

Understanding the Genres

The word "genre" refers to certain category of music or literature. Even within a broad classification such as, Fiction, one finds sub-categories, such as sci-fi, murder mystery, historical fiction.



- Each genre of literature requires a different approach to it
- The Bible is unique for the multiple types of literature found in it
- Our English Bibles are largely constructed according to genre
- Nearly every section or genre contains portions of poetry, parables and prophecy

The Genre Types in the Bible

Historical/Narrative/Exposition

Poetic Sections

Prophetic Sections

Parable Sections

1. **Historical, narrative, exposition sections are to be read _____**
 - An understanding of the historical setting is crucial
 - These sections often contain conversations and dialogue
 - This is the _____ where we find many commands and principles

2. **The prophetic sections are the most difficult to understand**
 - Figurative language is intended to _____ something and not be taken literal
 - Figures and symbolism are often _____ from other parts of the Bible
 - There are places where figurative language is directly understood (dreams)
Rev 1:1– things were "shown" and "signified" and must come to pass "shortly"
 - Use figurative interpretation when the literal becomes _____ (Mt 7:15; Jn 3:3-6; Rev 8:10-11)

Let the Context help you:

- Isa 14:12-15 is often used to describe Satan as a fallen angel (however, vs. 4 corrects that idea)
- Daniel 6 is commonly illustrated as a teenage Daniel in the lion's den (however, 5:31; 1:1; Jer 25:11-12 corrects that idea)

1. **Always keep the original _____ in mind** (the message was intended for them first)
 - some have reasoned that the Song of Solomon represents Jesus and the church. However, it would be more than a thousand years after it was written that the Jesus/church relationship became known. What was it to mean before that to the readers?
2. **Remember that God does not _____ Himself nor is He the author of _____** (1 Cor 14:33)
3. _____ **within a context is important**
 - don't go from literal to figurative within same setting
 - the 1,000 year reign (Rev 20:4)
 - follows Satan being tied up with a great chain (Rev 20:1)

3. Hebrew Poetry

Beyond the book of Psalms, many O.T. sections use Hebrew poetry (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, many of the prophets, Genesis 49, Exodus 15, Judges 5)

- Many English Bibles offset the text to identify it is poetic
- 1. Hebrew poetry is not structured like English poems
- 2. Poetry appeals to the whole of a person, including his emotions

Historical Account

Exodus 14:26-31 "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out with your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen." ²⁷ So Moses reached out with his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained. ²⁹ But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, and the waters *were like* a wall to them on their right and on their left. ³⁰ So the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses.

Poetic Account

Exodus 15:1-5 Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying: I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted; The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. ² The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him. ³ The LORD is a warrior; The LORD is His name. ⁴ Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has thrown into the sea; And the choicest of his officers are drowned in the Red Sea. ⁵ The waters cover them; They went down into the depths like a stone.

3. Much of the poetry is either in the form of prayers or songs that were sung to the Lord

4. Poetry, like figurative language is to represent or be illustrative.

- It is not to be taken literal (ex: Ps 23)
- The images are intended to mean something else

Types of Poetry:

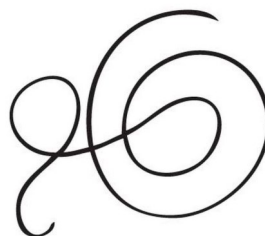
1. Parallelism (Ps 6:1-2, 20:1)
 - Antithetic Parallelism (Prov10:1)
 - Repetitive Parallelism (Ps 29:1; 147:13-20)

2. Progressive (Ps 1:1)

3. Extensive imagery (Ps 98:8; 148:3-4, 7-13)

4. Parables are intended to be _____

- A common and understood physical story points to a greater spiritual lesson
- Jesus was not the first to use parables, but was a master of them (Mk 4:30-34; Mt 13:11)
- It is important to understand the nature of the physical story before the spiritual lesson can be made
- Generally, there is one central point being made in a parable. A mistake is to try to make every detail mean something other than adding to the story.
- Parables are to be seen as representative of something else and comparing things
- Many of the parables were explained by Jesus



Memory Verse:

John 4:24

"God is a spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."