



Finding Christ in the Tabernacle

THE LORDS WAY OF TEACHING

And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me.”

Moses 6:63

Symbolism

Symbols are the timeless, universal language God has chosen to teach His children. In His wisdom, He uses symbols to give visual and spiritual form to ideas, covenants, and feelings that often reach beyond the limits of words. Through symbols, the Spirit and the scriptures communicate eternal truths, helping us better understand who God is and who we are.

Symbols are rarely one-dimensional. They often carry multiple layers of meaning that unfold according to a person's spiritual preparation, life experience, and willingness to seek

understanding. Because of this, symbols can transcend language, culture, translation, and historical context, allowing the same truth to speak powerfully to people across time. As we read the scriptures, we must be careful not to overlook their symbolic dimension. Many stories, events, individuals, and objects were intentionally designed to teach more than their surface meaning. A symbol may represent more than one truth at the same time.

For example, when the Lord declared that the woman's "seed" would bruise — or in Hebrew, crush — the serpent's head, Genesis 3:14–15, the original language reveals that "seed" is singular. This points directly to Jesus Christ and

foretells His ultimate victory over Satan. Symbols also serve a protective purpose. They safeguard sacred truths, allowing those who seek understanding through faith and humility to learn and partake, while preserving holiness from careless or irreverent use.

Symbolism is woven throughout the gospel — in ordinances, people, animals, events, the heavens and the earth, names, and numbers. We live in a world rich with spiritual symbols.

The keys to understanding symbolism are found through revelation, the Holy Ghost, sincere study, the scriptures, prophets, and prayer. As we use these guides, the Lord teaches us to see spiritual truths more clearly and deeply.



Symbols in their various forms and applications (ordinances) leave strong imprints on our memories, spirit and understanding. They help bind us to our Heavenly Father and His son, Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith explained, “Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them, can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relations to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, edits, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p 324)



EXAMPLES OF SYMBOLISM IN SCRIPTURE

SYMBOLISM & SACRED ORDINANCES

Sacred ordinances use symbols to help us understand spiritual truths.

- Baptism represents dying and being born again with Christ, Romans 6:3-4. It is a symbol of starting fresh and following Him.
- Partaking of the sacrament represents partaking of the Savior's flesh and blood, which were given for all of us, John 6:53-56. Through it, we remember His sacrifice and renew our covenant to become one with Him, John 17:21.
- The dove is a symbol of the Holy Ghost. At Jesus's baptism, the Spirit descended in the form of a dove, Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21; John 1:32-34, showing the presence of the Holy Ghost at His confirmation after baptism. The dove also represents peace and may suggest that the Spirit comes gently and according to God's will.
- Anointing oil is also symbolic of the Holy Ghost, 1 John 2:27. It also points to Jesus Christ and His Atonement, because He is called the "Anointed One," or the Messiah.
- During Passover, the Israelites sacrificed a lamb with no blemish, Exodus 12:5-7. This symbolized Jesus Christ, who would become the perfect and eternal sacrifice for all.



EXAMPLES OF SYMBOLISM IN SCRIPTURE

THINGS & ANIMALS SYMBOLIC OF CHRIST, HIS MISSION & ATTRIBUTES

The scriptures uses objects, animals, and images to point us to Jesus Christ and His role in God's plan.

- The Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, Genesis 2:9, represents Christ's love, 1 Nephi 11:25. It is also associated with the divine feminine, or Heavenly Mother, 1 Nephi 11:9–18, as well as a symbol of wisdom, Proverbs 3:13–19.
- The Jewish menorah symbolizes the Tree of Life and also recalls the burning bush that Moses saw. It represents bringing light into the world, Matthew 5:15–16, through Christ, who is the Light of the World, John 8:12.
- The Brass Serpent on the Cross, Numbers 21:4–9, symbolized Jesus Christ, Helaman 8:14–15, who would later be lifted up on the cross, 3 Nephi 27:14.
- Manna was given to the children of Israel from heaven to save them in the desert and represented Christ, John 6:32–35. The Levite priests partook of the shewbread (the Bread of the Presence) in the tabernacle in remembrance of God's covenant with Israel, represented by the twelve loaves for the twelve tribes Leviticus 24:9, symbolizing both the covenant with Israel and Christ's saving grace.



EXAMPLES OF SYMBOLISM IN SCRIPTURE

- The stars are symbolic of the sons of God or angels, Job 38:7, Revelations 1:20, 12:4. Imagine the biggest star that reflects the most important Son of God, Numbers 24:17, Matthew 2:2

INDIVIDUALS AS TYPES/SYMBOLS OF CHRIST OR SATAN

- Abel and Cain: Abel making the proper sacrifice, versus Cain not making the appropriate sacrifice, could symbolize the premortal Christ doing the will of the Father and eventually being sacrificed for mankind, versus Lucifer seeking to do his own will for his own glory and being cast out, Abraham 3:27–28.
- Abraham and Isaac: Abraham was required to sacrifice his only-begotten son, Isaac, Genesis 22:6–16, as a shadow or type of the Father sacrificing Jesus Christ and raising Him from the dead, Hebrews 11:17–19.
- Moses: Moses symbolized the Messiah, Jesus Christ, Moses 1:4–7; Deuteronomy 18:15–19; 3 Nephi 20:23, being sent to rescue and reclaim Israel and to fulfill Heavenly Father's covenant with Abraham.
- Nebuchadnezzar: The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II symbolized Satan as the fallen angel in Isaiah 14:12–15.



EXAMPLES OF SYMBOLISM IN SCRIPTURE

- Jonah: Jonah the prophet was a Christ-like symbol in his three-day experience inside the whale, symbolizing what Christ would do in the spirit world for three days after His crucifixion, Matthew 12:39–40.
- Isaac and Ishmael: Isaac and Ishmael (as well as Jacob and Esau) can be seen as representing the sacrificed goat and the scapegoat, which ultimately symbolized the Savior's sacrifice and the expulsion of Satan Leviticus 16:7–10.

NUMBER SYMBOLISM

- Codes or symbols communicate certain things like Gematria (Hebrew and Greek letters are assigned numeric value to show prophetic sayings or fulfillment), Matthew 1:17. For example, in Matthew 1:17, David's name has the numeric value 14, which is used to show Christ's fulfillment of David as a shadow or type.
- The Roman Caesar, Nero, who significantly persecuted the early Christians was speculated as the beast with the number 666 (applied to his name value in Hebrew) without naming him specifically, Rev 13:18. Regardless, the number 666, as opposed to 7 (representing divine perfection or completeness), emphasizes the imperfect and counterfeit character of Satan and his followers.



EXAMPLES OF SYMBOLISM IN SCRIPTURE

- Early Christians referred to Jesus's resurrection on the first day of the week (Sunday) as the eighth day or new creation. They also called it the Lord's Day. Ancient baptismal fonts were octagons reflecting the eighth day as the promised resurrection.

OTHER SYMBOLS REGARDING GOD'S WAYS

- Often referred to as the all-searching or all-seeing eye of God, Psalms 33:18, Proverbs 15:3, 2 Nephi 9:44, Jacob 2:10, Mosiah 27:31, D&C 38:1, represented the idea that we are always being watched by the Lord.
- When Christ tells Peter that he has the keys to the kingdom, Matt 16:18-19, this is symbolic of him having Christ's authority or priesthood.
- The horn where anointing oil is dispensed by the ancient prophets when anointing kings and priests represents Christ as was noted by Zechariah, Luke 1:68-9, when prophesying about the Messiah. Horns anciently were symbols of power.