

## What are you talkin bout?

*Sfg. Bishop C. Shawn Tyson*

**Sub Topic:** Understanding the various literary devices used in scripture:

The Bible contains many types of figurative language, whether in poetry or prose, prophecy, gospel or epistle. God uses different language devices throughout scripture for clearer communication and more dynamic impressionable illustrations of truth.

But there are some passages due to the differences in time and culture and because we aren't familiar with some the types of literature and literary devices in the Bible, if not read with understanding and interpreted in its proper context, it will change the entire meaning of what the Spirit is attempting to communicate with us.

### 5 fundamental Reasons for figurative language in scripture:

1. It presents descriptive truth, rather than propositional truth
  - A: Descriptive = Of, relating to, or dealing with the structure of a language at a particular time, usually with exclusion of historical and comparative data.
  - B. Referring to, constituting or grounded in matters of observation or experience.
2. It is more concrete (not just abstract and theoretical)
3. It is efficient and concise in the presentation of ideas
4. It is relatable and more encompassing of the emotions involved.
  - PP: Faith does not eliminate the reality of feeling.

Jeremiah 29:11, For I know the thoughts I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected END.

You cannot allow emotion to DRIVE your life.

Emotion can inspire you.  
Emotion can energize you.  
Emotion can motivate you.  
Emotion can sensitize you, but emotion must never DRIVE you.

5. The 5th and final reason why the bible employs figurative language is because It makes passages and principles easier to remember.

Psalm 91:4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler".

The language communicates important truths about the nature of God and his concern, passion and protection for us. It is descriptive rather than straight propositional truth.

It teaches about God's love, compassion, comfort, protection to us. The Bible contains much beautiful language that is not only aesthetically pleasing, but connects with our entire being—spiritual, intellectual, and emotional.

## II. Literary devices (figures of speech found in the holy scriptures)

1. Simile: a figure of speech comparing two different things that is often introduced with the words, like or as....

Proverbs 17:22 *"A merry heart doeth good (LIKE) a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.*

James. 1:22-23 KJV- *But be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is (LIKE) unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24. For he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

2. Metaphor= A direct comparison of two items, or X=Y.

James 3.6: *And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.*

- **PowerPoint:** One wrong word spoken at the wrong time or in the wrong TONE can alter your entire destiny.

*Psalm 17:8 KJV Keep me (as the apple of your eye) hide me under the shadow of thy wings..."*

*Proverbs 15:19 KJV- The way of slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain (Or like a level highway) a balanced person.*

3. Metonymy = A metaphorical or spiritual association between two items, such that one is used interchangeably to mean the other.

For example, in communion, wine and blood are used interchangeably for one another. Hence, sometimes a literal item serves as a metaphor for an abstract item.

*John 6:53-Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*

*Hosea 1:2 -The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea. And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms; for the land hath committed great (whoredom) = departing from the LORD.*

(Land = people in the land)

4. Synecdoche (Pronounced sy nec do key)

Similar to metonymy; a part is used to symbolize the whole to which it belongs; e.g., in English: "three heads of cattle" means three whole cattle.

*Acts 27:37 KJV: And we were all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. The original Greek uses 276 souls for 276 men.*

5. Merism -A listing of opposite parts stands for a whole. E.g., "day...night" in the Psalms means at all times:

*Psalm 91:5 KJV: Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day.*

6. Symbolism

*Revelations 8:3 KJV- Incense is used as a symbol of prayer.*

Revelations 8:3-5 KJV-*And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightings, and an earthquake*

7. Idiom= a language unique to a people, culture, district or class.

Matthew 23:24 KJV - *Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.*

8. Personification= Something inanimate or divine is represented by something with human or tangible form.

Proverbs 9:1: *Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.*

9. Anthropomorphism= ascribing human characteristics (physical form, human-like emotion, etc.) to God, in order to make Him more understandable to us.

Genesis 6:6: *"The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain."*

10. Apostrophe = In this indirect type of personification, the speaker addresses an inanimate object, him/herself, or others who cannot respond to the statement or question.

Sometimes a psalmist addresses his own soul psalm (42:5) or commands mountains and rivers to praise God. (Psalm 148)

11. Allusion= An indirect reference to something else. The reference and meaning are understood from the cultural or personal context or previously revealed knowledge.

Revelations 12:1: *"A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head."* (This refers back to Joseph's dreams of the sun, moon, and stars in Genesis 37.

12. Type= A literary prefiguring: one person or item serves as a metaphorical prefigure or type of another that is to come later.

-For example, Joseph mistreatment by his brothers and him be sold into slavery are prefiguring and foreshadowing of Christ.

-Elijah prefigures John the Baptist.

-The serpent made of brass lifted toward heaven in Numbers 21 serves as a type of the cross of Christ (Jn 3.14).

13. Word play= Biblical writers and speakers, especially prophetic and poetic writers, make plays on word meanings in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages.

Mt 16.18: *"And I tell you that you are Peter [Greek: Petros], and upon this rock [Greek: petra] I will build my church..."* ('Peter' means a small rock, stone, or pebble; petra means a large, unmoveable, impenetrable rock.)

Micah 1.11: *"Those who live in Zaanán will not come out..."* (The town name Zaanán in Hebrew means 'come out'; this is pronounced as a judgment against the town)

14. Hyperbole= Literary exaggeration for emphasis or rhetorical effect.

Luke 14.26: *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life— he cannot be my disciple."*

(Our love for God must be so strong, that our love to others would seem like hate in comparison.)

Mark 9.43- *"If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and go to hell..."*

15. Paradox= A statement that seems illogical or contradictory on the surface, but actually conveys truth.

Matthew. 16.25: *"For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."*

16: Numerology= Occasionally numbers are used in symbolic ways in Scripture, especially in prophesy and apocalypse.

3= Manifestation  
7=Divine Perfection  
12=Government  
40 =Divine Testing

17: Onomastics = Occasionally proper names have meanings in the original language which which relate to the actual character or disposition of the individual.

Issac= laughter.

Ichabod. Glory has departed...