

**Sermon #5**

**The Bible**

God is eager to show me the truth, but He doesn't force it on me.

God is always teaching and revealing truth,

but I must choose to listen and see.

God is good and gracious, wonderful and kind.

He is the greatest, the wisest, the most amazing, the best.

His way is best and His word is truth.

God's channel of truth is the Holy Spirit.

This Spirit of Truth can teach, manifest and reveal truth  
through anyone or anything.

Jesus Christ is the living word of God.

The Holy Spirit testifies of Him to us.

The Bible also testifies of Him to us.

When you read the Bible, don't be intimidated by it or worship it.

It is testimony to be considered, not a god to be worshiped.

Regardless of whether or not one reads and studies the Bible,

God knows the heart.

Only the pure in heart will see God.

God dwells in a humble and contrite heart.

God's sheep are those who hear His voice—the Spirit of love and truth.

However, if you are submitting yourself to human teachers

and church leaders, it is of utmost importance that you read  
the Bible thoroughly and carefully.

Human religious teachers are notorious for twisting, stretching,

omitting and adding to Bible passages to justify themselves and  
their churches and/or to put people into subjection and service.

Certainly there are many who don't do this, but it is a great error for you to blindly trust any religious teacher or leader, no matter how good they act or look

A good example of this twisting and omitting Scripture by religious leaders is their usual teaching on what they call the "Law of the Tithe." The actual regulations about the tithe are found in Deuteronomy 14:22-29, and these passages are rarely if ever preached.

Interestingly, these passages instruct the Israelites to bring their tithes to God's presence and consume them, sharing and celebrating with the poor and needy. The passages say nothing about using the tithe to build up a sect, cult, denomination or church organization.

**{Read the first 2 pages of the "Symbolism"; then encourage individuals to use the remaining pages of the handout at home as a reference during their private Bible reading and study. Also encourage them to add their own insights to the list of symbols used in the Bible.}**

"I AM your God and you are My people if you do what I say.  
I, the Lord, dwell in righteousness and truth.

The Bible testifies of Me, as do many, many people and things.

All heaven and earth testify of Me is you are only willing to see.

The Bible is a gift to you, and so is a little child.

Listen to both, and let Me show you the truth in what you read and hear.

Do not listen to man, who perverts My word. Listen to Me.

I AM truth and love, goodness and mercy.

Listen to Me, and you will see.

The Bible is just a book. Outside of Me, it is dead.

It is My Word and Spirit that bring it alive."

## Considerations for Bible Reading and Study

### **Christ's teaching is supreme.**

The recorded words and actions of Jesus are the final authority on God's will, ways and character.

It is fine to read about and study other Biblical characters and their words, but decisions, beliefs and actions should be based solely on Christ.

### **Truth is revealed through the one Teacher, the Christ.**

To receive this revelation of truth from God when I read the Bible, I must submit to the Teacher, seek the truth, and open my spiritual eyes and ears to receive it. The Teacher, Christ within me, makes sense of the Bible and gradually shows me how it all fits together.

We should read and study the Bible as God leads, rather than as human teachers and pastors lead.

### **Don't Strain out a Gnat and Swallow A Camel!**

Knowing Hebrew and Greek, definitions, history, and trivial details are fine if I'm interested in those things, but I shouldn't let them obscure the message of following and obeying Christ.

### **Jesus Christ is the word of God; the Bible testifies of Him.**

The Bible is not God;

it is a gift from God to help me know and understand Him.

When I keep my focus on the living Word of God (Christ)

I will better understand the written word.

I should only imitate Christ—rather than Moses, David, Solomon, John the Baptist, Paul or any other Bible character.

But I can learn from the mistakes of Bible characters and be inspired and encouraged by their faith.

**It is God who saves,  
not Bible reading or churchgoing or tithe-giving.**

It is possible to have a personal relationship with God and enter His kingdom without reading or studying the Bible. But the testimonies in the Bible can be of great help in my walk with God.

**The Bible is rich in symbolism that adds meaning  
and depth to my understanding.**

The Bible is more easily understood and makes more sense if I am aware of the extensive use of metaphors and symbols.

Everything in the physical realm is symbolic of one or more things in the spiritual realm.

The more I understand and envision this symbolism,  
the more I see God in all.

## **Biblical Symbolism: An Overview**

Symbolism is useful for understanding,  
but it is not the truth in itself.

Symbolism is interesting,  
but it doesn't bring righteousness or save us.

God can teach us lessons symbolically through any  
and all created things.

Symbols can be used in different ways and represent more  
than one thing; thus, they are not cast in stone and do not  
necessarily have fixed meanings.

A symbol can be meaningful on several different levels:  
personal, family, church, nation, world.

Too much study of symbolism defeats its purpose and wearies  
the mind.

All symbolism in the book of *Revelation* is drawn from the Old  
Testament, and it fulfills all Old Testament prophecy.

## Creation Symbolism

| Day | Created Thing(s)   | Symbolic Meaning(s)  |
|-----|--|--|
|     | Whole Creation   | Whole Man: Spirit, Soul, Heart, Mind, Body   |
|     | Heavens  | The life of man: Spirit and Soul   |
|     | Earth: without form and void   | The "flesh" of man: Heart, Mind and Body   |
|     | Darkness: "Night"  | Unrevealed, unknown: watching, guarding  |
|     | Water  | Word   |
| 1   | Light: "Day"   | Revelation; working, walking, enjoying   |
| 2   | Firmament, expanse: "Heaven"   | Soul   |
|     | Waters above Heaven:<br>(Sea of glass in Rev.)   | The Mind of God: Spirit of truth   |
|     | Waters below Heaven: "Sea"   | The mind of man: human thinking  |
|     | Dry land: "Earth"  | The heart of man: motives, purposes  |
|     | face/surface of the earth  | Outer man and physical senses  |
|     | Vegetation from the earth  | Human speech: Words from the heart   |
|     | Green  | Living and alive   |
|     | Seed   | Word of God (truth)  |
|     | Fruit  | Truth put into practice (love)   |
| 4   | Lights in the firmament of Heaven  | Revealers, leaders, teachers and guides  |
|     | Greater light to rule the day  | Direct revelation of God: Love and Truth   |
|     | Lesser light to rule the night   | Teaching about God: Faith and Truth  |
|     | Stars  | Testimonies about God: Hope and Truth  |
| 5   | Living creatures that swim and teem in the sea   | Spectrum of human thoughts   |
|     | Living creatures that fly  | Range of human emotions  |
| 6   | Living creatures that move on earth  | Range of human attitudes and behaviors   |
|     | Let man have dominion<br>- over the fish of the sea<br>- over the creatures that fly in the air<br>- over every moving creature on earth | God has made my spirit to rule<br>- over the thoughts in my mind<br>- over the emotions in my soul<br><br>-over the attitudes and desires of my heart, and over my actions |
| 7   | Day of blessing and rest   | Physical fulfillment and completion  |
|     | garden   | my environment   |
|     | Eden   | pleasure   |
|     | tree of life<br>tree of the knowledge of good and evil   | man who trusts in and obeys God: Christ<br>man who trusts in himself and his wisdom  |

## Miscellaneous Symbolism

| Thing                      | What it Often Symbolizes   |
|----------------------------|--|
| beast                      | unspiritual man who lives beneath his calling as a son of God                            |
| dragon, serpent            | anti-life; anti-God; self-exaltation; Satan; liar; slanderer                             |
| horn                       | strength; virility; law; family line   |
| horse                      | human life force; power to do and go   |
| --horse rider              | --will; decision-maker; sent out   |
| Lamb                       | humility, self-giving, obedient to God   |
| locusts                    | sins: they devour what you have produced   |
| scorpion sting             | tormenting pain of sin & lies (poison)   |
| sheep                      | follower   |
| serpent/snake              | tongue of a liar; cunning; injects poison: lies, doubt, greed                            |
| red                        | blood, passion, guilt  |
| white                      | comfort; purity; conqueror; internal prosperity  |
| cloud                      | glory, power, presence, mystery and guidance of God                                      |
| crystal or glass           | clarity; vision; nothing hidden  |
| soil, field, world         | heart of man; the battleground of good and evil  |
| earthquake                 | shaking to loosen sin, falseness, pretense and denial of truth                           |
| fire                       | God's purifying, passionate love for man and hate of evil                                |
| flood                      | wiping out the sinful, worldly life  |
| fruit                      | a person's emotions, words and actions   |
| iron or bronze             | great strength and hardness; unyielding  |
| lake of fire               | remorse and shame; revulsion; separation from evil                                       |
| lightning                  | personal revelation of God/truth: who and what He is; conception by God                  |
| mountain                   | kingdom; high position and view; exalted; challenge                                      |
| born from above            | born of the Spirit of God; a new creation, a new man                                     |
| new earth                  | new heart and mind—obedient and loving heart   |
| new heaven                 | new Spirit and life: faithful, forgiven, pure soul                                       |
| plagues                    | wake-up calls to believe in God; destruction of idols and sin                            |
| river of the water of life | the Spirit of truth going forth from God to give eternal life to whoever will receive it |
| rock                       | God; Christ; steadfastness, security   |
| root                       | inner beliefs; foundation; anchor  |
| precious stones            | qualities and characteristics of God; sons of God  |
| thorns, briars             | painful, annoying, stressful   |
| valley                     | humble heart, attitude or circumstance   |
| wilderness, desert         | place of testing or trial  |
| wind                       | spirit; invisible power  |