

Intro: Before I begin this lesson, I want to link what I will be covering today with what Dad has been discussing over the last few weeks. Dad has been going through the importance of the Bible's inerrancy, explaining how we know that is true and how that belief affects other doctrines.

Believing inerrancy should also affect the way we read our Bibles. Unfortunately we probably often fail to read the Bible effectively because we have let it become too familiar.

Proposition:

I. General principles for reading Scripture

A. The influence of genre in the reading of Scripture.

1. Genre determines how a passage is interpreted
 - a. Genre is a technical term for the **type of literature** in which a passage is found.¹
 - b. Different genres are interpreted in different ways.
2. Scripture includes various types of genres.
 - a. Law
 - b. Poetry
 - c. Prophecy
 - d. Narrative
 - e. Parable
 - f. Epistle/Letter

B. Basic techniques for reading narrative

1. The most important tool in understanding biblical narrative is simply reading the passage.
2. Answering basic questions helps you understand the story's basic elements
 - a. Basic elements of narrative²
 - 1) Plot: the united sequence of events that follow a specific order³
 - 2) Characters: Often realistic and sinful
 - 3) Setting
 - a) May be geographical, time, social or historical
 - b) Provides the basic context within which plot and characters develop⁴

b. Basic questions

- 1) What, how: plot
- 2) Who: characters
- 3) Where, when: basic setting
- 4) Why: motivation/meaning**

Especially in the Old Testament, few passages provide explanatory statements by revealing what a person was thinking or why a particular principle was stated.

Although OT writers often do not provide a lot of explanatory statements or helpful dialogue, it is possible to understand why things happen in a Bible passage when we consider which details were selected by the author and how they are presented. Sometimes even details that are omitted from parallel passages are insightful in explaining the author's purpose or message.

3. Using this approach to understand Bible stories is not the only way to understand the meaning of every Scripture passage.
 - There are many other approaches:
 - History
 - Culture
 - Commentaries
 - Other study helps

II. An example study in Scriptural narrative (Judges 17)

A. Setting

1. Place: Ephraim
2. Time: Sometime after the death of Joshua, before the first judge Othniel (this is clarified in commentaries, deduced from the presence of Phineas in Jdg 20:28)
3. Scripture context: "there was no king in Israel"
 - a. 17:6
 - b. 18:1

c. 19:1

^{KJV} **Judges 19:1 ¶** And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah.

d. 21:25

^{KJV} **Judges 21:25 ¶** In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

B. Characters

1. Micah

- a. An Ephraimite (1)
- b. Parents unnamed (1)
- c. A thief (2)
- d. Wealthy (3)
- e. Owned a house of gods (5)
- f. Consecrated one of his sons to be priest (5)

2. Micah's mother

- a. Wealthy (2)
- b. Practicing some sort of black art [lit. *hurled an imprecation*] (2)
- c. Still acknowledges the true God [LORD denotes Yahweh or Jehovah] (2)
- d. Thanks Yahweh inappropriately (3)
- e. Gave her son silver to make into idols (4)

3. Young man

- a. From Bethlehem in Judah (7)
- b. A Levite (7)
- c. Seeking a place, lit. *wherever he might find* (8)

C. Plot

1. Scene 1: Micah and his mother (1-6)
 - a. The stolen silver returned (1-2)

- 1) Why would Micah return the silver to his mother when she had cursed its thief in his ears?
 - 2) How could Micah's mother thank Yahweh for the silver's return when her religious beliefs were so obviously flawed?
- b. The silver consecrated and made into an idol (3-4)
- 1) Why did Micah's mother dedicate the silver to the LORD to make an *idol*?
 - 2)
- c. The idols place in Micah's house (5-6)
2. Scene 2: Micah and the young man (7-13)
- a. The young man arrives (7-9)
 - b. The young man becomes Micah's priest (10-13)
- D. Message
1. This passage shows what happened when "there was no king in Israel."
 2. This passage supports the theme of the whole book that in those days "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

NOTES:

¹ Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral : A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Rev. and expanded, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 26.

² Ibid, 207.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, 209.