

Types and Shadows of Christ

Old Testament Figures Fulfilled in Christ

An expansive study of Old Testament types and shadows pointing to Christ - persons, events, and institutions that prefigure and find their fulfillment in Jesus.

Old Testament Persons

Adam as Type of Christ — The Last Adam

Adam was a type of Him who was to come. As the first Adam was the federal head of humanity, bringing sin and death to all his posterity, so Christ is the last Adam, the head of the new humanity, bringing righteousness and life. Adam was formed from the earth; Christ is the Lord from heaven. By the first Adam came death; by the last Adam came resurrection. The first man was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. What Adam lost, Christ restores—and more. In Adam all die; in Christ shall all be made alive.

Romans 5:14

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

1 Corinthians 15:45

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

1 Corinthians 15:22

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:47-49

The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Romans 5:17-19

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

Melchizedek as Type of Christ — Priest of the Most High God

Melchizedek, the mysterious king-priest of Salem, appears without genealogy, without beginning or end of days—made like unto the Son of God, abiding a priest continually. Abraham paid tithes to him, showing Melchizedek's superiority to the Levitical priesthood. Christ is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, not after the Levitical order of Aaron. This eternal priesthood is superior because it is not based on physical descent but on the power of an endless life. Christ is both King of righteousness and King of peace—the true Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7:1-3

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

Psalms 110:4

The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7:15-17

And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Hebrews 5:6

As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Genesis 14:18-20

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.

Isaac as Type of Christ — The Beloved Son Offered Up

Isaac, the son of promise, miraculously born to aged parents, pictures Christ in remarkable ways. Abraham offered up his only begotten son, figuratively receiving him back from the dead. Isaac willingly submitted to his father's will, carrying the wood for his own sacrifice up Mount Moriah. God provided a substitute—a ram caught in the thicket. The place was named Jehovah-jireh: 'In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.' Isaac's near-sacrifice foreshadows Christ, the beloved Son, willingly offered on that same mountain region, with no substitute provided—for He Himself was the substitute.

Hebrews 11:17-19

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Genesis 22:2

And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Genesis 22:6-8

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son... And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.

Genesis 22:13-14

And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Joseph as Type of Christ — Rejected by Brothers, Exalted to Save

Joseph, beloved of his father, hated by his brethren, sold for silver, and exalted to save the world from famine, is one of the clearest types of Christ. His dreams prophesied his exaltation; his brothers rejected him; he was cast into a pit and sold to Gentiles. Yet through suffering he rose to glory at Pharaoh's right hand. He saved those who had rejected him, revealing himself to his brothers with tears and forgiveness. Joseph's life remarkably parallels Christ's rejection by Israel, His suffering, His exaltation, and His ultimate reconciliation with His people.

Genesis 37:4

And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

Genesis 37:28

Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Genesis 41:41-43

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand... and they cried before him, Bow the knee.

Genesis 45:4-5

And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

Genesis 50:20

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Acts 7:9-10

And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Moses as Type of Christ — The Prophet Like Unto Moses

Moses was a type of Christ as prophet, mediator, and deliverer. God promised to raise up a Prophet like unto Moses from among the brethren. Like Christ, Moses was preserved from death as an infant, called out of Egypt, performed miraculous signs, mediated between God and man, and led God's people to deliverance. Yet Moses was but a servant in God's house; Christ is the Son over His own house. Moses brought the old covenant; Christ brings the new. Moses led Israel through the Red Sea; Christ leads His people through death to resurrection life.

Deuteronomy 18:15

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.

Acts 3:22-23

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

Hebrews 3:2-6

Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house... And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house.

Acts 7:35-37

This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer... This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me.

John 1:17

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

David as Type of Christ — The Shepherd King

David, the shepherd who became king, is a profound type of Christ. He was anointed but not yet enthroned, rejected by Saul, gathering a band of mighty men in the wilderness. David was both shepherd and warrior, musician and prophet. God promised David an everlasting kingdom—fulfilled in Christ, the Son of David, who

sits on David's throne forever. David's suffering, rejection, and eventual triumph mirror Christ's path to glory. The sweet psalmist of Israel prophesied Christ's death and resurrection in his psalms.

Acts 2:29-31

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David... Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ.

2 Samuel 7:12-13

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

Luke 1:32-33

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Ezekiel 34:23-24

And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them.

Revelation 5:5

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Old Testament Events

The Passover Lamb — Christ Our Passover

The Passover lamb is one of the most explicit types of Christ. In Egypt, the lamb without blemish was slain, its blood applied to the doorposts, and the destroyer passed over those households. Israel was to eat the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, ready for departure. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. His blood, applied by faith, causes

God's judgment to pass over the believer. Not a bone of the Passover lamb was broken; neither were Christ's bones broken on the cross.

1 Corinthians 5:7

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

Exodus 12:5-7

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses.

John 1:29

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Exodus 12:46

In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.

John 19:36

For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

1 Peter 1:18-19

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

The Bronze Serpent — Lifted Up for Healing

When fiery serpents plagued Israel in the wilderness, God commanded Moses to make a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. Everyone who was bitten and looked upon the bronze serpent lived. Jesus explicitly identified this as a type of His crucifixion: 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish.' The serpent represents sin; bronze represents judgment. Christ became sin for us and bore God's judgment. All who look to Him in faith are saved.

John 3:14-15

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Numbers 21:8-9

And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

John 12:32

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Isaiah 45:22

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

The Manna from Heaven — The Bread of Life

When Israel hungered in the wilderness, God sent manna from heaven—bread appearing each morning with the dew. Jesus declared Himself the true bread from heaven, superior to the manna that Moses gave. The manna sustained physical life temporarily; Christ gives eternal life. Those who ate manna eventually died; those who eat of Christ live forever. The manna was gathered daily, picturing our daily dependence on Christ. The hidden manna is promised to overcomers. Christ is the bread of life—whoever comes to Him shall never hunger.

John 6:48-51

I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 6:32-33

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For

the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Exodus 16:14-15

And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

Revelation 2:17

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.

John 6:35

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

The Rock Smitten for Water — Christ the Spiritual Rock

When Israel thirsted at Horeb, Moses struck the rock and water gushed forth. Paul explicitly identifies this rock as Christ: 'That Rock was Christ.' The rock was smitten once, and water flowed—Christ was struck once on the cross, and from His side flowed blood and water. The rock followed Israel through the wilderness, providing continuous water. Christ accompanies His people through their wilderness journey. Later, at Meribah, Moses struck the rock again instead of speaking to it, forfeiting entrance to Canaan. Christ need not be crucified again; we now approach Him by speaking—by prayer.

1 Corinthians 10:4

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

Exodus 17:6

Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

John 19:34

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

John 7:37-38

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Isaiah 48:21

And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

Tabernacle and Temple

The Tabernacle as Type — God Dwelling Among His People

The entire tabernacle system points to Christ. 'The Word was made flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us.' Every piece of furniture, every measurement, every material speaks of Christ. The tabernacle was God's dwelling place among His people—Christ is Immanuel, God with us. The veil separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place; Christ's flesh was that veil, torn at His death to open access to God. The tabernacle was built according to the pattern shown Moses on the mount—the heavenly reality of which the earthly was but a shadow.

John 1:14

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Hebrews 9:11

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building.

Hebrews 10:19-20

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.

Hebrews 8:5

Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

Exodus 25:8-9

And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

Colossians 2:17

Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

The High Priest as Type — Our Great High Priest

The Levitical high priest, robed in garments of glory and beauty, bearing the names of the tribes on his shoulders and breastplate, entering annually into the Most Holy Place with blood—all this pointed to Christ our great High Priest. He passed through the heavens into God's presence. He offered not the blood of bulls and goats but His own blood. He lives forever to make intercession for us. We have a High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. We may come boldly to the throne of grace.

Hebrews 4:14-16

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 9:11-12

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Hebrews 7:25

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 7:26-27

For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

Exodus 28:29

And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually.

The Sacrificial System — The One Perfect Sacrifice

The entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament was a shadow of the good things to come. The burnt offering pointed to Christ's total consecration. The sin offering pictured Christ bearing our sins. The trespass offering showed Christ paying for specific transgressions. The peace offering anticipated fellowship restored through Christ. Yet all these sacrifices could never take away sins—they were offered year after year, continually reminding of sin. Christ offered one sacrifice for sins forever, then sat down, His work complete. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins; the blood of Christ can.

Hebrews 10:1-4

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Hebrews 10:10-12

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.

Hebrews 9:26

But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Isaiah 53:10

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Ephesians 5:2

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

The Day of Atonement — The Great Day Fulfilled

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, was the most solemn day in Israel's calendar. Only on this day could the high priest enter the Most Holy Place, and only with blood. Two goats were presented: one slain as a sin offering, its blood sprinkled on the mercy seat; the other, the scapegoat, had the sins of the people confessed over it and was sent into the wilderness, never to return. Christ fulfilled both: He died as our sin offering; He carried our sins far away, never to be remembered again. He entered once into the true Most Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:7

But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.

Hebrews 9:12

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Leviticus 16:21-22

And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel... and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited.

Hebrews 9:24-26

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us... but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Hebrews 10:3-4

But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Micah 7:19

He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

