

# *Animal and Plant Lexical Metaphor in Bible*

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**Abstract:** Through the interpretation of the Bible, the article explores that metaphor in language is a phenomenon of language use closely related to context. The essence of metaphor is to understand and experience another kind of thing through certain kinds of things. At the same time, the study of metaphor in the Bible will have a deeper understanding of Western culture, and make the close relationship between metaphor and culture more clear. This article introduces the metaphors of the Bible from the metaphorical culture of animal and plant vocabulary.

## 1. Introduction

One of the hotspots of metaphor research is to study metaphor in a specific cultural context, that is, to collect the source of metaphor expression, the working mechanism and the operation of metaphor in a specific cultural context. Considering that the Bible contains a large number of metaphorical allusions and has a far-reaching impact on Western culture, it is the best choice to study metaphor. The essence of metaphor is to understand and experience another kind of things through one kind of things.

The Bible contains a large number of metaphorical allusions and has a far-reaching impact on Western culture . At the same time, the study of metaphor in the Bible will give us a deeper understanding of Western culture and make the close relationship between metaphor and culture clearer . The article discusses the important animal and plant-related metaphors in the Bible from the metaphorical culture of animal and plant vocabulary to explain its impact on culture.

## 2. Animal Lexical Metaphor Culture

The Bible has a deep-rooted influence on British and American culture. The Bible culture is also deeply engraved in the language people use every day. In the process of people using language, many words are given metaphorical meaning. On the one hand, people's cognitive needs. The limitations of human brain memory require people to use the most economical vocabulary to refer to the concept of maximum quantity. On the other hand, the use of metaphors can help people understand the concept of abstraction. Therefore, many words have many extended meanings in the use of language over a long period of time. In English, the Bible culture has a great influence on the acquisition of many lexical metaphorical meanings. This chapter explores the influence of the Bible culture on the metaphorical meaning of English vocabulary from both animal and plant perspectives.

The Bible is not only a great religious work, but also its rich, vivid and wonderful language

makes it a great source of language and literature. The idioms and allusions in the Bible are concise. Many idioms have gone beyond their religious significance and are widely used in people daily communication. The greatness of the Bible is that it has characteristics different from other religious scriptures. It not only teaches religious doctrines, but also records the origin of the world, the origin of the species, the birth of mankind, the history of the rise and fall of the Jewish nation and surrounding countries. Therefore, there are also names of various animals, as well as some languages that use animals as metaphors. Therefore, some animal vocabulary is attached to another meaning. Let's take a look at the impact of the Bible on animal vocabulary.

Today, animal idioms used by many people in English are directly derived from the Bible. The book was written from about 1300 BC to more than a hundred years after AD, and lasted for about 1400 years. There are many records about the nomads in the Middle East. The people of the Middle East own more cattle, sheep, pigs, camels and the like. But the Jewish people did not eat pork and thought that the pig was a dirty animal. Camels are the most familiar and essential animals for people living in desert areas. Thus, there are some idioms about pigs and camels. For example: "cast pearls before wine". This is from the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus said, "Don't leave your pearls in front of the pigs. I am afraid that it tramples on the pearls and turns to bite you[3]." Now it has been metaphorized to waste time or energy to provide valuable things to someone, but the other party is unable to accept or understand because of their limited conditions, and with the Chinese, the meaning is close. Another example: It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than...". The idiom is also from Matthew, Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. The original meaning of the Bible is that it is harder for the rich man to enter God's kingdom than for the camel to pass through the eye of the needle. It means that it is difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. And now culturally used to metaphorize things that are difficult or impossible to accomplish.

The Bible is the most widely spread, most influential, and most widely distributed book in the West. The Bible consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament[2]. The Old Testament was first written in Hebrew, and the New Testament was written in Greek, also known as Jewish Greek. Since the 4th century AD, the Roman emperor Constantine made Christianity an international one, so the Bible still had a Latin translation very early. From then on, Christianity spread to the whole world. The Bible and its relevant literary works, in the history of literature and art in Britain and the United States, have far-reaching influences and are unmatched by any other works. Many great poets, writers, and artists have created many immortal masterpieces based on biblical stories and legends. The language of the Bible also has an important place in the process of English formation. As for the examples in which the allusions in the Bible become idioms into English vocabulary, there are many idioms related to characters and animals. This chapter mainly introduces the English idioms related to plants. Cultural sources and related metaphors.

### 3. Plant Lexical Metaphor Culture

There are many plant vocabularies in the Bible that are also given rich metaphors, such as "fig leaves" literally means fig leaves[1]. This language is from the Genesis of the Bible, which records that the human ancestor Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of good and evil that God forbids them to eat, and the flesh's eyes are bright. At this time they found themselves naked and felt ashamed. They used the leaves of the broad fig tree to make a skirt to cover their shame. So "fig leave" has a metaphor of "figure cloth."

In Chinese, red beans, also known as acacia beans, symbolize love and thoughts. But in English, "red bean" refers to "the principle of selling for the sake of the immediate interests, and seeing forgiveness." This layer of meaning is derived from the records in the Old Testament of the Bible:

one of the characters is Esau, he likes to hunt in the wild, and his twin brother, Jacob, likes to stay at home quietly. One day, Esau came back from hunting, tired and sweaty, and his mouth was dry. At this time, Jacob cooked a bowl of delicious red bean soup at home. When Esau asked the younger brother to drink the bowl of red bean soup, the Jacob proposed that Esau should be replaced as the eldest son. In front of the tempting red bean soup, Esau agreed without hesitation. The name of the eldest son in the culture at the time meant status, inheritance of property and blessings, and Esau sold the name of the eldest son for a bowl of red bean soup. So there is the cultural association meaning of “red bean” now.

In the ancient Middle East, many people planted vineyards and olive trees. People use grapes to make wine and olives to extract oil. Oil and wine are things that make people have material enjoyment in life, so the fruits of grapes and olive trees are considered to be extremely valuable agricultural products. Thus the concept of tree and fruit is often used in biblical culture to metaphorize human and human behavior. From the eighth chapter of Old Testament Genesis, when God sees the world full of violence, he will use the flood to destroy the world, but Noah is a perfect person. God ordered him to build an ark, let him bring his family and all animals. Going to the ark to escape the flood, after 150 days, the flood disappeared, Noah released a crow, and the crow flew around. After waiting for a while, he released another pigeon. At night, the pigeon came back with a new twisted olive leaf in his mouth. Noah knew that the water on the ground had receded. For example: “A tree is known by its fruit.” “The wicked will do evil because of the evils in his heart. The righteous will do good because of the goodness in his heart.” Its cultural meaning is reflected in what people do. It is their heart. At the same time, it also leads to “Hold out the olive branch”, which implies a good wish to seek peace.

#### 4. Conclusion

This article mainly describes the biblical metaphors of animals and plants, and the use of these metaphors in later British and American literary works to illustrate the biblical metaphors from a cultural perspective.

Metaphor is not only a common way of expression, but also a way of thinking. Metaphor is closely related to culture. It is rooted in culture, a concentrated reflection of culture in language, a link between culture and language, and has important cultural cognitive value. It is also a breakthrough in the study of cultural differences among countries.

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