

"Like" as Found in Select References from the New Testament

Both the synoptic writers (Matthew, Mark and Luke) as well as St. Paul sought to communicate the "good news" in terms accessible to people from all walks of life. Due to their universal appeal, every person can find as much meaning as he or she desires in their writings. Once these texts became organized and accepted by the early Church, they eventually became known as the New Testament and thus set forth for future generations God's communication of his love as embodied in the person of Jesus Christ.

In brief, both the canonically accepted words of Jesus and Paul's Epistles seek to bridge the gap between God and humankind which had been forfeited by sin. One way of achieving this reconciliation is when we have recourse to examples from everyday life which serve to reflect, however dimly, those aspects revealing...uncovering...certain features of God's love. One crucial way of bridging what had previously been considered unbridgeable is by the appropriate use of metaphors and analogies. Even this approach implies that the two spheres, human and divine, are more dissimilar than similar. Nevertheless, it is the special charism of the New Testament to employ illustrations endowed with universal appeal in an attempt to narrow the gap between God and humankind. It does so by accentuating those points of contact both have in common. This does not imply that the element of one is naturally inherent in the other, but the process of making comparisons reveals how we employ language, especially when it comes to something unfamiliar or different from normal human experience. Furthermore, the New Testament writers invite their readers to make use of their imaginations while reading the "good news," a task vital to the practice which later became known as *lectio divina* to which this Home Page is devoted.

A key word for enhancing those similarities our world has in common with the divine realm is contained in the small yet important word *like* or a comparable term. In the citations below this word or its equivalent is in italics and followed by a transliteration of the Greek equivalent in parentheses. The reader may find special interest in considering those objects to which the "kingdom of heaven" is compared, perhaps the most familiar point of reference that comes to mind.

In conclusion, the reader can readily see that St. John's Gospel does not favor the word "like" or its equivalents, that is, his language focuses more upon the divine origin and nature of Jesus Christ. We may say that John's language is more "ontological" as opposed to the earthly, familiar examples of daily life used by the synoptic writers. With this distinction in mind (which could easily be the theme of a separate article regarding the use of metaphors), the references are interesting in that they provide insight and nourishment with regard to things heavenly. After the references I give a list of those persons and/or objects which have been compared. It is hoped that one may grasp the essential points of comparison between those elements the earthly and divine realms have and do not have in common.

Matthew

3.16: and behold, the heavens were opened and he [Jesus] saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove (*hosei*) and alighting on him.

6.9: Pray then like this (*houtos*): Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

6.29: even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these (*hos*, i.e., lilies).

7.24: Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man

(homoiothesetai) who built his house upon the rock.

7.26: And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man (homoiothesetai) who built his house upon the sand.

11.16: But to what shall I compare this generation (tini homoioso)? It is like children sitting in the market places and calling to their playmates.

13.31: The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed (homoia) which a man took and sowed in his field.

13.33: The kingdom of heaven is like leaven (homoia) which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.

13.43: Then the righteous will shine like the sun (hos) in the kingdom of their Father.

13.44: The kingdom of heaven is like treasure (homoia) hidden in a field which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

13.45: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant (homoia) in search of fine pearls.

14.47: Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net (homoia) which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.

13.52: Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder (homoios) who brings out of treasure what is new and what is old.

17.2: And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun (hos).

18.3: unless you turn and become like children (hos), you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

18.4: Whoever humbles himself like this child (hos), he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

20.1: For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder (homoia) who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

22.30: For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels (hos) in heaven.

22.39: And a second [commandment] is like it (homoia), You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

28.3: His appearance was like lightning (hos), and his raiment white as snow.

Mark

1.10: immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove (hos).

4.31: It [kingdom of heaven] is like a grain of mustard seed (hos) which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth.

6.15: And others said, "It is a prophet like one of the prophets (hos) of old."

6.34: and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep (hos) without a shepherd.

10.15: whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child (hos) shall not enter it.

12.25: For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels (hos) in heaven.

13.34: It ["that day"] is like a man going on a journey (hos), when he leaves his servants in charge.

Luke

6.40: but everyone when he is fully taught will be like his teacher (hos).

6.48: he [the person listening to Christ's words] is like a man building a house (homoios), who dug deep and laid the foundation upon rock.

6.49: but he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house (homoios) on the ground without a foundation.

7.31: They [men of this generation] are like children (homoioi) sitting in the market place and calling to one another.

10.18: I saw Satan fall like lightning (hos) from heaven.

12.27: even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these (hos, lilies).

12.36: and be like men who are waiting for their master (homoioi) to come home from the marriage feast.

13.18: What is the kingdom of heaven like (homoia)?

13.19: It is like a grain of mustard seed (homoia) which a man took and sowed in his garden.

13.21: It [kingdom of heaven] is like leaven (homoia) which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.

18.17: whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child (hos) shall not enter it.

21.34: But take heed to yourselves...and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare (hos).

22.31: Satan...might sift you [Simon] like wheat (hos).

Acts of the Apostles

2.2: And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind (hosper).

6.15: And gazing at him [Stephen], all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel (hosei).

10.11: and saw the heaven opened and something descending like a great sheet (hos) let down by four corners upon the earth.

17.29: being God's offspring, we ought not to think that the Deity is like gold (word lacking in Greek), silver or stone, a representation by the art and imagination of man.

Romans

5.14: Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam (epi to homoimati) who was a type of the one who was to come.

6.5: For if we have been united with him in a death like his (to homoimati), we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his (Greek word missing).

1 Corinthians

3.10: According to the commission of God given to me, like a skilled master builder (hos) I laid a foundation.

4.9: For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death (hos).

2 Corinthians

3.12-13: Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, not like Moses (kathaper), who put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not see the end of the fading splendor.

Galatians

4.28: Now we, brethren, like Isaac (kata), are children of promise.

Philippians

3.21: who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body (summorphon), by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself.

1 Thessalonians

2.7: But we were gentle among you, like a nurse (hos) taking care of her children.

2.11: for you know how, like a father (hos) with his children, we exhorted each one of you.

5.2: the day of the Lord will come like a thief (hos) in the night.

5.4: But you are not in darkness, brethren, for that day to surprise you like a thief (hos).

Hebrews

1.11: they [the heavens] will all grow old like a garment (hos).

1.12: like a mantle (hosei) you will roll them up.

8.9: not like (kata) the covenant that I made with their fathers.

James

1.6: for he who doubts is like a wave (eoiken) of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

1.10: like the flower (hos) of the grass he will pass away.

1.23: For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man (eoiken) who observes his natural face in a mirror.

1.24: for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like (hopoios).

5.3: Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire (hos).

1 Peter

1.19: but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb (hos) without blemish or spot.

1.24: All flesh is like grass (hos) and all its glory like the flower (hos) of the grass.

2.2: Like newborn babes (hos), long for the pure spiritual milk.

2.5: and like living stones (hos) be built into a spiritual house.

2.25: For you were straying like sheep (hos).

4.6: though judged in the flesh like men (kata), they might live in the spirit like God (kata).

5.8: the devil prowls around like a roaring lion (hos).

2 Peter

3.10: But the day of the Lord will come like a thief (hos).

1 John

3.2: but we know that when he appears we shall be like him (homoioi), for we shall see him as he is.

3.12: and not be like Cain (kathos) who was of the evil one and murdered his brother.

Revelation

1.10: I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet (hos).
 1.13: in the midst of the lamp stands one like a son of man (homoion).
 1.14: his eyes were like a flame (hos) of fire.
 1.15: his feet were like burnished bronze (hos).
 1.16: his face was like the sun (hos) shining in full strength.
 2.18: the Son of God who has eyes like a flame (hos) of fire.
 2.18: his feet are like burnished bronze (hos).
 3.3: If you will not awake, I will come like a thief (hos).
 4.1: The first voice which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet (hos).
 4.3: And he who sat there appeared like jasper and carnelian (homoios) and round the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald (homoios).
 4.6: and before the throne there is as it were a sea of glass like crystal (homoia).
 4.7: the first living creature like a lion (homoion), the second living creature like an ox (homoion), the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle (homoion).
 10.1: his face was like the sun (hos) and his legs like pillars of fire (hos).
 10.3: and called out with a loud voice like a lion (hosper) roaring.
 14.2: And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters (hos) and like the sound of loud thunder (hos); the voice I heard was like the sound of harpers (hos) playing on their harps.
 14.14: and seated on the cloud one like a son of man (homoion).
 16.15: Lo, I am coming like a thief (hos)!
 19.6: the voice of a great multitude like the sound of many waters (hos) and like the sound of mighty thunder peals (hos).
 19.12: His eyes are like a flame of fire (hos).
 21.11: [Jerusalem] having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel (homoios), like a jasper (hos).

This concluding section is an abstract or summary of the references above to which the spiritual realm is compared and broken down into three main sections:

The Synoptic Gospels

Spirit of God = dove; pray = Our Father; Solomon = lilies; hearing Christ's words = wise man building house upon rock; foolish man = building house upon sand; this generation = children in market places; kingdom of heaven = grain of mustard seed; kingdom of heaven = leaven; righteous = sun; kingdom of heaven = hidden treasure; kingdom of heaven = merchant searching for pearls; kingdom of heaven = net; scribe = householder & treasure; Christ's face = sun; children = entering kingdom of heaven; child = kingdom of heaven; kingdom of heaven = householder hiring laborers; resurrection = angels; first commandment = second commandment; Christ's appearance = lightning; Spirit = dove; kingdom of heaven = grain of mustard seed; prophet = prophet of old; people = sheep without shepherd; kingdom of God = child; resurrection = angels; man going on journey = "that day;" fully taught person = teacher; listening to Christ's words = house built on foundation of rock; not hearing Christ's words = building house on no foundation; men of this generation = children in market place; Satan's fall = lightning; Solomon = lilies; waiting for Christ = expectation of master; grain of mustard seed = sown in

garden; leaven = hidden in meal; kingdom of heaven = child; watchfulness = snare; Satan's sifting = wheat

The Acts of the Apostles & Epistles of St. Paul

sound = wind; face = angel's; something (from heaven) = sheet; deity = gold; sins = unlike Adam's; death = Christ's; God's commission = builder; apostles = condemned men; hope = unlike Moses'; children of promise = Isaac; our body = Christ's; gentle = nurse; we (apostles) = father; day of Lord = thief; that day = thief; heavens = garment; heavens = mantle; new covenant = unlike one with fathers; doubting person = wave; doubting person = grass; not doing the word = observing face in mirror; forgetfulness = what is like; rust = fire; Christ's blood = lamb; flesh = grass; babes = spiritual milk; living stones = spiritual house; straying = sheep; devil = lion; day of Lord = thief

The Book of Revelation

voice = trumpet; midst of lamp stands = man; eyes = flame; feet = bronze; face = sun; eyes = fire; feet = bronze; sleep = sleep; first voice = trumpet; sitting on throne; jasper & carnelian; rainbow = emerald; glass = crystal; first creature = lion; second creature = ox; third creature = man's face; fourth creature = eagle; face = sun; legs = pillars of fire; voice = lion; voice = many waters; voice = thunder; voice = harpers; seated on cloud = son of man; coming = thief; multitude = many waters; multitude = thunder peals; eyes = flame; Jerusalem = jewel; Jerusalem = jasper.