

**1 Kings 11:9, “Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,**

**1 Kings 11:10, “and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD had commanded.”**

אָנאַ (ʔānap), q. be angry; hitp. be angry; אַפּ (ʔap II),  
nom. nose, face, anger, nostrils.

**Is. 55:8, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts,  
Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the  
LORD.**

**Is. 55:9, “*For as the heavens are higher than the  
earth,  
So are My ways higher than your ways  
And My thoughts than your thoughts.*”**

**Song 4:1, “How beautiful you are, my darling,  
How beautiful you are!  
Your eyes are *like* doves behind your veil;  
Your hair is like a flock of goats  
That have descended from Mount Gilead.**

**Song 4:2, “Your teeth are like a flock of *newly*  
shorn ewes  
Which have come up from *their* washing,  
All of which bear twins,  
And not one among them has lost her  
young.**

**Song 4:3, “Your lips are like a scarlet thread,  
And your mouth is lovely.  
Your temples are like a slice of a  
pomegranate  
Behind your veil.**

**Song 4:4, “Your neck is like the tower of David,  
Built with rows of stones  
On which are hung a thousand shields,  
All the round shields of the mighty men.”**

- 1. God is my rock**
- 2. You will strike the rock. Ex 17:6**
- 3. The rock! His work is perfect. Deut 32:4**
- 4. He will cover you with His pinions,  
And under His wings you may seek refuge.**
- 5. And the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. Nah 2:3**
- 6. The pot is boiling.**
- 7. 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'**
- 8. The tongue is a flame of fire.**

**Psa. 18:2, “The LORD is my rock and my  
fortress and my deliverer,  
My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge;  
My shield and the horn of my salvation,  
my stronghold.”**

# 1. What is a figure of speech?

“The laws of grammar describe how words normally function. In some cases, however, the speaker or writer purposely sets aside those laws to use new forms, forms we call figures of speech. As Bullinger wrote, ‘A figure is simply a word or a sentence thrown into a peculiar form, different from its original or simplest meaning or use.’ If we say, ‘It is raining hard,’ we are using a normal, plain statement. But if we say, ‘It is raining cats and dogs,’ we have used a sentence that means the same thing but is an unusual, more colorful way of expressing the same thought. Or when we say, ‘The teakettle is boiling,’ we mean not the kettle but the water in it.”

# 1. What is a figure of speech?

“According to Sterrett, ‘A figure of speech is a word or phrase that is used to communicate something other than its literal, natural meaning.’ He then gives these examples of figurative expressions in modern-day English: ‘That argument doesn’t hold water.’ ‘Stand up for the Word of God.’ ‘I was tickled to death.’ In the first example the argument has nothing to do with literal water. The point is that the argument is as useless as a bucket with holes. In the second example we are not being encouraged to stand up physically next to a Bible, but rather to defend the truths of Scripture, living in such a way that our convictions are clear. And in the third example the person was instead speaking of being extremely pleased.

# 1. What is a figure of speech?

**“When John the Baptist said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God’ (John 1:29), he was not pointing to an animal, but to Jesus, who was being compared by John to a lamb. The individuals hearing those words and readers today reading those words are challenged to think of how Jesus was like a lamb. Since the Jews frequently sacrificed lambs, John no doubt had in mind Jesus’ forthcoming sacrificial death on behalf of others and in their place.”**

Roy Zuck

# **1. What is a figure of speech?**

**“In each of these examples certain aspects of the statements are not true in their normal sense, but yet the sentences are convey-ing truth. The argument is inadequate (‘it doesn’t hold water’), we are to defend and live in accord with the Bible (‘stand up for the Bible’), we are pleased (‘tickled to death’), Jesus is a substitutionary sacrifice (‘the Lamb of God’). Figures of speech express truths in vivid and interesting ways.**

**Since the Bible has so many figures of speech, it is important to recognize them and determine what they are communicating.”**

**Roy Zuck**

## 2. The Problem: Little written, little taught.

“There is no even tolerably good treatise on Figures existing at present in our language—Is there in any other tongue? There is no consecutive discussion of them of more than a few pages; the examples brought forward by all others being trivial in the extreme and threadbare; while the main conception of what constitutes the chief class of figures is altogether narrow, erroneous, and unphilosophical. Writers generally, even the ablest, are wholly in the dark as to the precise distinction between a trope and a metonymy; and very few even of literary men have so much as heard of Hypocatastasis or Implication, one of the most important of figures, and one, too, that is constantly shedding its light upon us.”

John Vilant Macbeth, Prof of Rhetoric, UWV

“Applied to words, a figure denotes some form which a word or sentence takes, different from its ordinary and natural form. **This is always for the purpose of giving additional force, more life, intensified feeling, and greater emphasis.** Whereas to-day ‘Figurative language’ is ignorantly spoken of as though it made less of the meaning, and deprived the words of their power and force. A passage of God’s Word is quoted; and it is met with the cry, ‘Oh, that is figurative’—implying that its meaning is weakened, or that it has quite a different meaning, or that it has no meaning at all. **But the very opposite is the case. For an unusual form (figura) is never used except to add force to the truth conveyed, emphasis to the statement of it, and depth to the meaning of it.**”

E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*

“Whatever Christian theology means by the impassibility of God, it does not mean that God’s love, compassion and mercy are **mere figures of speech**. But neither is God’s love simply a disposition evoked in God during the history of man and that belongs only to the economy of salvation. God is love in the sovereign freedom and power of his eternal being, and as such has revealed himself definitively and decisively in Scripture and in Christ.”

Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*.

**“This change is brought about and prompted by some internal action of the mind, which seeks to impress its intensity of feeling upon others. The meaning of the words themselves continues to be literal: the figure lies in the application of the words. This application arises from some actual resemblance between the words, or between two or more mental things which are before the mind.”**

**EWB**

**Zoomorphism.** “Whereas an anthropomorphism ascribes human characteristics to God, a zoomorphism ascribes animal characteristics to God (or to others). These are expressive ways of pointing up certain actions and attributes of the Lord in a picturesque way. The psalmist wrote, God ‘will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge’ (Ps. 91:4). The readers would think of young chicks or birds being protected under the wings of the mother hen or bird. Job depicted what he considered to be the furious anger of God lashing out at him when he wrote that God ‘gnashes His teeth at me’ (Job 16:9).”

**Zuck, *BBI***

**To brood or incubate, Gen. 1:2**

**A horn, Psa 18:2**

**Wings, feathers, Psa 91:4; 17:8; 36:7**

**Anthropomorphism.** An anthropomorphism is the ascribing of human characteristics or actions to God, as in the references to God's fingers (Ps. 8:3), ear (31:2), and eyes (2 Chron. 16:9), face (Psa 16:11), mouth (Num. 12:8), . Other physical human features ascribed to God are:

**Impassibility:** The attribute of God's being unaffected by anything outside of himself. Those who accept the view that God is impassible hold that he cannot be caused to do or feel anything, because of his omnipotence and perfection. Critics believe that impassibility would be a barrier to genuine loving relations between God and his creatures. See also divine attributes.

**“Any Christian who reflects on living with grief has to reflect on living with God in grief; and that immediately leads into the issue of impassibility. I knew the traditional picture: God surveys with uninterrupted bliss what transpires in this vale of tears which is our world. In the situation of my son's death, I found that picture impossible to accept—existentially impossible. I could not live with it; I found it grotesque. . . .**

**“Perhaps if I had firmly believed it was the correct picture I could eventually have brought myself to the point where I no longer rebelled against it. But by this time I had already, for more or less theoretical reasons, found the doctrine questionable; this experience pushed me over the edge, one might say. It did more than that though: it led me to reflect on the doctrine much more thoroughly and seriously than I had before. For I knew that in rejecting the doctrine, I was disagreeing with the greatest minds and hearts of the Christian church; I was not, and I am not, willing or even able to do that lightly.**

**“The picture that comes to my mind is of those sweaters knit in such a way that when you pull on one thread, the whole thing unravels before your eyes. Impassibility is one component in that tightly integrated traditional way of understanding God. My interest in the structure as a whole accordingly led me to become interested in eternity, in simplicity, in aseity (unconditionedness)-and then also in impassibility. Once you pull on the thread of impassibility, a lot of other threads come along. Aseity, for example-that is, unconditionedness... One also has to give up immutability (changelessness) and eternity.”**

**Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Does God Suffer,” *Modern Reformation*, 99:45.**

**10. Anthropopathism. This figure of speech ascribes human emotions to God, as seen in Zechariah 8:1, “I am very jealous for Zion.”**

Rejoicing, Isa 62:5

Sorrow and grief, Gen 6:6; Judges 10:16

Repentance, Gen. 6:6

Anger, Ex 15:7

Vengeance, Jer. 9:9

Hatred, Psa 5:5

Jealousy, Nahum 1:2

Displeasure, Zech 1:15

Pity, Joel 2:18

# **Anthropopatheia; or, Condescension**

**The Ascribing of Human Attributes, etc., to God.**

**An-thrōp'-o-path-ei'-a. Greek, ἀνθρωποπάθεια, from ἄνθρωπος (anthropos), man, and πάθος (pathos), affections and feelings, etc. (from πάσχειν, paschein), to suffer).**

**This figure is used of the ascription of human passions, actions, or attributes to God.**

**The Hebrews had a name for this figure, and called it (Derech Benai Adam), the way of the sons of man.**

**The Greeks had another name for it: SYNCATABASIS (Syn´-cat-ab´-a-sis), from σύν (syn), together with, κατά (kata), down, and βαίνειν (bainein), to go: a going down together with: i.e., God, by using this figure, condescends to the ignorance and infirmity of man.**

Hence, the Latin name for it was  
**CONDESCENSIO**, condensation.

- 1. As analogies or comparisons, these are terms that have meaning within a human frame of reference, but, according to the definitions of figures of speech, they do not correspond to essential realities within God.**

**2. In the history of Christianity it is frequently noted that the concept of impassibility is the dominant view.**

**3. The nature of analogy is such that what is true in the experience of man not only does not have to be true in God, but in most analogies, what is attributed in one analog is not in the other, which is why the analogy needs to be made.**

**Chain of Being  
Emanating  
from “god”**

**“god”**

**Angelic beings**

**Human beings**

**Animals**

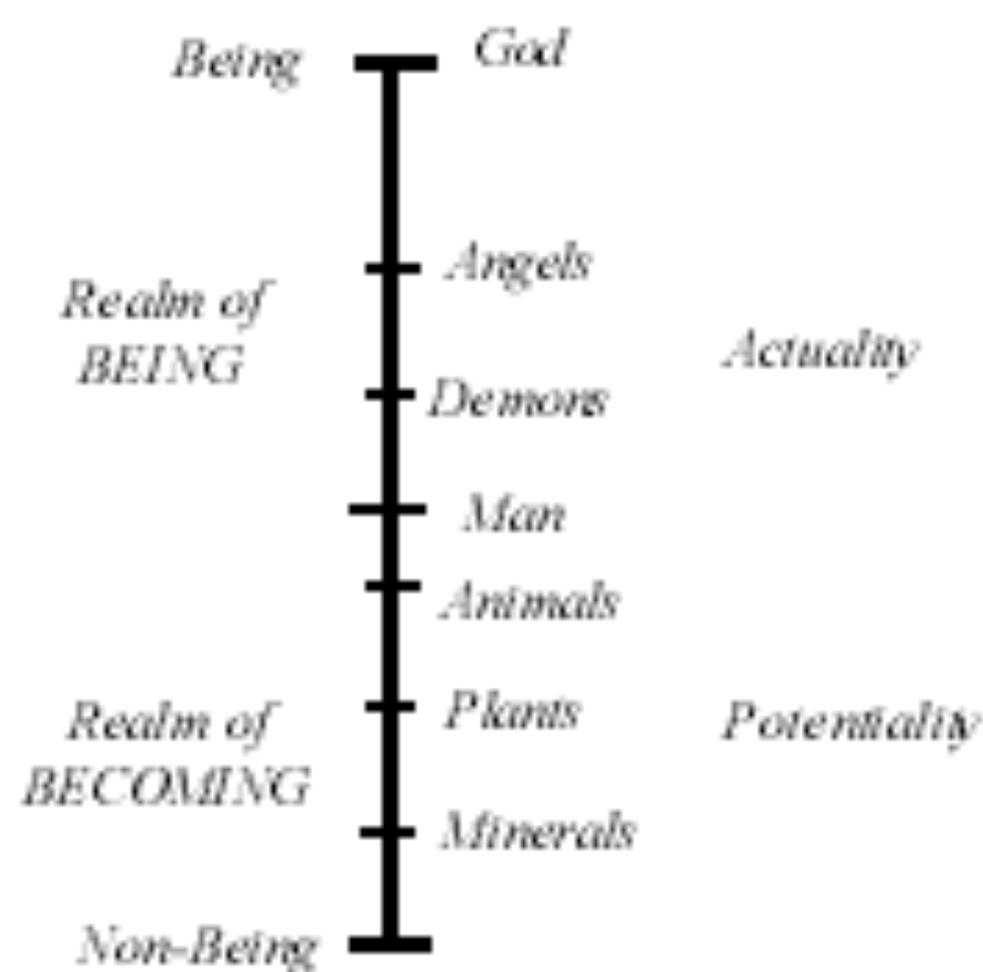
**Vegetation**

**Rocks, dirt, water**

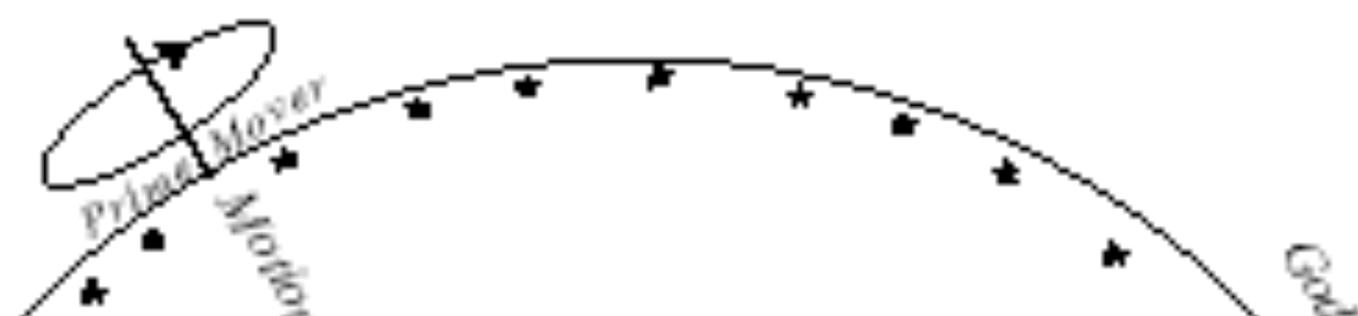
**Being or  
raw  
existence  
itself**



*The Great Chain  
of Being*



*Fig. 1*





**GOD**

**Personal-Infinite**

**FINITE UNIVERSE**

**angels**

**man**

**animals**

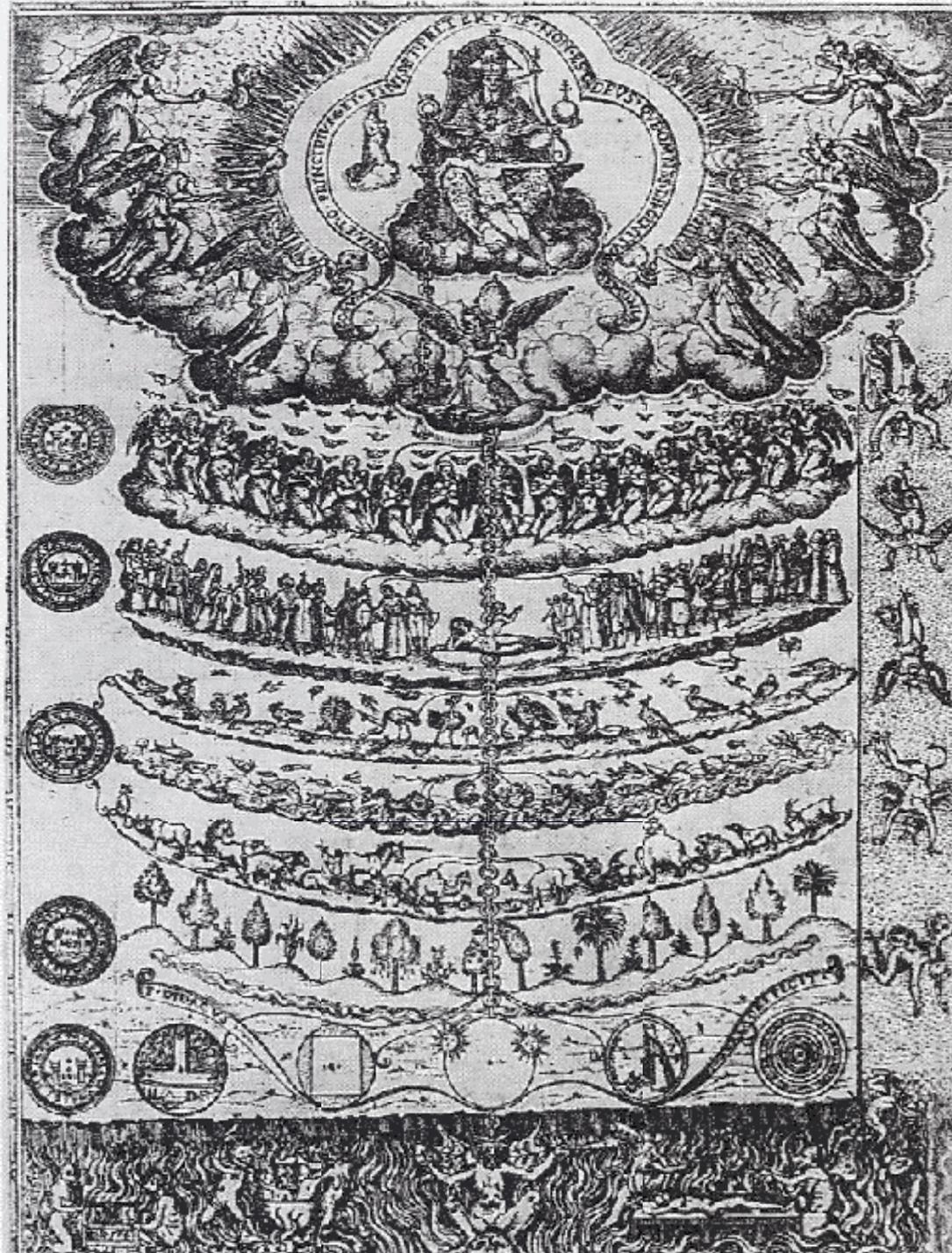
**vegetation**

**matter/energy**

**INFINITE-  
IMPERSONAL  
Universe**



**god  
angels  
man  
animals  
nature**



**God**

**angels**

**mankind**

**birds**

**animals**

**vegetation**

**“The difference between a Christian system that seeks to be consistently analogical and one, like that of Romanism and evangelicalism, that does not, is that only in the former is the false ideal of knowledge of the unbeliever rejected. If one does not make human knowledge wholly dependent upon the original self-knowledge and consequent revelation of God to man, then man will have to seek knowledge within himself as the final reference point. Then he will have to seek an exhaustive understanding of reality. Then he will have to hold that if he cannot attain to such an exhaustive understanding of reality, he has no true knowledge of anything at all.”**

***Van Til, Christian Theory of Knowledge***

**“You are truly compassionate in terms of our experience. Yet You are not so in terms of Your own. For when You see us in our misery, we experience the effect of compassion; You, however, do not experience this feeling. Therefore you are compassionate, in that you save the miserable and spare those who sin against You; and You are not compassionate, in that You are not affected by any sympathy for misery.”**

**Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion***