

Bible Metaphors

Class 1: The Metaphors of “the word of God”

Outline

- **Class 1: The Metaphors of “the word of God”**
 - Metaphors describing “the word of God”
- **Class 2: The Metaphors of Faith**
 - Metaphors describing a life of faith
- **Class 3: Faith as Metaphor**
 - How does metaphor/abstract language affect/inform our reading/understanding of the Bible?

metaphor | 'mɛtəfə, 'mɛtəfɔː |

noun

a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable:

when we speak of gene maps and gene mapping, we use a

cartographic metaphor | [mass noun] : her poetry depends on suggestion and metaphor.

- a thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else:
the amounts of money being lost by the company were enough to make it a metaphor for an industry that was teetering.

ORIGIN

late 15th century: from French *métaphore*, via Latin from Greek *metaphora*, from *metapherein* 'to transfer'.

metaphor | 'mɛtəfə, 'mɛtəfɔː |

- **Purpose:**

- Explanatory. Used to explain phenomena:

- For which more directly explanatory words don't exist

- For which more directly explanatory words exist, but are obscure, not known or understood by audience

(Ecclesiastes 12:11–13 ESV)

“The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. My son, beware of anything beyond these. **Of making many books there is no end**, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”

(Deuteronomy 4:1–2 ESV)

“And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. **You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it,** that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.”

(Revelation 22:18–19 ESV)

“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: **if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city,** which are described in this book.”

(Proverbs 30:5–6 ESV)

“Every word of God proves true; **he is a shield** to those who take refuge in him. **Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.**”

GOD IS A SHIELD

(Psalm 119:105 ESV)

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and **a light** to my path.”

GOD'S WORD IS A LAMP/LIGHT

(Hebrews 4:12 ESV)

“For **the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword**, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

GOD'S WORD IS A SWORD

(2 Peter 3:10–13 ESV)

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, **what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness**, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”

(2 Timothy 3:16–17 ESV)

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

GOD'S WORD IS HIS BREATH

(Ephesians 2:10 ESV)

“For **we are his workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

BELIEVERS ARE GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION

(1 Corinthians 13:9–12 ESV)

“For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. **For now we see in a mirror dimly**, but then face to face. **Now I know in part**; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.”

(Psalm 139:4–6 ESV)

“Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.**”

(Job 11:7–9 ESV)

“Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.”

(Romans 11:33–36 ESV)

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! **How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!** “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

(Romans 16:17–18 ESV)

“I appeal to you, brothers, to **watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught**; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.”

(Colossians 2:8 ESV)

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.”

(2 Peter 2:1 ESV)

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as **there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies**, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.”

(1 John 4:1–3 ESV)

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many **false prophets have gone out into the world**. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.”

(1 John 4:1–3 ESV)

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many **false prophets have gone out into the world**. By this you know the Spirit of God: **every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God**. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.”

(2 Peter 2:1 ESV)

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as **there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them,** bringing upon themselves swift destruction.”

(Colossians 2:8 ESV)

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.”

(Romans 16:17–18 ESV)

“I appeal to you, brothers, to **watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught**; avoid them. **For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.**”

(John 1:1–5 ESV)

“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. In **him** was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

(John 1:1–5 ESV)

“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. In **him** was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

(John 1:14 ESV)

“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.”

(1 Corinthians 8:4–6 ESV)

“Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”— **yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.**”

(John 1:14 ESV)

“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.”

JESUS IS THE WORD OF GOD

(Genesis 1:1–3 ESV)

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And **God said**, “Let there be light,” **and there was light.**”

(Jeremiah 1:9–10 ESV)

“Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. **See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”**”

(Numbers 23:19 ESV)

“God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. **Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?**”

(Numbers 11:21–23 ESV)

“But Moses said, “The people among whom I am number six hundred thousand on foot, and you have said, ‘I will give them meat, that they may eat a whole month!’ Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, and be enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, and be enough for them?” **And the LORD said to Moses, “Is the LORD’S hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not.”** ³¹ Then a wind from the LORD sprang up, and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp, about a day’s journey on this side and a day’s journey on the other side, around the camp, and about two cubits above the ground.”

(John 1:14 ESV)

“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.”

JESUS IS THE WORD OF GOD

(Hebrews 1:1–3 ESV)

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but **in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the **exact imprint of his nature**, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.”

JESUS IS THE WORD OF GOD

(Hebrews 1:1–3 ESV)

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but **in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed the heir of all things, **through whom also he created the world**. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.”

(Ephesians 2:10 ESV)

“For **we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus** for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

JESUS IS THE WORD OF GOD