

Melchizedek as a Type and Shadow of Christ

1. He was a great high priest

Melchizedek - Alma 13:14 - "...Melchizedek, who was also a high priest"

Christ - Hebrews 3:1 - "...consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;"

2. He held the High Priesthood

Melchizedek - Alma 13:14 - "...Melchizedek ...who also took upon him the high priesthood forever."

Christ - Joseph Smith, *TPJS*, pg. 274 - "...He held the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood and kingdom of God"

3. Type of His Order [He preformed ordinances, which were patterned after Christ's ordinances]

Melchizedek - Alma 13:14 "Now these ordinances were given after this manner, that thereby the people might look forward on the Son of God, it being a type of his order, or it being his order, and this that they might look forward to him for a remission of their sins, that they might enter into the rest of the Lord."

"Every holder of the Melchizedek Priesthood is or should be a type of Christ. Those who lived before he came were types and shadows and witnesses of his Coming. Those who have lived since he came are witnesses of such coming and are types and shadows of what he was." (Bruce R. McConkie, *Promised Messiah*, pg. 451)

4. The Priesthood bears His Name

The **Melchizedek** priesthood = The Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the **Son of God**

D&C 107:2-4 - "Why the first is called the Melchizedek Priesthood is because Melchizedek was such a great high priest. Before his day it was called the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God. But out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name, they, the church, in ancient days, called that priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek Priesthood."

5. He is the 'King of righteousness'

Melchizedek - Alma 13:17/Hebrews 7:1-2 - "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem,... first being by interpretation King of righteousness,"

Christ - Jeremiah 33:15 - "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land."

6. His people waxed strong in iniquity and abominations

Melchizedek - Alma 13:17 - "Now this Melchizedek was a king over the land of Salem; and his people had waxed strong in iniquity and abomination; yea, they had all gone astray; they were full of all manner of wickedness;"

Christ - 2 Nephi 10:3 - "...that Christ ... should come among the Jews, among those who are the more wicked part of the world; ...and there is none other nation on earth that would crucify their God."

7. He exercised mighty faith

Melchizedek - Alma 13:18 - "...Melchizedek having exercised mighty faith,"

Christ - Hebrews 11:3 - "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God,"

8. He was called to preach repentance

Melchizedek - Alma 13:18 - "Melchizedek ...did preach repentance unto his people"

Christ - Matthew 9:13/Mark2:17 - "...for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

9. He was called the prince of peace

Melchizedek - Alma 13:18 - "Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days; therefore he was called the prince of peace,"

Christ - Isaiah 9:6 - "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called ...The Prince of Peace."

10. He was a king over the land of Salem

[Salem was renamed Jeru-salem by Abraham - Genesis 22:14]

Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Gospel Symbolism*, pg. 175 – "The name *Jerusalem* is formed by the addition of *Jeru* to *Salem*, the name of Melchizedek's city which stood on the same spot. *Salem* is a form of *shalom*, or 'peace.' Scholars are uncertain as to what additional meaning is attached to Salem by adding *Jeru* to it. What is certain is that it was a sacred place long before David captured the city. Salem is identified in a Psalm as the place of God's dwelling (Psalm 76:2), and Josephus tells us that Melchizedek had a temple there."

Melchizedek - Alma 13:18 - "Melchizedek ...was the king of Salem;"

Christ - Matthew 2:2 - "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

11. He reigned under his father (Hebrews 7:3)

Melchizedek - Alma 13:18 - "Melchizedek ...reigned under his father."

Christ - John 8:28-29 - "Then said Jesus unto them, ...that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."

12. There were none greater

Melchizedek - Alma 13:19 - "Now, there were many before him, and also there were many afterwards, but none were greater;"

Christ - D&C 19:18 - "Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all..."

- Both were taken up into heaven (JST Gen. 14:34-36/Acts 1:9-11)
- Both provided the sacrament to the faithful (JST Genesis 14:18/Matthew 26:26-28)
- Both held keys of presidency (JST Genesis 14:37-39/Joseph Smith, *TPJS*, pg. 190)
- Both had power over the elements (JST Genesis 14:26/Matthew 8:23-27)

Question: Is it possible that Shem and Melchizedek are the same person?

(Alma E. Gygi, I Have a Question, *Ensign*, November 1973, pg. 15-16)

This question is frequently asked and is an interesting one. Let us examine first what we know about Shem. Although the Bible names Shem as the eldest son of Noah (Genesis 5:32), modern-day revelation places Japheth as the eldest (Moses 8:12). Both reports, however, are harmonious in naming Shem as the progenitor of Israel and in the fact that the priesthood descended through Shem to all the great patriarchs after Noah. (1 Chronicles 1:24–27) In this patriarchal order of priesthood, Shem stands next to Noah. He held the keys to the priesthood and was the great high priest of his day.

Living contemporary with Shem was a man known as Melchizedek, who was also known as the great high priest. The scriptures give us the details of Shem's birth and ancestry but are silent as to his ministry and later life. Of Melchizedek, however, the opposite is true. Nothing is recorded about his birth or ancestry, even though the Book of Mormon states that he did have a father. (Alma 13:17–18) Concerning his ministry and life we have several interesting and important facts. (Genesis 14:18–20; Heb. 7:1–4; Alma 13:17–18)

All of this provokes some questions and calls for answers. Were there two high priests presiding at the same time? Why is the record silent concerning Shem's ministry? Why is nothing known concerning Melchizedek's ancestry?

Because of this state of knowledge on our part, many Saints and gospel scholars have wondered if these men were the same person. The truth is, we do not know the answer. But an examination of the scriptures is fascinating, because it seems to indicate that these men may have been one and the same. For example, here is the case for their oneness:

1. The inheritance given to Shem included the land of Salem. Melchizedek appears in scripture as the king of Salem, who reigns over this area.
2. Shem, according to later revelation, reigned in righteousness and the priesthood came through him. Melchizedek appears on the scene with a title that means "king of righteousness."
3. Shem was the great high priest of his day. Abraham honored the high priest Melchizedek by seeking a blessing at his hands and paying him tithes.
4. Abraham stands next to Shem in the patriarchal order of the priesthood and would surely have received the priesthood from Shem; but D&C 84:5–17 says Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek.
5. Jewish tradition identifies Shem as Melchizedek.
6. President Joseph F. Smith's remarkable vision names Shem among the great patriarchs, but no mention is made of Melchizedek.
7. Times and Seasons, 6:746) speaks of "Shem, who was Melchizedek. ..."

On the other hand, there is a case for their being two distinct personalities. Many persons believe D&C 84:14 is proof that there are perhaps several generations between Melchizedek and Noah. The scripture says, "Which Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek, who received it through the lineage of his fathers, even till Noah."

If it does turn out that Shem and Melchizedek are the same person, this scripture should prove no stumbling block, because it could be interpreted to mean that priesthood authority commenced with Adam and came through the fathers, even till Noah, and then to Shem."