illustrated how the Exodus will pale in light of the greater blessings God showers upon Israel in the Davidic Kingdom.

*“Therefore behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when they will no longer say, ‘As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ but, ‘As the LORD lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and from all the countries where I had driven them.’ Then they will live on their own soil” (Jeremiah 23:7–8).*

The assumption holds that the millennial animal sacrifices are memorial in nature. If that assumption is true, then the Passover memorial will coincide with other memorials. In Old Testament times, the Passover memorial coincided with the non-memorial shadow-doctrine animal sacrifices. A consistent view would accept these conditions to be the nature of the millennial arrangement—a memorial Passover coinciding with non-memorial, shadow-doctrine animal sacrifices. This view is at least a *possibility*, and our conclusion offers it as a *probability*.

Continuing the Old Testament survey produces a remarkable observation. *Every animal sacrifice* is memorial in nature, but not in the way we normally think of it. A text is Exodus 20:24.

*You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you.*

In the location and activity of bringing an offering to the Lord, the Lord causes believers to remember His name.

Thus, it is not a particular work of God that believers commemorate, but His character, nature, or essence (name) that one brings to mind. It is also a bi-directional activity. Certainly, the one who brings the offering is mindful of the name of the Lord. The Sovereign God that receives the offering is also mindful of His own name. In this regard, God, being the subject of the verb *remember*, becomes even more important than any human being remembering the name of the Lord. The book of Ezekiel highlights this concept:

*Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD, It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went (Ezekiel 36:22).*

God causes His people to remember Him in every sacrifice. In a sense, God memorializes His own faithfulness when He is mindful of His own holy name in every sacrifice on the part of man. As observed in the first five occurrences of *zākar*, the text places the emphasis on God's activity as the subject of the verb. This pattern continues.

The survey also shows that Aaron's high-priestly garments had two onyx stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod. These were memorial stones for the tribes of Israel (Exodus 28:12, 29; 39:7). Aaron would bear those stones as he approached the presence of the Lord on behalf of the people.

*Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders for a memorial . . . Aaron shall carry the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment over his heart when he enters the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually* (Exodus 28:12b, 29).

Once again, God does the remembering. In a test of Moses' humility, he commands the Lord to remember His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 32:13). God does the remembering.

Our survey then goes to Leviticus and Numbers to observe the occurrences of "memorial-offering." We should consider the grain offerings as evidence either for or against the millennial sacrifices being memorial in nature. The text records explicit details, because the grain offerings are memorials. The Lord's and man's portions are determined and precisely recorded. It is interesting that we discover "memorial-offering" seven times.<sup>6</sup> In every case, a portion goes to the Lord, and part remains for man to consume. The *memorial portion* goes up to the Lord, so the priest does not keep it. God does the remembering, man enjoys the blessing. The memorial is entirely His. It is vital to observe that grain offerings will be among the featured millennial offerings.<sup>7</sup>

Let's note two final examples in this Old Testament survey of memorials. The Lord established tassels on Israel's garments, as a device for human memorial (Numbers 15:37–41). Moses explicitly revealed and recorded the precise nature of the device (a tassel), its color (blue), and position (corner).

Finally, the Lord directed Joshua to erect a twelve-stone memorial at the Jordan River (Joshua 4:1–9). The Lord established the precise number of stones and the location for their placement. The Lord explicitly recorded what the memorial commemorated and the instructive nature of the memorial for the descendants of the conquest generation.

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<sup>6</sup> Leviticus 2:2, 9, 16; 5:12; 6:15; 24:7; Numbers 5:26.

<sup>7</sup> Ezekiel 42:13; 44:29; 45:15, 17, 24, 25; 46:5, 7, 11, 14, 15, 20.

## New Testament Remembrance

The predominant New Testament memorial is the Lord's Table. Like the Passover, the Communion service looks backward and forward. As a memorial, the Lord's Table looks back to the character and work of Jesus Christ (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24–25). As a proclamation, the Lord's Table looks forward to His imminent return (1 Corinthians 11:26).

All of the elements observed in the Old Testament memorials appear in the Communion service. There is an explicit revelation of the memorial. The Lord said, *Do this in remembrance of me* (Luke 22:19). There is specific instruction as to the manner of the memorial. Paul said, *I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you* (1 Corinthians 11:23). There is a defined time frame for this memorial—*until He comes* (1 Corinthians 11:26).

The who?, what?, where?, when?, why?, and how? of the Communion service clearly demonstrates its memorial nature. All of the elements are present and the memorial is explicitly stated. Does the same hold true for the millennial animal sacrifices?

### The Millennial Sacrifices

Given the characteristics we observed in both Testaments for memorials, a clear picture should be present, or should be absent, for the millennial animal sacrifices. Is there an explicit statement defining the millennial animal sacrifices as memorial in nature? No. Is there a clearly defined time frame for these animal sacrifices? No. Are there clearly stipulated procedures for the who?, what?, where?, when?, why?, and how? of the supposed memorials? No.

None of the elements for memorials is present in the millennial animal sacrifices. The millennial observance of Passover is memorial in nature, therefore the memorial assumption for the animal sacrifices becomes redundant. An insistence upon

the assumption only is attractive as a way to resolve the conflict between Ezekiel and Hebrews.

Imagine a little boy or girl looking at an animal, which the child believes to be a dog. The child examines his “dog” and observes that it has feathers instead of fur. The “dog” also has two wings, and two feet, instead of four paws. The “dog” does not bark—it clucks. This “dog” has the oddest habit of laying eggs. The child has it stuck in his head that he is looking at a dog, though, and fervently keeps throwing sticks, which his lazy “dog” continuously refuses to fetch. One of two things needs to happen. Either the chicken needs to learn how to fetch, or the child needs to adjust his perspective and understanding to identify properly the chicken.

Since many assume that the millennial animal sacrifices are memorial in nature, this paper first examined the nature of memorials. Since the non-millennial animal sacrifices are understood to be shadows in nature, we will now examine the nature of shadows.

## **Shadows and Types**

At once, it becomes apparent that we must conduct a study on shadows and/ or typology in the New Testament. We must learn the reality first then relate to it the shadow that preceded; that is, we must observe the antitype and relate it to the type that precedes. Even the vocabulary of shadows and types, the New Testament restricts mainly to New Testament passages; we rarely find this vocabulary in the Old Testament. Whereas the Greek term for “shadow” can refer to either a literal shadow, or a figurative shadow, there is no such case for the Hebrew term, which is only used of literal shadows, or idioms that consist of the literal shadow.

The Greek terms “type,” “antitype,” and “parable” likewise develop the biblical issues of typology far beyond anything that the Hebrew term does. Moses certainly understood that the Lord

patterned the tabernacle after a heavenly blueprint, but in no way developed the type/ antitype reality as in the Book of Hebrews.

Before addressing the shadows and types of the New Testament, a few comments are in order with respect to ritual and reality. In general, the Old Testament is heavy on ritual, and the New Testament is light on ritual. Students often think that the New Testament teaches the reality of what the Old Testament presented. While true, it is wrong to assume that the Old Testament believers were ignorant of the reality behind their detailed ritual.

To illustrate this, we can observe the Church Age sacrifices that the New Testament reveals. An angel told Cornelius that his *prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial to God* (Acts 10:4). Cornelius was not offering the prescribed Levitical sacrifices for memorial offerings. He was functioning in his priesthood even before his instruction from Peter regarding the new dispensation. Other Church Age sacrifices include praise, doing good, and sharing (Hebrews 13:15–16). Grace giving may benefit a local church ministry, but the fragrant aroma rises to God (Philippians 4:18). Believers themselves, functioning in the Christian Way of Life, are a sweet aroma in the dark, stinking world in which we live (2 Corinthians 2:14–16).

The Old Testament believers were not ignorant of these issues. The Prophet Samuel clearly taught that a heart of obedience needed to be behind every external deed of ritual (1 Samuel 15:22). This issue was so vital, many prophets repeated it: David (Psalm 40:6–8; 51:16, 17); Isaiah (1:11–15); Jeremiah (7:22–23); Hosea (6:6); Micah (6:6–8); the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 9:13; 12:7; Mark 12:33); and the author of Hebrews (10:6–9).

Old Testament saints knew, or should have known, that the ritual in itself had no value. The attitude behind the ritual was vitally important. The reality that God would one day reveal was

ultimately the most important issue. Peter said it best, affirming that the Old Testament prophets

*made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look (1 Peter 1:10–12).*

We want the Lord to reveal everything *now*, and we want to know all mysteries and all knowledge *now* (1 Corinthians 13:2). Yet, *it is the glory of God to conceal a matter* (Proverbs 25:2). God, in His sovereignty, keeps certain things secret, and reveals other things at the appropriate time (Deuteronomy 29:29). He sovereignly chose to reveal the fact of millennial animal sacrifices, but has hidden a total understanding of them until a future point of time.

### **Conceptualizing Millennial Sacrifices**

That is not to say that this article does not take a conceptual stab at understanding the millennial animal sacrifices. However, we will do so with the understanding that total revelation has yet to appear. Our understanding will be as sketchy as the current revelation is sketchy.

With respect to the New Testament use of shadows and typology, we may make a number of observations. The Lord patterned the tabernacle (and thus the temple) after the heavenly reality (Acts 7:44; Hebrews 9:24) and its ritual is a shadow of the heavenly reality (Hebrews 8:5; 9:9). The New Testament teaches that certain Old Testament people are types of people yet to come (mainly Christ) (Romans 5:14; Hebrews 11:19). The people involved most likely had no idea that they were types of Christ. If they knew it, Scripture does not reveal that they knew it.

Additionally, the New Testament teaches that the Old Testament ritual is shadow Christology. All of the feasts, sacrifices, rituals, etc., are shadows—the substance of which is Christ (Colossians 2:16). Once again, if Old Testament believers understood the shadow nature of their rituals, and their ultimate fulfillment in the Messiah, then that understanding came through their contemporaneous prophetic ministry, and not through the explicit revelation of Scripture. Therein lies the primary distinction between memorials and shadows. Memorials consistently and repeatedly include explicit written revelation concerning their nature. Shadows consistently and repeated exclude explicit written revelation concerning their nature—*until the reality fulfilled the shadow.*

A summary of observations thus far:

- *The Lord gave memorials in specific detail and with explicit record of the memorial.*
- *The prophets prophesied explicit revelation before God revealed it in time, but the prophets did not necessarily understand what they said.*
- *Shadows and types are not explicitly declared before their being revealed in time, but once the antitype is manifested, the shadow becomes clear.*
- *Shadow revelation must be accompanied by prophetic revelation in order for some meaning to be made known to people living in the time of shadows.*

Having concluded that the millennial animal sacrifices bear none of the characteristics of memorials, this article rejects the assumption that the millennial animal sacrifices are memorials. Instead, we have a different working-assumption. Since the Old Testament animal sacrifices were shadows of an as-yet unrevealed reality, we assume that the millennial animal sacrifices will be shadows of an as-yet unrevealed reality.

We see three primary characteristics of shadow ritual in the millennial animal sacrifices: (1) They are not explicitly revealed as shadows at the point the Lord reveals them, or at the point the

people practice them. (2) A prophetic office and ministry accompanies them, which may serve to explain the shadow ritual. (3) Something greater follows the shadow rituals that makes them obsolete (Hebrews 8:13). The lack of explicit revelation is an argument of silence; but, it is an argument of silence that agrees with the silent nature of shadow revelation. Whereas the silence would be unusual for a memorial, it is expected in a shadow.

In addition, students often overlook the accompanying prophetic ministry throughout the millennial kingdom. Joel 2:28–29 finds its ultimate fulfillment in the millennial kingdom and not on the Day of Pentecost, which inaugurated the Church Age. Prophets are forth-tellers, certainly, but they are also fore-tellers. They have a ministry in the millennial kingdom that points ahead to future, as-yet unrevealed Truth. It becomes natural to view the millennial animal sacrifices as shadow ritual, which coincides with that prophetic ministry.

If we assume that the nature of the millennial animal sacrifices is shadow ritual, it is then natural to consider what doctrine, or teaching, is contained in that shadow ritual. This article will conclude with just such speculation. Before engaging in such supposition, however, we must restate that man will not totally understand the reality of the shadow until that reality manifests itself in time.

Only in the broadest concepts may we consider such things, in that it is the Father's good pleasure to conceal the matter until He chooses to reveal the reality behind the shadow. Nevertheless, in broadly considering what future, as-yet unrevealed Truth this shadow ritual might teach, it is useful to remember who the High Priest of this millennial priesthood will be. The Lord Jesus Christ will not only be King of kings on the throne, but Priest in the millennial temple (Zechariah 6:12,13). What sort of teaching might the Lord Jesus Christ offer through the agency of shadow ritual?

## Conclusion

It is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ to reveal God the Father (John 1:18; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3) and to bring people to the Father (John 14:6). Ultimately, the Lord's work will be to apply the teaching He received from the Father (John 5:20). The Son revealed the Father in His first-advent incarnation (John 1:18; 17:4). Accordingly, it makes sense to understand that the Son will reveal the Father with His work that follows His second-advent. Simply stated, the Lord Jesus Christ has been revealing the Father since creation. Why would He stop doing that in the Millennium?

These are broad concepts, and could serve as a springboard into other fields of study. The progression from shadow-Christology to shadow-Paterology has so far only been presented as a concept. A greater examination of Paterology itself should be conducted as an extension of any millennial study. The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times would also be a field of study for future work. Such a study particularly becomes us, if our new assumption is true, and the shadow-Paterology is followed by a stewardship in which these shadows are unfolded. The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, as a stewardship between the Millennium and Eternity Future would be that precise stewardship. Such future Paterological studies may support or refute the proposition of this article. The animal sacrifices in the millennial temple and priesthood are not memorial in nature. They are shadow ritual (as they were before), accompanied by prophetic teaching (as they were before), and look forward to a future fulfillment in reality (as they did before). Whereas Old Testament animal sacrifices were shadow-Christology, millennial animal sacrifices will be shadow-Paterology.

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