

# **Bible Metaphors**

Class 2: The Metaphors of Faith

# Series 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 understanding and response to 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** | 'metəfə, 'metəfɔː |

- **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.**”

## **Metaphors of the Word of God**

- God's word is a lamp (Psalm 119:105)
- God's word is a sword (Hebrews 4:12)
- God's word is His breath (2 Timothy 3:16)
- Jesus is God's word made flesh (John 1:14, Hebrews 1:1-4)

**(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**

# **Class 2 Outline**

## **Metaphors of God and Jesus' roles**

- God is a king
- God is a father
- Jesus is son of God

## **Metaphors of Sin (and Salvation)**

- Sin is a king/master
- Sin is a debt

## **Metaphors of Faith**

- Faith is a road

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**(Exodus 15:18 ESV)**

“The LORD will **reign** forever and ever.”

**GOD IS A KING**

**(1 Samuel 8:6–7 ESV)**

“But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but **they have rejected me from being king over them.**”

**GOD IS A KING**

**(Psalm 103:19 ESV)**

“The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and  
**his kingdom rules over all.**”

**GOD IS A KING**

**(Mark 1:14–15 ESV)**

“Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God is at hand**; repent and believe in the gospel.””

**GOD IS A KING**

**(Revelation 11:15 ESV)**

“Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, **“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”**”

**(Daniel 4:32 ESV)**

**“...the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.”**”

**GOD IS A KING**

# God is a king: Summary

- God is a king, sovereign over everything and everyone on the earth
- Though currently metaphorical, in the future, his kingdom will be a physical reality – a singular, global and eternal kingdom on this earth
- We choose now whether to accept or reject God as king

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**(Exodus 4:22–23 ESV)**

“Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, **Israel is my firstborn son**, and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.” If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.’””

**GOD IS A FATHER**

**(Isaiah 64:8–9 ESV)**

“But now, **0 LORD, you are our Father**; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Be not so terribly angry, 0 LORD, and remember not iniquity forever. Behold, please look, we are all your people.”

**GOD IS A FATHER**

**(Psalm 103:13 ESV)**

**“As a father** shows compassion to his children, so **the LORD** shows compassion to those who fear him.”

**GOD IS A FATHER**

**(Romans 8:15–17 ESV)**

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of **adoption as sons**, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that **we are children of God**, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **provided we suffer with** him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

**GOD IS A FATHER**

**(Romans 9:3–4 NET)**

“For I could wish that I myself were accursed—cut off from Christ—for the sake of my people, my fellow countrymen, who are Israelites. **To them belong the adoption as sons,** the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple worship, and the promises.”

**GOD IS A FATHER**

**(Matthew 15:22–24 NET)**

“A Canaanite woman from that area came and cried out, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is horribly demon-possessed!” But he did not answer her a word. Then his disciples came and begged him, “Send her away, because she keeps on crying out after us.” So he answered, **“I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”**”

**GOD IS A FATHER**

**(Romans 11:11–12 ESV)**

“So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!”

**GOD IS A FATHER**

# God is a father: Summary

- God is a father, Israel is his firstborn son
- The new covenant represented and taught by Jesus was presented first to God's firstborn, Israel
- Israel rejected the new covenant – and God extended it to all people, adopting them through belief and faith in Jesus
- Israel has not been rejected by God, but they must follow this same process of belief and faith to be included

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**(John 3:16 ESV)**

“For God so loved the world, that **he gave his only Son**, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

**JESUS IS SON OF GOD**

**(Luke 2:48–50 ESV)**

“And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.” And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? **Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?**” And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.”

**JESUS IS SON OF GOD**

**(John 12:49–50 ESV)**

“For I have not spoken on my own authority, but **the Father who sent me** has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, **I say as the Father has told me.**”

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**(John 10:30 ESV)**

**“I and the Father are one.”**

**JESUS IS SON OF GOD**

# Jesus is son of God: Summary

- Jesus' sonship was literal in the sense that he was mortal flesh and blood like us. He was born, lived, faced temptation, and died as we do.
- Jesus' sonship is metaphorical in the sense that:
  - His conception (of a virgin) was a miracle of God
  - His relationship with his father was beyond our experience (perfect obedience (did not sin) and complete oneness of mind with his father)

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**(John 8:31–34 ESV)**

“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?” Jesus answered them, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.”**

**SIN IS A KING/MASTER**

**(Romans 6:16,23 ESV)**

“Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, **you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?**... <sup>23</sup>For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

**SIN IS A KING/MASTER**

# **Sin is a master/king: Summary**

- Rejection of God & his son is a state of slavery to sin (slavery to our own natural desires)
- Master/king sin pays wages – death
- Slavery/service to God & his son does not earn us wages, rather because of it, God gives the free gift of eternal life

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**(Matthew 6:11–13 ESV)**

“Give us this day our daily bread, and **forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors**. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

**SIN IS A DEBT**

**(Matthew 6:11–13 ESV)**

“Give us this day our daily bread, and **forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors**. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

**(Luke 11:3–4 ESV)**

“Give us each day our daily bread, and **forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us**. And lead us not into temptation.”

**SIN IS A DEBT**

**(1 John 3:4 ESV)**

“Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; **sin is lawlessness.**”

**SIN IS A DEBT**

**(1 John 3:4–5 ESV)**

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**SIN IS A DEBT**

**(Psalm 103:10–12 ESV)**

“He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; **as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.**”

**SIN IS A DEBT**

**(Colossians 2:13–14 ESV)**

“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him (Jesus), **having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.** This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

**SIN IS A DEBT**

**(1 Peter 2:24 ESV)**

**“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.”**

**SIN IS A DEBT**

# **Sin is a debt: Summary**

- Sin (lawlessness with respect to God's laws) is a debt towards God
- Our debt of sin cannot, be "paid" by us (we're sinful), nor by anyone else
- The debt of our sin is cancelled/forgiven/taken away through Jesus' perfect (symbolic) sacrifice, if we live the example of sacrifice he gave, dying to sin, and living to righteousness

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**(Exodus 32:7–8 ESV)**

“And the LORD said to Moses, “Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. **They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them.** They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’”

**FAITH IS A ROAD**

**(Deuteronomy 5:32–33 ESV)**

“You shall be careful therefore to do as the LORD your God has commanded you. **You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live,** and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess.”

**FAITH IS A ROAD**

**(Micah 4:2 ESV)**

“and many nations shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, **that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.**” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

**FAITH IS A ROAD**

**(1 John 2:4–6 ESV)**

“Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: **whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.**”

**FAITH IS A ROAD**

**(1 Peter 2:20–21 ESV)**

“For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because **Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.**”

**FAITH IS A ROAD**

**(John 14:5–6 ESV)**

“Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, and the truth, and the life.** No one comes to the Father except through me.”

**FAITH IS A ROAD**

# Faith is a road: Summary

- Faith (living according to God's word) is a road; we're either on the road or we're turning aside from it
- Jesus walked the road of faith perfectly, he broke the trail, leaving a path for us to follow in his footsteps
- We all turn aside from the road from time to time, but Jesus is also the truth (the gospel of forgiveness/salvation) through whom we are called back to return to the road, and thus through whom we can arrive at the destination – God's kingdom, and eternal life therein