

# Telling His Stories: The Artistry of the Biblical Narrative

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**LOVE**

**“We gain grammatical knowledge when we understand the rules that govern a particular communicative act in a particular context.”**

*(Is There Meaning in This Text? Vanhoozer, 337)*

**"Literary genres, then are like language games. The interpreter's task is to determine which game (e.g. epic, history, chronology, prophecy, parable, etc) is being played: only then will the individual 'moves' make sense."**

*(Is There Meaning in This Text? Vanhoozer, 338)*

**“To invoke the notion of genre is to acknowledge a tacit agreement on how a text should be written and how it should be read. A text only communicates...if the reader is able to follow the rules of the literary game being played by the author.”**

*(Is There Meaning in This Text? Vanhoozer, 342)*

**"Genre creates a cooperative context, and generic competence requires that one attend both to the universal rules that govern all discourse as well as to the particular rules that govern particular literary forms."**

*(Is There Meaning in This Text? Vanhoozer, 343)*

**"An author intends a particular set of generic rules and intends the reader to recognize them."**

*(Is There Meaning in This Text? Vanhoozer, 347)*

# **WANTED: GOOD WOMAN**

Must Be Able To Clean,  
Cook, Sew, Dig Worms  
and Clean Fish.

Must Have Boat  
and Motor.

**PLEASE SEND PICTURE  
OF BOAT AND MOTOR!**



Exodus 20:1-17 Then God spoke all these words, saying, 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 "You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 5 "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. 7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. 8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. 12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you. 13 "You shall not murder. 14 "You shall not commit adultery. 15 "You shall not steal. 16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

# How can we tell that this is genre of law?

- Form (structure: poetic vs prose; narrative vs epistle; proverb vs psalms)
- Content (what is the text saying!)
- Function (How is the text intended to function? What is the Author/author's goal for the text?) (COTC, 11-12)

# Why different genres?

- "Stories and poems do more than inform our intellect. They also arouse our emotions, appeal to our will and stimulate our imagination in ways that a modern systematic theology cannot." (Longman, 26-27)

- **Deuteronomy 25:11-12** 11 "If *two* men, a man and his countryman, are struggling together, and the wife of one comes near to deliver her husband from the hand of the one who is striking him, and puts out her hand and seizes his genitals, 12 then you shall cut off her hand; you shall not show pity.

**HUMAN AUTHORSHIP +  
DIVINE REVELATION =  
UNIQUE GENRE**

- **Ecclesiastes 7:20** Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins.
- **John 8:24** "I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you shall die in your sins."

Psalm 73:1 *A Psalm of Asaph.*

Proverbs 1:1 The **proverbs** of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel

Song of Solomon 1:1 The **Song** of Songs, which is Solomon's.



# Why narrative at all?

- "The story... has been consciously assembled by the author for a calculated effect on the audience." (*Words of Delight*, Ryken, 85)

# Characteristics of Narrative

- **Scene**
- **Plot**
- **Conflict**
- **Point of View**

- **“One must carefully note that the point of view adopted by the narrator is the one that God would take, and therefore the one that we must give credence to as well.” (COTC, 74)**

# Characteristics of Narrative

- Scene
- Plot
- Conflict
- Point of View
- Characterization
- Setting
- Dialogue
- Structural Level

# Structural Level

- Gen 1:1-2:3 Power of God's word to create
- Gen 2:4-25 Power of God to provide for man
- Gen 3:1-24 Man's response to God's word and God's provision

# Characteristics of Narrative

- Scene
- Plot
- Conflict
- Point of View
- Characterization
- Setting
- Dialogue
- Structural Level
- Style

**"The story... has been consciously assembled by the author for a calculated effect on the audience."**

*(Words of Delight, Ryken, 85)*