

The **LOST
LANGUAGE
of SYMBOLISM**

AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR RECOGNIZING
AND INTERPRETING SYMBOLS OF THE GOSPEL



ALONZO L. GASKILL

FOREWORD BY JOSEPH FIELDING MC CONKIE

**The Lost Language of Symbolism: An Essential
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of the Gospel**

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Symbolism is a marvelously instructive and expressive language. . . . It partakes of the language of the heart and the language of the Spirit. . . . As Alonzo Gaskill deftly points out in this work, the language of symbolism embraces everything from the dust of the earth to the glories of the heavens. To miss what is being expressed or taught with symbols is like living in a world without sunsets or autumn leaves. "Joseph Fielding McConkie "All things have their likeness," the Lord has said, "and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth" (Moses 6:63). "Symbolism is the very language of scripture," writes author Alonzo Gaskill. As we more fully understand the symbolism in the scriptures and the temple, we are led to deeper, more profound insights and truths that previously eluded us. The result is that we can then more readily liken the scriptures unto ourselves for "our profit and learning" (1 Nephi 19:23). This engaging and well-researched guide explores the symbolism of body parts, clothing, colors, numbers, directions, names, and animals in holy writ and in the temple. It also provides a series of charts comparing the lives of scriptural individuals and showing how they actually are types and symbols of Christ. Filled with countless examples to help explain and support the author's discussion of symbols and their meanings, the text makes extensive references not only to recognized Latter-day Saint sources but also to lesser-known sources written by a variety of religious scholars both modern and ancient. Symbolism is a language hidden in the margins, tucked between the lines, and suspended below the surface of the words. With study and effort, we can coax the symbolic meaning into the open and become fluent in reading the eternal truths it reveals. This book is an invaluable aid in that process.

The Lost Language of Symbolism: An Essential Guide for Recognizing and Interpreting Symbols of the Gospel Details

Date : Published January 1st 2003 by Shadow Mountain

ISBN : 9781570088919

Author : Alonzo L. Gaskill

Format : Unknown Binding 476 pages

Genre : Christianity, Lds, Religion, Nonfiction, Church



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Stacy says

I wasn't expecting the reference style format, but it served its purpose. This book proved to be quite insightful. I was not previously familiar with Gaskill's work and am not well versed in the topic. So, I am, admittedly, blindly trusting his research. That aside, he explores some really fascinating symbolism that truly adds depth to gospel study. The book really puts into perspective how shallow our understanding of scripture can be. Or for a more optimistic way of putting it: how our understanding of the gospel can deepen and grow with continued study. Of course, read with a grain of salt, as it is in no way doctrine. Overall, I enjoyed it.

Linda says

My go-to. Gaskill will say that after this first foray into symbolism, he would revamp a thing or two. Still, a rock-solid resource for getting your feet wet, for finding out what the Hebrew Scriptures are trying to say. Hint: whatever you think you understand, it is, literally, the tip, the top layer of last night's dusting of snow, compared to what's underneath.

Christi says

Definitely a wonderful reference to have on the bookshelf. It's organized so you can quickly look up what you're interested in and just focus on that, but I did read it cover to cover because there are gems in the text that are worth finding. It's a little dry (again, it's a reference book) but I really liked it and am looking forward to applying what I've learned.

Jeffrey Richardson says

This was the first book I ever read on symbolism. My wife by chance bought it for me because it was written by a Church member and boy am I glad she did! I can honestly say its what got me interested in the deeper things (meat) of the gospel. And honestly that's the WHOLE point of symbolism. Whether it's in scriptures, the temple, or any other ordinance, its purpose is to help us realize deeper things that human words can't express. I never before realized the scriptures and other ordinances of the Church have so much symbolism to it. This book covers numbers, animals, people, places, clothing, colors, etc and although it has an LDS emphasis to it, anyone of any faith can read it. If you have no background with symbolism, this is a great start. It will change the way you read scriptures.

Martha Smith says

Symbolism is a marvelously instructive and expressive language...It partakes of the language of the heart and the language of the Spirit...I have read this book no less than 16 times before I went to the temple. Each time I learn something new. I highly recommend all thinking, Latter-day Saints read and study this book. This book is in my top 5 favorite books.

Marsha says

What the heck is Isaiah talking about? Why are symbols used in the scriptures anyway? What's the point? This book explains. It may not answer every question about the meanings in the scriptures, but it sure helps for those who are trying to feast on them, but find some gristle that's hard to get through. It is an excellent resource to have open right next to your scriptures during study. It will open layers of symbolism that you never thought were there before. Excellent book!

Kelly says

This book took my 6 months to read. It is a deep doctrine study type of book I don't think it would be very beneficial to read it cover to cover.

I spent hours going through the scriptural references in this book! It was so interesting! I have learned a ton! I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to get a more in depth understanding of the scriptures.

Lisa says

When I bought this book I actually read it cover to cover. It is so rich with information that it was impossible to retain all that I read. Really with I had a photographic memory, but now I use it as a reference book. I am digging around in it constantly and it is one of my top three scriptural references.

If you are interested in gospel symbolism this one is an absolute must read.

Cami says

I have been studying scriptural and temple symbols and noticed that every book I read referenced this one, so I decided I needed to find a copy. This is a fantastic reference book and teaching tool!! Some parts were obvious to me and therefore a little boring, but I learned a lot of new things and particularly loved the chapter on clothing as symbols (it explains a lot about the temple without saying a word about it!) as well as being introduced to the ideas of directions as symbols ("eastward in Eden" has a whole new meaning now) and the concept of gematria (numbers as word symbols). This is one to keep on the bookshelf and refer to often as I study and teach from the scriptures.

Jill says

This book was a deep study into religious symbolism. Thankfully, I read it along with three of my very smart and well-informed friends who made this study even more informative and enjoyable because we read and discussed it together over the past year! I have to say, Gaskill is a finely educated scholar who presents detailed descriptions and history of every possible biblical symbol. (The notes section of the book was a hefty 150 pages!) He expertly guides your thoughts towards the temple experience and what awaits you there as you ponder and decipher temple symbols through your own personal revelation and experience. This book is intended to be read slowly, studied carefully and prayerfully pondered. Symbols are replete throughout the scriptures! I learned so much and will need to study it again. I don't think once is enough!

Cindy says

I am not a very symbolic person, so this book was perfect for me. I learned so much about the symbols found in scripture and how to understand them better. I especially loved the chapter on number symbols. It certainly adds depth and meaning when we look below the surface. It kind of reads like a dictionary or encyclopedia, but I've never been so fascinated reading one of them in the past!

Dr. says

It pains me to admit how well done this book is. Largely because of my bias against non-apostolic writers and commentators. This book succeeds largely because of its heavy use of scripture, translation from other texts, and the appropriate tone in which Dr. Gaskill approaches the subject matter. Even for those who are largely aware of the traditional symbolism in scripture, this book offers examples that one may not have previously noticed. This book is particularly helpful for those who would like to better understand the book of Revelation.

Erma says

To rate a 5 from me, a book must have changed my life in some important way. When I read this book a couple of years ago, I got a taste of the depth that can be found in the scriptures. Since then, my scripture reading has been more rewarding. I find new insights and discover gems I missed before as I read the scriptures. I return to this book again and again and ponder.

Robert says

Although quite a bit dryer than Sacred Symbols, this book has some good material to ponder. I especially liked the chapter on symbols for Christ. This will make a good reference book.

Page Turner: 3/10

Honest: 9/10

Cerebral: 10/10

Uplifting: 9/10

Teri says

I love allegory, so I really enjoyed this book, which is written by an LDS author. I read it cover-to-cover and my copy is now heavily marked and highlighted. It will continue to be a valuable scripture-study reference for me in the future. It covers the types and symbols found throughout the scriptures and temple, and raises awareness of the many layers of meaning the gospel employs. Here are the categories:

Body Parts as Symbols

Clothing as Symbols

Colors as Symbols

Numbers as Symbols

Directions as Symbols

People as Types

Names as Symbols

Animals as Symbols

Types & Symbols of Christ

The chapter on numbers was particularly interesting and discusses both numerology and gematria (reckoning by numbers), a topic not often discussed in Sunday school classes.

A recommended gospel study aid!

Related book: *Gospel Symbolism* by Joseph Fielding McConkie
