

## HYPOCATASTASIS of LEAVEN

During the month of September, we will study four figures of speech used in the NT to teach the importance of the application of the word of God. **The meaning is in the literal while the application is in the figure.**

A figure of speech is a word or phrase that is used to communicate something more colorfully than its literal or original meaning and use.

**Simile, metaphor and hypocatastasis** are comparison figures of speech.

**Simile** is a comparison **by resemblance** (like, as) – “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner.” (Matt.20:1) [Parable of Laborers]

**Metaphor** is a comparison **by representation** – “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.” (John 10:11)

**Hypocatastasis** is a comparison **by implication** – “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) **Can you find the hypocatastasis in Matt.16:6, 11-12?**

**This lesson will study four aspects of the study of the figure of speech called the Hypocatastasis of Leaven of the Pharisees.**

**1. If the hypocatastasis “figure of speech” is well known to the listeners, it shortens the time and method of communications.**

But if not, then the point of its use is confusing and it could become a distraction to the point.

- Do you see how this happened in our lesson text of the leaven of Pharisees?
- The disciples took the literal meaning and interpreted it as bread (Matt.16:7). **Remember that the meaning is in the literal while the application is in the figure.**

The English word for leaven is derived from Latin. The Hebrew word is seor ( ) and the Greek word is zume ( ). Today, we would refer to leaven as yeast.

Israelites referred to it as fermented or sourdough. Its history is the Unleavened Bread of the Exodus and Passover and Last Supper and the Eucharist (Ex.12:15-19, 39; Deut.16:3; Luke 22:1, 7, 19-20; 1 Cor.11:23-26).

**2. A hypocatastasis figure of speech becomes more complicated when you have to interpret it from other languages and cultures like Hebrew, Greek, English, and the melting pot of America’s languages and cultures.**

Here are six examples of biblical hypocatastasis figures of speech.

- Leaven of Pharisees (Matt.16:12)
- Herod the fox (Luke 13:31-32)
- Dragon, Ancient serpent, Devil, and Satan (Rev.20:2)
- Destroy this temple (John 2:19)
- Savage dogs (Ps.22:16; Phil.3:2; Acts 20:29)
- Plowed with my heifer (Judges 14:18)

**3. We will examine our lesson text by the following five homiletical points (Matt.16:5-12).**

**Leaven** of Pharisees (Matt.16:5-6) Warning (2 commands) – forgot bread from feeding 4,000 (Matt.15:37)

**Literal** meaning (Matt.16:7) Reasonable interpretation of sight, not faith (2 Cor.5:7)

**Lesson** of faith (Matt.16:8-11a) Five questions and one rebuke! “eyes of heart need enlightening to divine truth” (Eph.2:18-19) – ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:13-15)

**Rebuke** – “Men of Little faith (oligopistos)” – failure at application point of the faith cycle (2 Cor.5:7)  
[believing is seeing and not seeing is believing]

**Leaven** of Pharisees (Matt.16:11b) – second warning (1 command)

**Legalistic** teaching of Pharisees (Matt.16:12) – “Then (tote) they understood (suniemi / a.a.ind).” Notice the effort it took by Jesus as the teacher and the disciples as students of the word of God to get it.

**4. Jesus was in constant conflict with the legalistic teachings of the Tradition of the Elders (Matt.15:1-9)**

“And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?” (Matt.15:3)

- Salvation by works rather than by grace (Acts 15:10-11; Eph.2:8-9; Gal.1:6-8; 2:16).
- Receiving the Holy Spirit by works rather than by grace (Gal.3:1-3).
- Spirituality by works rather than grace (Gal.4:9-11; 5:1-2, 6-9; Col.2:8, 16-19).

“A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.” (Gal.5:9)

**5. In the following four passages, leaven is used as a figure of speech as a corrupting evil against the truth of God’s word. Leaven is used to show the way false evil teaching works corruption.**

- **Matt.12:5-12** – leaven of Pharisees – corrupt evil teachings of Pharisees (Matt.23) – lawyers (nomikos) (Luke 7:37-54) [woes]
- **Mark 8:15-18** – leaven of Pharisees and Herodians – corrupt evil of religion and state against Christianity. (Matt.22:15-22; John 11:47-53; Mark 3:6) [plotted together to murder Jesus]
- **Gal.5:1, 6-9** – leaven of works salvation and spirituality (Acts 15:10-11) - **note the proverb**
- **1 Cor.5:1, 6-8** – leaven of cultural immorality (phallic cult of Corinth) – **note the proverb** – **clean out** (ekkathairo / a.a.impv.2pl) **the old** (palaios) **leaven** – **for a new** (neos) [in respect to time] (Heb.12:24) **lump** (Eph.4:22-24) **of sincerity and truth.**

**This shows the powerful influence of language, culture and apostate religion upon believer’s process of thinking:**

**“Your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.”  
(1 Cor.2:5; Matt.16:21-23)**

**BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF LEGALISM**