Metaphor’s tenuous relationship with the academy goes back a long way. It was Plato who first articulated what everyone else was thinking – Metaphor is childish.¹ She need not be taken seriously. It’s ok to be polite to her in public, but she has nothing to offer in terms of networking potential. As soon as possible one should move on to more substantive conversations. Plato’s public dismissal was devastating to Metaphor’s career.²

With no office on campus and no hope of a tenure-track position, Metaphor did most of her work from the periphery, unnoticed by her colleagues in the Religious Studies Department.³ Students always enjoyed her classes and rated them highly, but she was not taken seriously by her peers. Metaphor was never invited to faculty meetings or to serve on committees. She was paid minimally – barely enough to stay engaged in academia. As the years wore on she toyed with the idea of giving up altogether and finding a job in journalism where her talents would be appreciated. But deep down inside she knew she had something to offer the religious studies department, and so she stuck around and kept agreeing to teach the classes no one else wanted, biding her time. Nobody said it to her face, but the unspoken opinion of her was shared by every member of the department – she simply did not have what it took to make a real contribution to scholarship. Her work lacked gravitas. She was dispensable, frivolous, not the sort of scholar one needed on the faculty.

Several years ago, when a job opened up due to the retirement of a senior German scholar, Heilsgegeschichte, Metaphor applied for the position. But the committee was dominated by source critics, who had already made up their mind that they needed another Continental scholar to replace their esteemed colleague, preferably an expert in biblical law. Consequently, Metaphor had no full-time job, and she was unlikely to get one as long as current views about her work prevailed.

Her breakthrough came unexpectedly. Unable to get a full-time position in Religious Studies, she ended up adjuncting for the Linguistics department. She was warmly welcomed by her colleagues, who seemed fascinated by her work, crowding around her at the coffee maker and asking her questions. Each semester they added to her load until she was teaching full-time. Rubbing shoulders with linguists opened up new avenues for her to develop her craft. With no

¹ Bonnie Howe, Because You Bear This Name: Conceptual Metaphor and the Moral Meaning of 1 Peter, BIS 81 (Boston: Brill, 2006), 13–21. The legacy of classical Greek scholars, especially Plato, was a largely negative opinion of metaphor and an inattention to the cognitive processes that produce and recognize metaphor.
² To be fair, Aristotle allowed that an appropriate metaphor could be effective rhetorically. On Aristotle’s legacy, see Andrea L. Weiss, Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel, VTSup 107 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1–10.
³ For those already wondering if this introduction is autobiographical, it is not. However, it may have been inspired by a true story, subsequently infused with imagination.
Imes, 2

stigma dogging her, Metaphor was free to engage fully in rigorous discussion with other experts. Neuroscientists and comparative linguists collaborated with her on conference papers. They agreed that Metaphor was not merely frivolous, but had something substantive to offer. Her days of living in the shadows were over. People looked to Metaphor to help them understand both language and cognition. Her expertise was just what was needed to make sense of conundrums in these other fields. They agreed that Metaphor was not merely frivolous, but had something substantive to offer.

Gradually word got out. Metaphor was the rising star in the Linguistics department. Older members of the Biblical Studies faculty paid no attention, of course, but some of the newer hires, those lacking institutional history, began hanging out with Metaphor and asking questions.⁴ By then it was widely rumored that Metaphor had branched out from a focus on explicit poetic expressions, leaving behind the old “A is B” formula.⁵ Emboldened by her new associates, Metaphor now claimed to have the key to explain patterns of cognition that left only traces in texts. Now, in the right context, one could have just A or just B and claim that Metaphor was responsible. With just a word, Metaphor triggers whole “networks of associations.”⁶

Those specializing in Hebrew poetry were among the first to be seen publically fraternizing with Metaphor.⁷ This was unremarkable, since everyone knows that poetry thrives on figurative language. Their association was tolerated; both poetry and metaphor were still largely seen as “ornamental.” However, Psalms scholars began to notice the way metaphors provide organizational structure to a given psalm, linking stanzas that form critics had ascribed to different Sitz im Leben.⁸ Fruitful work was done on mixed metaphors, conceptual blending, metonymy, and synecdoche. This was gratifying, but Metaphor was not content to limit her association to experts in Hebrew poetry. She was convinced that these patterns of cognition were endemic to ordinary speech in genres across the spectrum. And she began to say so.

Before long, scholars of biblical narrative decided to try out her approach. New explorations were begun in the role of metaphorical language in biblical stories. New

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⁴ For many biblical scholars, the gateway to metaphor theory was George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). However, some criticize Lakoff and Johnson for focusing almost exclusively on cognition at the expense of linguistic expressions. See Weiss, *Figurative Language*, 15–17.

⁵ As expressed, for example, by E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968), 735.


⁸ E.g., Gray, *Psalm 18 in Words and Pictures*. 
dissertations popped up on certain key metaphors, such as “God is king.” These metaphors were identified, collated, and traced through various corpora. By this time the stigma of such work had largely faded, but a few holdouts in the department still viewed Metaphor’s theories as a fad. The experts in biblical law were the most adamant about the dangers of Metaphor’s approach. After all, they insisted, now that Metaphor has fraternized with Cognitive Linguists, she tends to see figurative language everywhere. She overstates her own importance and the explanatory power of her theories. No one can read the minds of ancient authors. To suggest otherwise – to suggest that modern interpreters can discern the cognition of biblical writers – is nothing short of preposterous.

Truth be told, few experts in biblical law ever invited Metaphor to explain her approach. If they had, they would know that she is just as committed to textual evidence as they are. Far from guesswork, she traces patterns of evidence in the text itself for indications of cognitive associations. Metaphor regrets that these scholars have conflated her work with the psychoanalysis of an earlier generation. She has no interest in that discipline. In actuality, Metaphor has more in common with the staunch defenders of the historical-critical method than they realize.

A colloquium sponsored by the Dean of the Arts and Sciences was just announced. It will take place just before the holidays. Metaphor has decided to shoot the moon. Rather than wait around for her detractors to warm up to her work, Metaphor will face them head on. She realizes now that they are too set in their ways to allow themselves to be influenced by those who work in poetry or even narrative. She’s preparing a paper on conceptual metaphor in biblical law. If she can make her case in law that metaphor is not just for show, but is indispensable to meaning, she will have removed the final barrier to the acceptance of her theory in the guild.

She plans to introduce her audience of biblical scholars to the work of Zoltán Kövecses, her favorite colleague from the Linguistics department at a Hungarian University, who demonstrates the ubiquity of conceptual metaphor in everyday communication. According to Kövecses, metaphor is an unavoidable part of the communicative process in ordinary conversations. Conceptual metaphors operate systemically and systematically, so that the potential motivations for a given expression may be reliably assessed. Without this recognition

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12 While their work has emphasized comparative study, examining the relationship between biblical and ANE laws, her work is thoroughly inductive, tracing patterns of language use in biblical texts.

of metaphoricity, something is irretrievably lost. The rhetorical contribution of a metaphor cannot be fully conveyed with non-metaphorical language because metaphors configure the way we think and act and continue to generate new related expressions. An overly concrete reading of a metaphor dissolves the creative tension and distorts the meaning.  

Her method is simple. First, she carefully re-read the Decalogue and Book of the Covenant in Hebrew, identifying metaphorical language—words or expressions that are more than the sum of their parts, allowing readers “to understand one domain of experience in terms of another.” Next she grouped related expressions together, beginning with straightforward examples of synecdoche and metonymy before utilizing Kövecses’ more sophisticated categories of conceptual metaphor: orientational, ontological, and structural. Finally, she chose the clearest examples of each type of metaphor to share with her stubborn audience. The salient points of her findings are presented in this series of tables, with highlighted lines receiving more detailed treatment.

Table 1 gives examples of simple metonymy (where one entity stands for another in the same domain) and synecdoche (where a part stands for the whole) signaled by an ellipsis. An ellipsis is a shorthand expression where a constituent syntactical item is left out and readers must infer it from the context. In each of these examples, the adjective stands for the implied noun that it modifies. Many other examples of ellipsis could be cited, but these clearly involve metonymy.

| 20:5b–6 | אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָא פֹקֵד עֲוֹן אָבֹת עַל־בָנִיםעַל־שִׁלֵּשִׁים וְעַל־רִׁבֵּעִיםלְשֹנְאָי וְעֹשֶה חֶסֶדלְאֲלָפִיּוֹתלְאֲלָפִיּוֹת שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה לָאֹהֶל שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה לָאֹהֶל שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה לָאֹהֶל שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה לָאֹהֶל שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה L אֵל נַפִּילָה שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה L אֵל N | I am YHWH your God, a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the parents on the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who hate me, but showing covenant faithfulness to thousands of generations? to those who love me and who keep my commands. | ADJECTIVE STANDS FOR (IMPLIED) NOUN |

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15 Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, 117.
16 Kövecses, Metaphor, 37.
17 Are these thousands living concurrently, showing the extent of YHWH’s love to the current generation? Or thousands of generations in contrast to just three or four that receive his punishment? Either interpretation is possible.
18 Cognitive linguists conventionally render conceptual metaphors using the formula A IS B or A AS B, and conceptual metonymy as A STANDS FOR B or A FOR B. These are not ontological statements, but rather the explicit identification of source and target domains for an unstated but verifiably-present metaphorical concept. The use of small capital letters signals this. Conceptual metaphors based on physiological experience often occur across cultural boundaries, which explains why many of the conceptual metaphors and metonymies mentioned below are also discussed in Kövecses, Metaphor, 195–213.
Silver he shall return to its owner, and the **dead [animal]** shall be his. If the bull of a person injures the bull of his neighbor and it dies, then they shall sell the living bull, and they shall divide **its silver**; and they shall also divide **the dead [bull]**. Or if it is known that a bull was given to goring formerly, but its owner has not guarded it, he shall surely pay bull for bull, and **the dead [animal]** shall be his.

If during the burglary the thief is found, and is struck so that he dies, there is no **blood[guilt]** for him. If the sun has risen on him, there is **blood[guilt]** for him.

If a person allows a field or vineyard to be grazed by sending his cattle out so that it grazes in another’s field, from **the best [produce]** of his field and **the best [produce]** of his vineyard he shall repay.

In each example in Table 1, the ellipsis is easily filled by readers. The first example is perhaps the most challenging, but there the mention of the transmittal of consequences from parents to children indicates that “generations” is the missing noun. While the second ellipsis leaves open two possibilities—are these “thousands” of “generations”? or “thousands” living concurrently?—the point is still clear: **YHWH’s חֶסֶד far exceeds YHWH’s פֹקֵד עֲוֹן, or accountability for sin.**

Table 2 highlights simple examples of metonymy or synecdoche that do not involve ellipsis.

### Table 2: Simple Synecdoche and Metonymy

| 20:4a, 5a | **לֹא תִּשְׁתָּחְוֶה לָהֶם** לָא תְּעָבְדוּם | You shall not make for yourselves an idol . . . you yourselves shall not **bow down to them**, nor serve them | synecdoche; SINGLE ACTION STANDS FOR DISPOSITION; PART FOR WHOLE; BOW DOWN ➢ WORSHIP |

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19 It could be argued that “bloodguilt” is simply part of the semantic range of **דָּמִים**. See **DCH 2:441–2**. Alternatively, **דָּמִים** could stand for “bloodguilt” as a conventionalized conceptual metaphor. Other examples of this meaning include Deut 22:8 and Hos 12:14.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20:10</td>
<td>לא תעשו כל מלאכה א海运 יגמך, nor your son or your daughter, your male servant or your female servant, nor your livestock, nor your foreigner who is within your gates</td>
<td>You shall not do any work, you, nor your son or your daughter, your male servant or your female servant, nor your livestock, nor your foreigner who is within your gates</td>
<td>synecdoche; PART FOR WHOLE; BOUNDARY STANDS FOR CONTAINED AREA; GATE ➢ PROTECTION; LOCATION STANDS FOR SOCIAL STATUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21:8</td>
<td>אם רעה בתעפיה עשת בעֵינֵּי את אדוניה</td>
<td>If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master</td>
<td>synecdoche; ORGAN FOR PERCEPTION; SIGHT FOR JUDGMENT; EYES ➢ JUDGMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21:10</td>
<td>אם אישה יקח לה שארהו כסוע לה עונתה לותר אף עלennifer</td>
<td>If he takes another [wife] for himself, her food, her covering, and her marital rights he shall not diminish.</td>
<td>synecdoche; SAMPLE ARTICLE STANDS FOR ALL ARTICLES OF CLOTHING; COVERING ➢ ALL CLOTHING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21:18–19</td>
<td>ויקים אנשים והכין איש את רעויו או את אשתו ובא בלבא ומדת ינקום ינקום אך אם יומע או יומיא יקום כיוו הוא</td>
<td>If persons dispute and a person strikes his neighbor with a stone or with a fist, but he (or she) does not die, but falls to bed; if he gets up and walks around in the street with his cane, then the one who struck him shall be acquitted; only let him give [provision for] his cessation (of work) that he may heal completely.</td>
<td>synecdoche; MEMBER OF A GROUP STANDS FOR THE WHOLE GROUP; STONE ➢ ANY WEAPON; FIST ➢ ANY BODY PART; idioms: “FALLS TO BED” ➢ BECOMES BEDRIDDEN; “IN THE STREET WITH HIS CANE” ➢ PUBLICLY WITH (OR WITHOUT) ASSISTANCE; ellipsis; SABBATH ➢ CONVALESCENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21:20–21</td>
<td>אם איש ושותף י킬ו אנשא או אשתו שבשא והמדת ינקום ינקום אך אם יומע או יומיא יקום כיוו הוא</td>
<td>If a person strikes their male servant or their female servant with a rod, and he dies under their hand, the person shall surely be avenged. However, if (after) a day or two days he stands up, he shall not be avenged, for he is his silver. 20</td>
<td>synecdoche; ROD ➢ ANY WEAPON OR OTHER OBJECT USED FOR HARM; metonymy; MATERIAL CONSTITUTING AN OBJECT FOR AN OBJECT; SILVER ➢ MONETARY VALUE ➢ PERSONAL POSSESSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21:35</td>
<td>אם בר חטיוו של רעהו ומדת ינקום ינקום את חטיוו הם יחלק נבעו ויחלכו את חטיוו הם יחלק נבעו ויחלכו</td>
<td>If the bull of a person injures the bull of his neighbor and it dies, then they shall sell the living bull, and they shall divide its silver; and they shall also divide the dead [bull].</td>
<td>metonymy; MATERIAL FOR SYMBOLIC VALUE; SILVER ➢ AMOUNT EARNED FROM SALE; ellipsis; ADJECTIVE STANDS FOR IMPLIED NOUN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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20 “Silver” is a conventionalized way to refer to money in this corpus. See 21:11, 34, 35; 22:16, 24.
If the animal is truly torn in pieces, let him bring a witness. Evidences of metonymy; witness ➔ evidence (i.e. the torn animal carcass), unless it refers to a person who has seen the evidence.

Anyone who lies with an animal shall surely be put to death. Euphemism, synecdoche; lie down ➔ sexual intercourse.

The first highlighted example in Table 2, taken from the Decalogue (20:4a, 5a), prohibits “bowing down” to pagan images. This is a straightforward example of synecdoche where part stands for the whole. In this case, the act of bowing down represents the entire range of possible activities that show allegiance to foreign gods. It is not just bowing that is problematic; sacrifices, divination, verbal acclamation and veneration of any sort are also implicated. A single action (“bowing down”) stands for any form of worship that might be offered. This one action represents any form of loyalty, inward or outward, toward other gods. That this is the case is confirmed by the second part of the prohibition, “or serve them,” indicating that any expression of allegiance is inappropriate.

The second highlighted example in Table 2, from Exod 21:35, illustrates metonymy. Here “its silver” stands in for the amount earned from the sale of the living bull. In this case, the material (“silver”) is a conventionalized way to refer to its purchase value (a synecdoche of sorts). Given the narrative setting of the Book of the Covenant, we would not expect a standardized system of coinage yet, but rather crude silver, weighed to represent the appropriate value. However, to refer to “its silver” in this context is clearly metonymical. The bull has no silver; this is the silver gained by selling it. Notice that the last line of Exod 21:35 includes a synecdoche by ellipsis, where “the dead” refers to the dead bull, but the noun modified is only implied. Again the adjective stands in for the noun.

A subcategory of synecdoche is synecdoche of gendered language, where a male noun or pronoun appears but the context seems to indicate that the law applies to all Israelites—that is, it is not gender specific. At least twenty examples occur in this corpus, but a single example of each type will suffice.

**Table 3: Synecdoche of Gendered Language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Rhetorical Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20:5</td>
<td>אני יהוה אלקיך הגוי, אני חטאני בנים על אבותי</td>
<td>I am YHWH your God, a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the parents on the children</td>
<td>member of a group stands for the whole group; ontological metaphor; action as an object; punishment/sin as a burden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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22 “Son” or “sons” (בֶּן) occurs in the following passages with a gender-neutral referent: 20:22; 21:5; 22:23; 23:12.
In these examples, a male noun is used—father, son, man—in a statement that clearly refers to all people. Women were not exempt from laws against murder or from the effects of their parents’ sin. If you argued the semantic range of these grammatically male nouns and pronouns includes a gender neutral meaning in certain contexts, I would agree, as would the Committee on Bible Translation, responsible for the updated NIV translation, released in 2011. In that case this becomes a category to illustrate a grammatical synecdoche that has become conventionalized.  

Kövecses organizes conceptual metaphors into three broad categories—orientational, ontological, and structural—that often appear in combination. By “orientational” he means that a metaphor lends coherence to a target concept by using “basic human spatial orientations, such as up-down, center-periphery, and the like.” For example, in English we think of up as good and down as bad. This up-down orientation produces endless possibilities of expression: Things are looking up; I’m down and out; She’s climbing the corporate ladder; His health has taken a downturn; They took the high road; He’s flying high. Notice that the resulting expressions often signal this conceptual metaphor by means of a single word, rather than the complete “A is B.” Furthermore, in each of these English examples, a second conceptual metaphor is in play. “Corporate ladder” refers to the organizational hierarchy of a corporation. “Taking the high road” conceives of life as a journey. Similarly, in the Decalogue and Book of the Covenant, all the orientational metaphors appear in combination with other types (see Table 4), resulting in complex instances of metaphor.

“Ontological” metaphors provide concreteness by which we may talk about abstract concepts such as emotions, ideas, or activities. Personification and anthropomorphism are ontological metaphors. As soon as something abstract is conceived as an object (or something nonhuman is conceived as human), structural metaphors may be employed.

A “structural” metaphor maps the structure of a source domain onto a target domain. Talking about organizational hierarchy by using the concrete image of a ladder offers a simplified way to conceive of that hierarchy, where upward movement is expected and encouraged. Structural metaphors offer the highest level of specificity and overall conceptual organization.

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23 “Man” or “men” (אִישָׁ) occurs in the following passages with a gender-neutral referent: 21:14, 16, 18, 20, 26, 33, 35, 37; 22:4, 6, 9, 13.
25 Kövecses, Metaphor, 40.
26 Ibid., 39.
First, I will consider passages utilizing a combination of orientation and ontological metaphors. See Table 4.

Table 4: Combination of Orientational and Ontological Metaphors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Script</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Metaphors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 22:7 [8 ET] | אם לא ימצא הַגַּנָּב וְנִקרְב בַּעַל־הַבַּיִת אִם־לֹא שָלַח יָדוֹ בִּמְלֶאכֶת רֵעֵהוּ | If the thief is not found, then the master of the house must come near to God, (to determine) if he did not stretch out his hand on his neighbor’s property. | Personification; PROXIMITY AS SUBMISSION; metonymy; ACT OF REACHING ➔ THEFT

| 23:2 | לא תִּהְיֶה אַחֲרֵּי רַבִּים לְרָעֹת וְלֹא תַעֲנֶה עַל־רִב לִ_stdout | You shall not follow after many to do evil. You shall not answer a dispute to turn aside after many to divert [justice]. | ACTION IS FORWARD MOVEMENT; COLLUSION AS FOLLOWING; WICKEDNESS IS A WRONG PATH; ellipsis; JUSTICE IS STRAIGHT

| 23:6–7a | לא תַטֶה מִׁשְפַּט אֶבְיֹנְךָ בְרִיבוֹ מִׁדְבַּר־שֶקֶר תִׁרְחָק | You must not turn aside the justice of your needy one in his dispute. From matters of falsehood keep distant. | JUSTICE IS STRAIGHT; FORWARD IS PROGRESS; STRAIGHT IS GOOD; synecdoche; PROXIMITY IS ASSOCIATION

Exodus 23:6–7a evokes the common conceptual metaphor of LIFE IS A JOURNEY with the more specific idea of justice concretized as a straight path. When someone who lacks social currency is engaged in a formal dispute, or רַבִּים, the Israelite is responsible to ensure that justice is not obstructed or diverted. To conceive of a dispute in this way places the burden of responsibility on one who does not naturally have a vested interest in a favorable outcome for the poor. The image is a hard one to shake. Have I stood in the way of justice? The ontological metaphor of the path is combined with the orientational idea of FORWARD MOVEMENT AS PROGRESS and with STRAIGHT AS GOOD. The instruction continues by exhorting the hearer to keep distant from falsehood. By concretizing falsehood as an object to be given wide berth, the instruction becomes more potent. The Israelites were not just to be truthful, but they were to avoid any association at all with falsehood.28

Two types of anthropomorphmetaphors are also evident in this corpus, those implying YHWH’s corporeal location and those portraying YHWH’s corporeality, that is, YHWH’s human senses or capabilities. The former, showcased in Table 5, involves a combination of ontological and orientational metaphors, while the latter, reserved for Table 8, involves ontological and structural metaphors.

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27 See also verse 10. In other contexts, the same action refers to bringing harm to someone else. See Exod 24:11, 1 Sam 26:9, and Esther 8:7 (the latter two are followed by ב- prefix).

28 See also Deut 16:14; 24:17; 27:19. The metaphor is even more explicit in Prov 17:23: “to divert the path of justice” (לְהַטֹּת אָרְחוֹת מִשְפָּט).
All four of the examples in bold in Table 5 imply God’s physical presence in the tabernacle. And while no form is prescribed for YHWH there, all other entities are in physical proximity to him. Other, rival gods are “opposite” YHWH—their images (here אֱלֹהִים clearly refers to the physical פֶסֶל metonymically; cf. 20:4) are not to be given a place in the sanctuary itself or across the courtyard in a rival shrine (20:3). In fact, this statement may be read metonymically as prohibiting the worship of other gods in any location. Physical proximity is a conceptual tool for indicating that these gods are rivals to YHWH; accordingly, they are prohibited from the sphere of cultic worship. However, the next examples clarify that images of other gods are prohibited whether in the tabernacle or in private homes (20:23). Those coming to worship at the tabernacle are considered to be “before” YHWH (23:15, 17), perhaps even “before the face of” YHWH (23:15).

A further example of conceptual metaphor is evident in 23:15, where physical possession of an unspecified object stands for the bringing of an offering or sacrifice in worship. Here the

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29 YHWH’s physical location is also implied in Exod 20:22 (“from the heavens I have spoken to you”), 20:24 (“I will come to you”), and potentially 22:28–29 (“you shall give me”). In Exod 21:6 and 22:7 אלהים may be translated either “God” or “judges.” If the former, these are further instances of anthropomorphism, or a metonymy representing the place where God is worshipped.

30 DCH 6:716. HALOT 2:160 says to read רא, as qal here and elsewhere: “see my face.” DCH 6:716 reads רוא, as niphal, “appear.” Other occurrences of niphal רא + פנים without a preceding preposition include Exod 34:20; Isa 1:12; and Ps 42:3 (some mss qal; DCH 7:358).

31 DCH 6:716.
generic category stands metonymically for the specific subcategory. The possession of any object would not satisfy this requirement; the point is for worshippers to bring the requisite offering when they come to the tabernacle.

Numerous examples of ontological metaphor appear in the Decalogue and Book of the Covenant. To reiterate, “ontological” metaphors provide concreteness by which we may talk about abstract concepts such as emotions, ideas, or activities. In Table 6, judgments, values, and words are treated as physical objects that can be moved. In some cases, objects are further personified, giving them agency (see “fire” and “bribes” in 22:5 and 23:8).

**Table 6: Ontological Metaphor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21:1</td>
<td>Now these are the judgments which you must set before them&lt;sup&gt;32&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>JUDGMENTS AS OBJECTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21:30</td>
<td>If a ransom is set upon him, then he must give for the redemption of his life according to whatever is set upon him.</td>
<td>RANSOM AMOUNT AS OBJECT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:5</td>
<td>If fire breaks out, and reaches thorns so that stacks of grain or the standing grain or the field are consumed; the one who caused the burning to burn must surely repay.</td>
<td>personification; FIRE AS A HUNGRY ANIMAL; metonymy; CONTAINER FOR CONTENTS; FIELD ➞ CROPS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:8</td>
<td>the matter of these two must come before the judges...</td>
<td>DISPUTE AS OBJECT; PRESENCE AS ATTENTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:10a</td>
<td>the oath of YHWH must be between the two of them</td>
<td>OATH AS OBJECT; RELATIONSHIP AS PHYSICALLY MEDIATED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23:1</td>
<td>You must not bear empty hearsay. Do not set your hand with the wicked to be a violent witness.</td>
<td>HEARSAY AS AN OBJECT; LIFE IS A JOURNEY; WORDS AS CONTAINERS; FULL IS RELIABLE, EMPTY IS UNRELIABLE; synecdoche; HAND STANDS FOR THE WILL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23:8</td>
<td>A bribe you must not take, for the bribe blinds the clear-sighted and distorts the words of the righteous.</td>
<td>Personification; SIGHT IS UNDERSTANDING; BLINDNESS IS DECEPTION; TRUTH IS STRAIGHT; FALSEHOOD IS TWISTED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<sup>32</sup> This could refer to the written record instructions, which would be less metaphorical (Exod 24:4, 12).
Exodus 23:1 illustrates well how a relatively simple statement involves complex metaphors. The Hebrew נשא, which usually means “bear” or “carry,” is paired with an intangible object, a “thing heard” (שמע; i.e., “hearsay”). The act of carrying implies forward movement, which faintly evokes the concept of LIFE AS A JOURNEY. The fact that the hearsay is described as being “empty” (שוא), draws on the idea of WORDS AS CONTAINERS. An empty container implies that the rumor lacks substance; it is false or unreliable.

The second statement in Exod 23:1 is difficult to decode. This is the only case in the Bible where the verb ישה is collocated with the object יד. The hand functions as a synecdoche for an expression of the will to conspire against justice.

Table 7: Structural Metaphor

| 20:2 | אני יהוה ваш Господь, я вывел вас из страны Египета, из дома рабов. | ИСТОЧНИКЪ ИСТОЧНИКОВ; ЧАСТЬ ДЛЯ ЦЕЛОГО; СЛУЖБА КАК КЛАСС
|      | A country is a domicile; part for whole; member of a category for the category; slavery as a building. |

Table 7 offers a single instance of structural metaphor, whereby the abstract concept of slavery is portrayed using the more concrete image of a house. To refer to slavery in this way activates other mappings from the source domain (a house) to the target domain (slavery). Just as the walls of a house confine its inhabitants, so the Hebrews were confined in Egypt under the institution of slavery. YHWH’s rescue from this predicament involves “bringing them out” (לאﹶאנךא), suggesting again that they have been physically confined inside. The apposition of the phrase “house of slaves” to the phrase “land of Egypt” makes the Hebrews’ predicament all the more vivid. YHWH brought them out of a land, a land which could further be called a “house of slaves.” Both phrases begin with the partitive מין, underscoring their identification: Egypt is the “house of slaves.”

Table 8: Combination of Structural and Ontological Metaphor involving YHWH’s Corporeality

| 22:22–23a | If you indeed humiliate him, so that he truly cries out to me, I will surely hear his cry; and my nose will burn and I will kill you with the sword. | YHWH HAS A HUMAN BODY; HEARING IS ACKNOWLEDGMENT; ANGER IS FIRE; PART STANDS FOR THE WHOLE: NOSE ➔ YHWH; YHWH USES HUMAN INSTRUMENTS |

33 The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew (8:342) defines the expression ךת יָד as “join hands with,” glossing one idiom with another.
YHWH’s statement in Exod 22:22–23, presented in Table 8, offers a concentrated example of anthropomorphism, portraying YHWH as hearing, burning with anger, and using an instrument to mete out judgment. All three statements rely on the conceptual metaphor YHWH HAS A HUMAN BODY (with ears, a nose, and hands). YHWH’s “burning nose” further relies on conceptual metaphor — ANGER IS FIRE — as well as a metonymy that associates the nose with anger and a synecdoche where the nose stands for all of YHWH. This vivid language is provoked by potential mistreatment of foreigners, widows, and fatherless children (22:20–21). The poignancy of these metaphors underscores the seriousness with which YHWH considers these infractions of covenant law. Any Israelite who takes advantage of the most vulnerable members of society risks lethal divine rage. Would YHWH wield the sword? Or would YHWH compel another nation to do it. Either way, the statement is metaphorical.

Table 9: Combination of Structural and Ontological Metaphor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20:7</th>
<th>You must not bear the name of YHWH your God in vain, for YHWH will not acquit the one who bears his name in vain.</th>
<th>PLACING THE NAME IS CLAIMING OWNERSHIP; ELECTION IS BRANDING; OBEDIENCE IS A JOURNEY; DIVINE JUDGMENT AS A COURT CASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>לֹאָ֔תְּנַשְׁא֔ אֱלֹהֶיךָ עֵ֑נִיָּם יְהוָ֑ה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לָ֖א יְנַקָּה יְהוָֽה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶֽׁר־יִׁשָּא֖ אֶת־שְׁמוֹ לַשָּׁוְאֽו</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 presents an example combining both structural and ontological metaphor. We’ll spend the rest of our time considering this example, as a wide range of interpretations has been proposed through the centuries—is it a prohibition of magical practices? False oaths? Pronunciation of the divine name? worship without sacrifice? False claims of authority? Proper understanding of this passage depends upon a recognition of the conceptual metaphors that underlie it. In my 2016 dissertation, I proposed that Exodus 20:7 exhibits metonymy embedded in metaphor, where NAME stands for YHWH’S CLAIM TO OWNERSHIP (declared at Sinai), which is then imagined via ontological metaphor as something physical to be carried. BEARING uses the metaphorical source domain of a JOURNEY to convey a charge to carry the object publicly. נשא usually implies forward movement, carrying something somewhere. The upshot is that the Israelites are to conduct themselves as befits YHWH’s own people. The command assumes that the divine NAME has been placed on the people to claim that they belong to YHWH, and that

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34 On YHWH “hearing,” see also 22:26 [27 ET]. Exodus 20:11 depicts YHWH engaged in the human-like activities of “making” and “resting.”
36 For a general discussion of this phenomenon, see Kövecses, Metaphor, 187–88.
37 If merely “exalting” the name was intended, the Hebrew.getSimpleName would have been more appropriate. Note the exclusively vertical dimension of SimpleName in DCH 7:441.
38 Unlike SimpleName (qal) never connotes exaltation (DCH 5:758) but often describes forward movement (DCH 5:763–65). See also appendix.
throughout the course of their lives they carry it. The command also assumes that Israel is legally responsible if they fail to bear the name well.\(^{39}\)

The nearest collocation of the terms \(יָשָׁה\) and \(שם\) in Exodus appear in the instructions for making the high priestly vestments. Aaron wore gems on his breastpiece inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes. He was to “bear their names” (וְנָשָּׁא אַהֲרֹן אֶת־שְמוֹתָם; Exod 28:12) before YHWH in the tabernacle as he went about his high priestly duties. Aaron also wore a gold medallion on his forehead inscribed with the divine name using the \(lamed\) inscriptionis (\(lamed\) + a proper name) indicating that he is “holy, belonging to YHWH” (כֹּסֶל לַיהוָה; Exod 28:36). His representative role is signaled by his garments. Likewise, the Israelites are a “kingdom of priests” (Exod 19:6), who are called “a people holy, belonging to YHWH” (עַם קָדוֹש אַתָּה לַיהוָה; Deut 7:6). Aaron embodies the vocation of the entire nation, making the comparison between his “bearing the names” and Israel’s “bearing YHWH’s name” fitting.

**BRANDING** is an appropriate source domain with which to describe this phenomenon for two reasons. First, the priestly blessing utilizes the language of physical branding to “put” \(שים\) YHWH’s name on the Israelites (Num 6:27).\(^{40}\) Note the ontological metaphor **NAME AS AN OBJECT**. Similarly, the Akkadian cognate to \(נָשָׁה\), \(našû\), was used to speak of “bearing” a brand.\(^{41}\) While the more common cluster of idioms related to “placing the name” \(נקרא שם על\) and \(לשוך שמו שם\) draws on the monumental tradition and usually evokes a stone inscription,\(^{42}\) “placing the name” on a person more naturally suggests a brand.

The origins of this conceptual metaphor lie in the ancient cultural practices of claiming ownership orally or by affixing one’s name to something — either by sealing it with an inscribed signet ring in wax or clay, by inscribing a stone monument, or, in the case of slaves, by branding. The “perceived structural similarity” between these various methods of claiming ownership facilitated the application of terms from one domain (physical) to another (oral) and triggered a network of metaphorical extensions and entailments.\(^{43}\)

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\(^{39}\) Although \(נקָה\) relates to the absolution of guilt, it is not a cultic word. It never appears in discussions of guilt and/or cleansing from sin in Leviticus, Ezekiel, or Chronicles, where one might expect it. Rather, \(נקָה\) involves moral innocence or blamelessness in a legal setting. The verb \(נקָה\) (44x) and its related adjective \(נָקָה\) (43x) can refer to freedom or exemption from the consequences of an oath (Gen 24:8, 41; cf. Josh 2:17–20). But the range of offenses that will or will not be exempt from punishment is broader than this. The LXX renders \(נקָה\) with καθαρίζω, which normally means “to cleanse,” but can also indicate moral purity or freedom from the guilt or defilement of sin. The sense differs slightly from Hebrew because legal connotations are absent. Instead, καθαρίζω emphasizes the stain of sin that must be subsequently washed away.

\(^{40}\) As noted by Bar-Ilan, “They shall put my name,” 24. In Gen 4:15, YHWH “put” \(שים\) a mark on Cain that others could see. Jacobs (“The Body Inscribed,” 9–12) compares \(.DrawString(0x2060, 0x2062) zwłaszc) to its Akkadian cognate \(šamātu\), which denoted the placing of a brand on a temple servant. See also Dougherty, *The Shirkûtu*, 78–91.

\(^{41}\) CAD 11:80, 86.

\(^{42}\) For a full exploration of these, see Sandra L. Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology: Lĕšakkôn Šēmô Šām in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002).

\(^{43}\) On this method, see Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 85. Kövecses (ibid., 325) explains, that the “potential entailments” of a given source domain naturally arise from prevailing knowledge about that domain. See also Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green, *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction* (Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum, 2006), 173.
Second, the mapping of the conceptual domain of BRANDING onto the conceptual domain of ELECTION highlights a systematic set of associations, with implications for how Israel’s election is conceived and expressed in terms of selection, ownership, loyal service, protection, and even representation. Branded slaves bore the name of their owner (whether human or divine) so that their social status was permanently and publicly conspicuous. Israel clearly conceives of YHWH as her new master. From servitude to the Egyptians, Israel has now entered the service of YHWH (Exod 20:2; Lev 25:42, 55). Reading Exod 20:7 in light of this conceptual metaphor with its associated inferences not only clarifies its meaning, but also brings it into conversation with related texts, which together contribute to a biblical theology of election.

Table 10: Conceptual Mapping of Election in Terms of Branding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concrete Source: BRANDING</th>
<th>Abstract Target: ELECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the branded</td>
<td>Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the brander</td>
<td>YHWH (or his priests)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the act of branding</td>
<td>the priestly blessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the brand</td>
<td>YHWH’s Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the social dynamic</td>
<td>the nations are aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the result</td>
<td>possession / loyal service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A related entailment of the metaphorical expression, *bear the name*, is that YHWH’s REPUTATION is at stake. This association is a natural result of two phenomena: (1) the potential for this association intrinsic to the concept of branding, especially with temple slaves, and (2) the idiomatic and/or metonymic use of NAME in both cases. While it would be illegitimate to suggest that every potential meaning of the lexeme יְשֵׁם is activated by any expression that contains יְשֵׁם, or that every occurrence of יְשֵׁם relates to these metaphors, I argue that interrelated meanings of יְשֵׁם may simultaneously influence a choice of idiom, making it especially fitting for a particular context. According to Kövecses, recent studies confirm that “the comprehension of metaphorical expressions . . . always takes place with the simultaneous activation of source domains,” even if that activation is subconscious. In this case, because YHWH’s NAME is the salient feature of a claim to ownership of the Israelites, biblical authors naturally chose to speak of Israel’s failure to obey YHWH as profaning the divine NAME (i.e., reputation), just as the failure to properly carry out cultic procedures would constitute a profaning of YHWH’s NAME in the temple on which the NAME had been placed. Each of these is an extension of the core conceptual metaphor, activated in various contexts by distinct idioms or linguistic expressions.

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To say ELECTION IS BRANDING is not to suggest that election actually involved physical branding, nor that election was universally or consistently construed as branding. It also does not imply that the connection between these domains was ever explicit. Instead, ELECTION IS BRANDING expresses a concept underlying and giving rise to a number of other linguistic expressions, which I have discussed in my dissertation, available in print from Eisenbrauns under the title “Bearing YHWH’s Name at Sinai: A Re-Examination of the Name Command of the Decalogue.” It is also physically evident in the high priestly medallion, which enables him to embody Israel’s status as belonging to YHWH.

שם נשא is an unconventional expression arising from the inherent uniqueness of the events at Sinai, motivated by a convergence of factors, including the revealed significance of YHWH’s name, the conventional idioms for expressing a claim of ownership, the recounting of a physical journey through the wilderness, and Israel’s formal entry into YHWH’s service. Because the metaphor OBEDIENCE IS A JOURNEY is highly conventionalized, it is difficult to conceive of the life of faith without reference to forward movement. This unique expression, נשא נשא, which accesses the journey metaphor (in part) is especially fitting since the literary setting for this command in Exodus is the retelling of the Israelites’ journey to Canaan, during which their obedience to YHWH involved traversing the wilderness in the “sight” of the nations. The wilderness narrative provided an arena in which the Israelites were clearly associated with YHWH and clearly in the purview of nations.

To think of election in these terms generates a field of associations (or entailments) and therefore expressions that would not otherwise be possible, such as profaning the name through immoral behavior or sanctifying the name through God-honoring behavior or being led in right paths “for his name’s sake” (Ps 23:4). How else could we account for these other expressions without acknowledging the structural conceptual metaphors OBEDIENCE AS A JOURNEY and ELECTION AS BRANDING or its corollary, NAME STANDS FOR REPUTATION?

Metaphorical expressions based on conceptual metaphor are powerful communicative devices, but they come with inherent risks. The potential for misunderstanding probably lies in inverse proportion to the semantic capital of a given metaphor; the more innovative the expression, the more thought-provoking, and also the most likely to be “missed.” The predilection toward connecting NAME with speech in the past is responsible for much of the misinterpretation of Exod 20:7—as a prohibition of oaths, pronunciation of the name or its use in magic. Proper recognition of the full range of possible ways that NAME functioned historically, including metonymic and metaphorical, allows us to apprehend its true sense in this passage and avoid the pitfalls of some of the more common interpretations.

47 On the conventionalization of metaphor, see Evans and Green, Cognitive Linguistics, 733–34.
48 This, too, is a metaphor: KNOWING IS SEEING, a subset of THE MIND IS THE BODY. The nations heard reports of Israel’s travels, but did not physically see them all transpire.
49 For example, Num 22:11.
To conclude, Metaphor’s foray into biblical law has demonstrated several things.

1. Conceptual metaphor is pervasive in biblical law. Well over one hundred examples could be cited in just these four chapters of Exodus, not counting the narrative frame.

2. Examples of conceptual metaphor include complex combinations of orientational, ontological, and structural metaphors, in addition to simple metonymy and synecdoche.

3. Some texts cannot be properly understood without conscious attention to metaphor. It is true, some forms of conceptual metaphor are so ubiquitous that a seasoned reader unconsciously processes and understands them. In other cases, interpreters must wrestle with the meaning. For these texts, much depends on the recognition of a metaphorical pattern that is somewhat foreign to English speakers. An overly ‘literal’ reading of such a text, without sensitivity to its metaphorical mode of expression, will result in missing the point entirely. Metaphor is clearly indispensable to meaning.50

   At least that’s what she thinks. Has she made her case?51

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51 Metaphor has ideas for further avenues of research. She’d like to extend her analysis to the Holiness Code of Leviticus and the Deuteronomic Torah, noting whether any consistent patterns or shifts occur in relation to the Decalogue and Book of the Covenant. She thinks it would be worthwhile to examine how the LXX handles each of these conceptual metaphors. Finally, Metaphor thinks someone ought to examine the history of interpretation—especially Jewish legal interpretation—for the passages highlighted by her research to find out whether metaphoricity has been given sufficient attention. I have already thoroughly addressed the Name Command in my dissertation, but some of Metaphor’s other examples merit deeper study as well.