

## Metaphors of Christ #1: Introduction and “the Word of God”

**What is a metaphor?** “A figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance, as in ‘A mighty fortress is our God’.” (dictionary.com)

In contrast, a **simile** is a figure of speech where one thing is said to be like something else. (Prov. 25:11 – “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”)

The Bible has scores of names or titles of Christ. Some are not figurative at all - they are literal titles or descriptive phrases. Many others however are metaphorical, expressing some part of Christ’s nature or activities. They are all through the Bible, but especially in the writings of John.

### Non-Figurative Titles or Names of Christ (just from John)

#### Titles

- Son of God – Jn. 1:34, 3:17-18, 3:35-36, 6:69
- Rabbi – Jn. 1:38, 1:49, 3:2
- Messiah – Jn. 1:41, 4:25-26, . . .
- King of Israel – Jn. 1:49, 12:13-15, 19:19
- Son of man – Jn. 1:51, 3:13-14, . . .
- Christ – Jn. 4:29, 6:69, . . .
- The Almighty – Rev. 1:8
- Son of man – Rev. 1:13, 14:14
- Lord of lords and King of kings – Rev. 17:14, 19:16

#### Descriptive Names or phrases

- Only begotten Son – Jn. 3:16
- The resurrection and the life – Jn. 11:25
- The way, the truth, and the life – Jn. 14:6
- Advocate – 1 Jn. 2:1
- Faithful and True – Rev. 19:11

### Some OT Metaphors of Christ

- A Star out of Jacob and a Scepter out of Israel – Num. 24:17
- The Arm of the Lord – Isa. 52:10, 53:1
- The Branch – Zech. 3:8, 6:12-13, Isa. 11:1-10
- Root of Jesse – Isa. 11:10

### NT Metaphors of Christ, Just from John (gospel, 1 Jn., Rev.)

- Word – Jn. 1:1, 1:14, 1 Jn. 1:1, 5:7, Rev. 19:13
- True Light – Jn. 1:9, 8:12, 9:5, 12:35-36, 46
- Lamb of God – Jn. 1:29, 36, Rev. 5:6-9, 6:16, 7:9-10, 7:14-17, 12:11, 13:8, 14:4, 17:14, 19:7-8, 21:9, 21:22-23, 21:27, 22:1, 22:3
- Bread of God, bread of life – Jn. 6:32-35, 6:48-58
- Door of the sheepfold – Jn. 10:7-9
- Good Shepherd – Jn. 10:11-16, 10:26-28, 21:15-17
- Arm of the Lord – Jn. 12:35
- True Vine – Jn. 15:1-8
- Alpha and Omega – Rev. 1:8, 1:11, 21:6, 22:13
- The Amen – Rev. 3:14
- Lion of Judah – Rev. 5:5
- Root (and Offspring) of David – Rev. 5:5, 22:16
- Tabernacle of God – Rev. 21:3
- The Temple – Rev. 21:22
- Bright and Morning Star – Rev. 22:16

## Jesus Christ is “the Word of God”

**What do we mean by “the word of God”?** It obviously means much more than a simple language word, like “fence”, “book”, “purple”, etc. How is it used in the Bible?

1. A message from God directly to a prophet, via audible voice, vision, dream, etc.
  - 1 Sam. 3:1 – “. . . the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.”
  - Jer. 1:4 – “Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, . . .”
  - Jer. 1:9 – “Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.” (also verses 11, 12, 13)
  - Ezek. 1:3 – The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest . . .” (visions, audible voice)
2. Prophetic messages or anointed teaching
  - Amos 8:11 – “. . . I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.”
  - 2 P. 1:20-21 – came not by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”
3. The written scriptures
  - Ps. 119:9, 11 – “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed to thy word. . . . Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” Ps. 119 throughout mentions God’s word, precepts, law, commandments, statutes, judgments, and testimonies.
  - 2 Tim. 3:16-17 – all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for . . .
  - Eph. 6:17 - . . . and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Remember that Jesus resisted Satan’s temptations by quoting written scriptures, and that the NT itself quotes very heavily from the OT.
4. Sometimes individually. God speaks to us to lead us in some way. This is not to be given the same level of confidence and authority as the written word however – not because of the speaker (if God says it, it is true), but because of our faulty perceptions and desires.
  - Job 33:14-17 – God speaks to us in dreams and visions of the night, to withdraw us from our own purposes
  - Mt. 2:12 – the wise men were warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod
  - Mt. 2:13 – Joseph was warned by God in a dream to flee into Egypt with Mary and Jesus
  - Mt. 2:22 – when returning, Joseph was warned by God in a dream to settle in Galilee
5. Specifically the NT gospel and the teachings of Jesus
  - Col. 3:16 – Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom . . .
  - Mt. 7:24-27 – to do Jesus’ sayings is to build your house upon a rock
  - Jas. 1:22 – “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”
  - Rom. 10:8-10 – the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.
  - 1 P. 2:2 – desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.
6. The whole of revealed truth – whatever, whenever, and however God does it
  - Dt. 8:3 – man lives not by bread alone but by every word . . .
  - Ps. 119:89 – For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.”
  - Ps. 119:105 – “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
  - Ps. 119:130 – “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”
  - 1 P. 1:24-25 – “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; But the word of the Lord endureth forever.” (Isa. 40:8)