

Images can be striking and symbolic...

The imagery of the Bible is rich and picturesque; however, some images are used in a manner that can go beyond a figure of speech. The images may be symbolic and are well worth examining to gain a contextual understanding of the passage and thus improve the accuracy of one's exegesis. Here are some examples.

1. What is the significance of the setting, the Garden of Gethsemane, during which Christ spent His last night just before Judas betrayed Him (Matt 26:36-46, Mark 14: 32-42, Luke 22: 40-46)?

The olive was an essential food ingredient in the Middle East, and it was grown primarily for its oil. Oil was used for cooking, fueling lamps, and for skin and hair care. Heavy stone oil presses called gath-shemen were used to extract oil. Beset with the temptation to forsake His Father's Will, Christ came to pray in preparation for the sacrifice that was to be made; He prayed that the trial would pass but, despite the anguish of sorrow and grief, He submitted Himself to His Father's Will. So overwhelming was the weight of atoning for the world's sin that He, like the olive, was being pressed for His blood in the Garden of olive presses.

This example shows that striking images can be found in the Hebrew names of people or places.

2. What is the significance of the image of matrimony between the church, as portrayed as the bride, and Christ, as portrayed as the groom? What do you know about the Hebrew wedding ceremony? How do you make sense of John 3:29, Matt 25:1-13, and 1 Thes 4:16-17?

In order to be married, the Jewish bachelor had go through an "engagement" process, which was to negotiate a price with the prospective girl's father. If the father accepts the offer, mutual promises are made and the groom gives gifts to the bride. The ceremony that celebrates this is called the "betrothal," and the young couple is "married in spirit" by drinking wine in benediction. The groom goes away to prepare a place for her in his father's home; but neither knows when he'll return. The marriage usually takes place about a year later. When preparations are complete, he returns, with his friends for the bride, which is usually at night. There is a shout, "make way for the bride groom cometh" and the sound of a trumpet. Instead of entering her home, he waits at the street for the bride and the bride's maids. Together with their friends, the couple returns to his father's home where they enter the Hoppa and consummate their marriage. The groom rejoins the celebration and the bride remains protected and hidden in the Hoppa for seven days.

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. "And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, how do we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:1-6)

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3. Examine John 3:14. At this time, what do Jews know about Jesus' purpose? Who was Jesus speaking to and does he encounter Jesus again? Use your concordance to find the reference to John 3:14 and make a chart of the two verses on their similarities.

At this time, Jews were looking to Jesus as a military leader / savior from the occupation of Rome. Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus who was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin; thus, he was well aware of Old Testament Law and tradition and a well-respected Jewish leader. Jesus' reference to Moses' standard of a bronze serpent (Num 21:4-9) in His discussions about "being born again," must have had an impact, because Nicodemus later reappears twice: once in cautious sympathy of Jesus while being tried in the Sanhedrin court (John 7:45-52), and later when he bought spices to prepare Jesus' body for burial (John 19:39).

	Numbers 21:8	John 3:14
The sin	Spoke against God	Born with sin
Intercessor	Moses	Jesus
Saving device	Bronze serpent on a standard	Jesus Christ on the cross
How are people saved	People bitten need to look at the Moses' serpent	Believe that Jesus died for our sins
Result	Life	Eternal life

This example shows an Old Testament event being used figuratively in the New Testament. Some Old Testament figures that foreshadow another in the New Testament are called "types"; or prophetic symbols. Most types, but not all, find their fulfillment in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. While this example is not considered a true type, typology, the study of **types** and their **antitypes**, reveals God's designs through Old Testament people and events in the portrayal and prediction of Christ and His ministry.

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