

Chapter 5

Metaphors were used sparingly in the first four chapters of this book, but allegories, symbols, and similes, which are all synonymous with the word metaphor, will inundate this chapter and all the remaining chapters. The following definitions indicate that the figurative language John used to describe the visions he portrayed in the remaining chapters are like “pictorial parables.”

Metaphor: 1. an implied comparison between two different things; figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily means one thing is applied to another thing in order to suggest a likeness between the two. 2. something concrete used to represent an idea, quality, or condition.

[1] **And I saw in the right hand of him that sits on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.**

[2] **And I saw a strong angel, and heard him proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and loose the seals thereof?**

[3] **And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.**

[4] **And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.**

This was not merely a forecast of the future as many scholars would have us believe. If it was, anyone would have been worthy to loose the seals. It goes far beyond that! Each of the seals represents a thousand year history of man upon the earth. [Chapters 6 through 9] depict events which have happened, are happening, and will happen in their respective thousand year epoch. For just prior to the end of time;

[D&C 85:34-35b] ... **the first angel again** shall sound his trump in the ears of all living, and reveal the secret acts of men, and the mighty works of God in **the first thousandth year.** [35a] And then shall **the second angel** sound his trump, and reveal the secret acts of men, and the thoughts and intents of their hearts, and the mighty works of God in **the second thousandth year:** [35b] and so on, until **the seventh angel** shall sound his trump; and he shall stand forth upon the land and upon the sea, and swear in the name of him who sits upon the throne, that **there shall be time no longer,** and Satan, who is called the Devil, shall be bound, ... for a thousand years.

John knew that unless someone was found who was worthy to open those seals, man’s destiny was to live through the many adversities described in subsequent chapters, only to end up in an endless grave! And - his spirit would have been subjected to the devil! Forever!

[2 Nephi 6:14, 17-21] ... because man became fallen, they were cut off from the presence of the Lord; [17] Wherefore, the first judgment which came upon man, must needs have remained to an endless duration. [18] And if so, **this flesh must have lain down to rot and to crumble to its mother earth, to rise no more.** ... [20] For, if the flesh should rise no more, our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more. [21] And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become angels to a devil, ... to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself.

No wonder John wept when no one was found worthy to loose the seals, to free man from the grave, and bring him back into God's presence! Through disobedience, man brought upon himself an endless death, both spiritual (separation from God and from all righteousness), and physical (separation of body and spirit). He sealed upon himself this destiny and had no power to change it. He was helpless! He was lost! He was without hope! **He had sealed himself to an endless grave!**

[Alma 19:93, 96-97] And now there was no means to reclaim men from this fallen state which man had brought upon himself, because of his own disobedience; [96] And thus we see that all mankind were fallen, and they were in the grasp of justice; yes, the justice of God, which consigned them forever to be cut off from his presence. [97] And now the plan of mercy could not be brought about, except an atonement should be made; therefore God himself atoned for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also.

But then, John was told not to weep and was shown that the Lamb of God was worthy to loose the seals and to bring man back into God's presence. Consequently - John saw that Jesus loosed the seals by being slain and shedding His blood! For, beginning with [Verse 5] we read;

[5] And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

[6] And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having twelve horns and twelve eyes, which are the twelve servants of God, sent forth into all the earth. *signifying the office of 12 apostles.

[7] And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

[8] And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.

[9] And they sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

[10] And have made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.

Paul recognized this truism concerning Jesus and wrote to the Jewish Christians that; "Once in the meridian of time *Jesus* has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men **once** to die, but after this the judgment; So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and he shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation unto them that look for him. [Hebrews 9:26-28]

And Peter, with the same conviction, wrote; "Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; **But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; ...** [1 Peter 1:18-19]

Jesus, before he was born, made the commitment to his Father to redeem mankind. Notice from the following scripture the difference between what Satan wanted and what Jesus wanted.

[**Genesis 3:1-3**] I, the Lord God, spoke unto Moses, saying, That Satan whom you commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning; [2] And he came before me, saying, Behold I, send me, I will be your Son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; **wherefore, give me your honor.** [3] But behold, my beloved Son, **which was my beloved and chosen from the beginning,** said unto me: Father, **your will be done, and the glory be yours forever.**

Lets go now, to the time when Jesus would fulfill his promise to his Father;

[**John 12:23, 27-28, 31-32**] And Jesus answered them, saying, **The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified.** [27] **Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour.** [28] Father, **glorify your name.** Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

And during what may have been the greatest agony in Jesus' life, he prayed;

“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly; and he sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. [**Matthew 26:36**] & [**Luke 22:43-44**]

“BUT FOR THIS CAUSE CAME I UNTO THIS HOUR!” To loose the seals! To break the bands of death! To rescue man from the grave! To change man's destiny from endless sorrow and misery to endless happiness and joy! From eternal damnation to eternal life!

Jesus knew every detail of his impending fate before he went to Jerusalem, for it is written that “*Jesus* took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was changed, and his raiment became white and glittering. And behold, **there came and talked with him two men, even Moses and Elias,** Who appeared in glory, **and spoke of his death, and also his resurrection, which he should accomplish** at Jerusalem.” [**Luke 9:28-31**] [**Matthew 17:1-2**] [**Mark 9:1-3**]

They didn't take his life, he gave it! Knowing the pain he would soon suffer, which was likely incidental compared to his agony in the garden; “when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.” [**Luke 9:51**]

Did Jesus have to go to Jerusalem? Yes! he had to loose the seven seals! Could he have avoided the cross? He certainly had the power, but chose not to do so.

“Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And behold, one of them which were with Jesus, (*Peter*) stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest (*Malchus*), and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again your sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Do you think that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me **more than twelve legions of angels** (60,000)? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that **thus it must be?**” [**Matthew 26:48-52**] [**John 18:3-12**]

Jesus knew that “**it must be!**”

Enoch knew that **“it must be!”** He “cried unto the Lord, saying, When the Son of Man comes in the flesh shall the earth rest? ... And the Lord said unto Enoch, Look; and he looked, and beheld the Son of Man lifted up on the cross, after the manner of men. [Genesis 7:61-62]

Isaiah knew that **“it must be!”** The Lord said to him that “Your dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, you that dwell in dust; for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” [Isaiah 26:19]

Zechariah knew that **“it must be!”** For did he not write, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, your King is coming unto you: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon a burro, ... As for you also, by the blood of your covenant I have sent forth your prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.” [Zechariah 9:9, 11]

Peter knew (*after the fact*) **“it had to be!”** He said that we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world. [1 Peter 1:18-21]

Paul knew (*after the fact*) **“it had to be!”** and wrote; “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and became the firstfruits of them that slept, for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” [1 Corinthians 15:19-22]

And the list goes on; Adam knew; Moses knew; Nephi knew; Alma knew, and many more knew that **“it must be!”** Man would be forever lost if Jesus had not redeemed him from the grave!

It was altogether imperative that man should die in order for him to understand and appreciate a life that has no death. We read that;

death has passed upon all men, to fulfill the merciful plan of the great Creator. **2 Nephi 6:11**

Death was a part of God’s plan for us? A part of His **merciful plan?**

Speaking to Moses, the Lord said; **“this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality, and eternal life of man.”** [D&C 22:23b] And in another place He said; “Keep my commandments in all things; and if you keep my commandments and endure to the end, **you shall have eternal life; which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.**” [D&C 12:3b & 6:5c]

We would truly appreciate this plan if we understood what would have happened if Adam and Eve had not transgressed in the Garden of Eden. For instance, look at [Genesis 4:10-11];

“And in that day Adam blessed God, and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth; saying, Blessed be the name of God, for, because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again, in the flesh I shall see God. [11] And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying, **Were it not for our transgression,** we -

1. **never** would have had seed, *which means they never would have had children,* and
2. **never** should have known good and evil, and
3. **never** should have known the joy of our redemption, and
4. **never** should have known the eternal life which God gives to all the obedient.

The prophet Lehi had something further to say about this:

[2 Nephi 1:111-115] If Adam had not transgressed, he would not have fallen; but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. [112] And all things which were created, must have remained in the same state which they were, after they were created; and they must have remained for ever, and had no end. [113] And **they would have had no children**; wherefore, they would have remained in a state of innocence, **having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin.** [114] But behold, **all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knows all things.** [115] **Adam fell, that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.**

Adam fell, that men might be. Adam was told that if he should eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would surely die. [Genesis 2:20-22] Die? What's that?

Did Adam and Eve know what death was? Had they seen anyone die? Remember, in the garden they were in a state of innocence; for we read that "Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning, and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again in their infant state, innocent before God." [D&C 90:6b]

Again; *"All things have been done in the wisdom of him who knows all things."* [2 Ne 1:114]

[Genesis 6:57] And the Lord spoke unto Adam, saying, Inasmuch as your children are conceived in sin, even so, when they begin to grow up sin conceives in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good.

"for if they never should have bitter, they could not know the sweet." [D&C 28:10d]

[11] And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

[12] Saying with a loud voice, **Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.**

[13] And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, **Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.**

[14] And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped him that lives forever and ever.

To the apostle Paul's declaration; **"O death, where is thy sting?" "O grave, where is thy victory?"** Abinadi replies; **"The grave has no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ!"** [1 Corinthians 15:55] [Mosiah 8:81]

[3 Nephi 5:11-12] He ...spoke unto the people, saying, Behold I am Jesus Christ, of whom the prophets testified should come into the world: [12] And behold **I am the light and the life of the world, and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father has given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things, from the beginning.**

[John 8:28] Jesus said unto them, When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you shall know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father has taught me, [29] And he that sent me is with me; the Father has not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

[3 **Nephi 12:25-28**] Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you, that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me; [26] **And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, I might draw all men unto me:** [27] That as I have been lifted up by men, even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil; [28] **And for this cause have I been lifted up;** therefore, according to the power of the Father, I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works. [29] And whoso repents and is baptized in my name, shall be filled; and if he endures to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father, at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.

Summary

This is a key chapter of this book; for it shows, in metaphorical style, the extent to which God suffered in order to redeem man. Now let's look at a similar expression given in prosaic style;

[**D&C 18:2g-j**] ... I command you to repent--repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore--how sore you know not! how exquisite you know not! yes, how hard to bear you know not! [h] For, behold, **I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer, if they would repent;** but if they would not repent, they must suffer even as I; [i] which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit, and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink; [j] nevertheless, **glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.**

The next six chapters of this book will manifest through conspicuous events that the seven seals represent the history, present, and future of man; beginning with the first day Adam and Eve "set foot" on earth, after their banishment from the garden; and extending to the time when "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ." [**Revelation 11:15**]

These seals, which had forever closed the "book of life" to anyone who will have lived on earth during the seven thousand years, were loosened, and **the book is open!** But, if Jesus had not loosened them and opened the book, it might as well have been a "book of death!" But, Jesus **did** loosen the seals, or the "bands of death," that had kept the book shut! He opened its pages so that the story of everyone whose names are written therein, shall live! Each person's history, present, and future, can now be meaningful if he but repents of his sins, and keep God's commandments!

Notice the commitment King Lamoni's father made to God in response to Aaron's preaching;

[**Alma 13:46-47, 53**] ... man had fallen, he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atones for their sins, through faith and repentance, etc. **And he breaks the bands [seals] of death, that the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death should be swallowed up in the hopes of glory:** And the king responded with, "if there is a God, and if you are God, will you make yourself known unto me, and **I will give away all my sins to know you,** and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day."

