

Next Steps with the Bible

Going Deeper and Growing Stronger

Week 6: Understanding Biblical Poetry

For my thoughts,
are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,
declares the Lord.

For as the heavens are
higher than the earth,

so are my ways higher

than your ways and
my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9

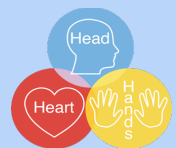




Understanding Biblical Poetry

1. Review of Week 6: Narrative

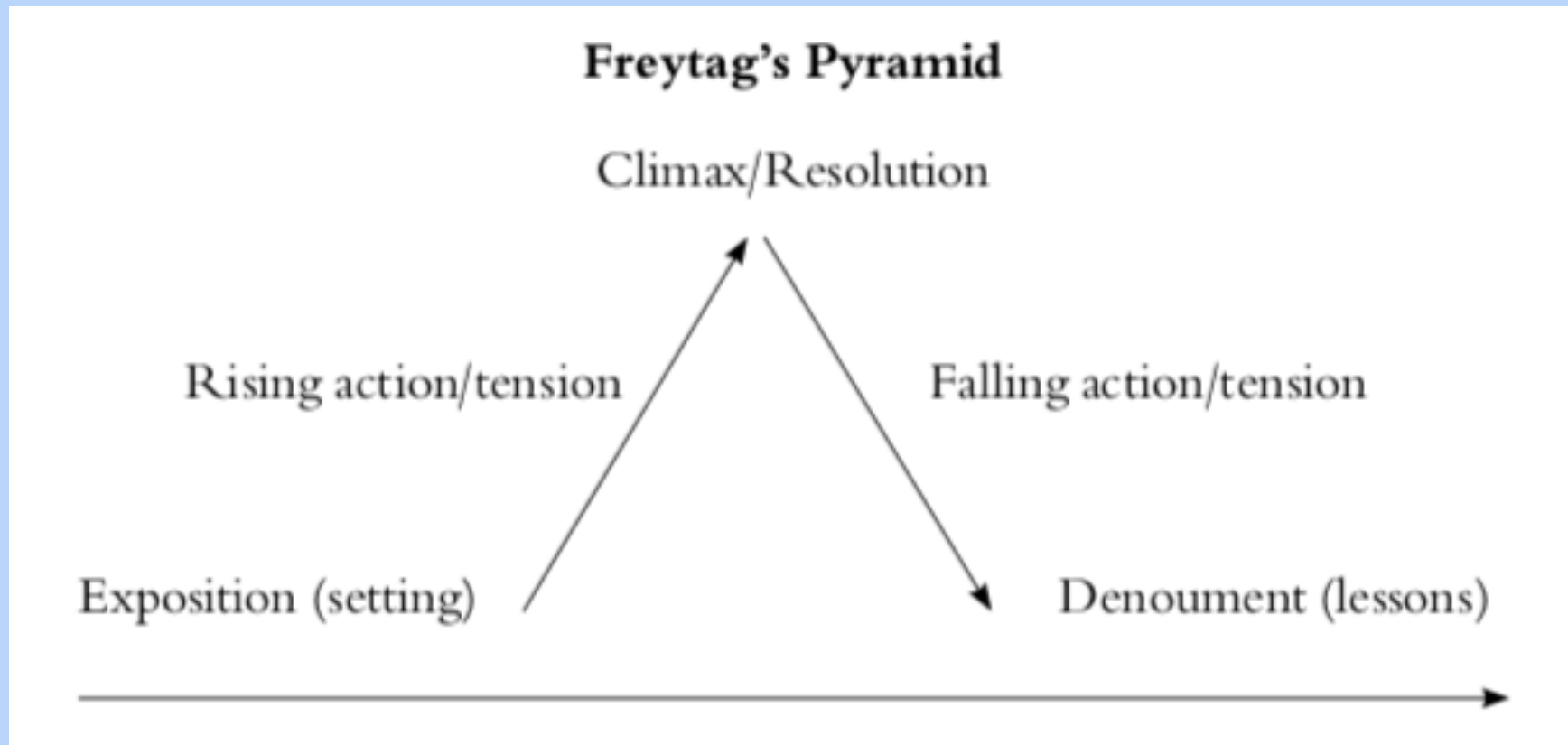
- Getting the **genre** right: *historical* fidelity, *literary* creativity, and *pastoral* sensitivity
- Reading as active, engaged **participants**, not passive, detached observers.
- **Plot** (comedy or tragedy), **characterization** (heroes and villains), and **point of view**
- OT narrative and Jude 11





Understanding Biblical Narrative

5. “The Plot Thickens”: A Common Pattern





Understanding Biblical Narrative





Understanding Biblical Poetry

2. What's the diff between prose and poetry?

- **Prose** is simple, straightforward, ordinary, unimaginative.

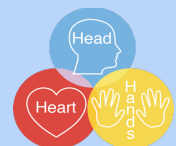
The Edmund Fitzgerald was loaded with 26,000 tons of iron ore when she sank in a bad storm on November 10, 1975.

- **Poetry** is imaginative, creative, evocative.

With a load of iron ore 26,000 tons more than the Edmund Fitzgerald weighed empty,

That good ship and true was a bone to be chewed when the gales of November came early. (Lightfoot)

- Without **figures of speech**, prose becomes boring.
- Poetry's main characteristic is its pervasive use **metaphor**, comparing *abstract* ideas to *concrete* items.

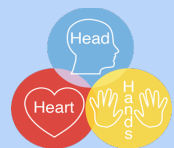




Understanding Biblical Poetry

2. What's the diff between prose and poetry?

- Not **rhyme** but **parallelism** of lines/ideas.
 - A . . . **what's more** . . . B.
 - Emphasis, contrast, purpose, reason, condition, etc.
- Two very common types of parallelism:
 - **Synonymous**: the two lines say roughly the same thing, although the second expands the first:
Oh how I love your instruction!
I think about them all day long. (Ps 119:97 NLT)
 - **Antithetical**: the two lines express contrasting ideas:
I hate and abhor all falsehood,
But I love your instructions. (Ps 119:163)

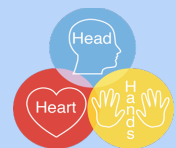


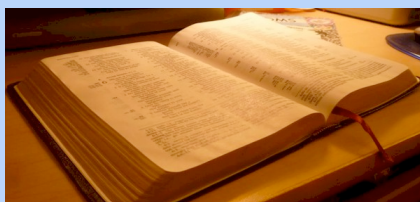


Understanding Biblical Poetry

3. Where do we find poetry in the Bible?

- **Psalms** (duh . . .)
- **Commonly** in other books, especially prophecy and wisdom
- **Occasionally** in narrative
 - Genesis 1:27; 2:23; 4:23; Luke 1:46-55; 68-79; 2:14; 29-32.
- Where do we find poetic elements in Jude?





Understanding Biblical Poetry

| ESV | NIV | NLT |
|--|--|--|
| <p>¹ Blessed is the man <u>who</u> walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.</p> <p>³ He is like a tree <u>planted</u> by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.</p> <p>⁴ The wicked are not so, <u>but</u> are like chaff that the wind drives away.</p> <p>⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, <u>nor</u> sinners in the congregation of the righteous; ⁶ for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.</p> | <p>¹ Blessed is the one <u>who</u> does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, ² but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. ³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, <u>which</u> yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.</p> <p>⁴ Not so the wicked! They are like chaff <u>that</u> the wind blows away.</p> <p>⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, <u>nor</u> sinners in the assembly of the righteous.</p> <p>⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the <u>righteous</u>, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.</p> | <p>¹ Oh, the joys of those who do not <u>follow</u> the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. ² But they delight in the law of the LORD, <u>meditating</u> on it day and night. ³ They are like trees planted along the riverbank, <u>bearing</u> fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, <u>and</u> they prosper in all they do.</p> <p>⁴ But not the wicked! They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind. ⁵ They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly. ⁶ For the LORD watches over the path of the godly, <u>but</u> the path of the wicked leads to destruction.</p> |

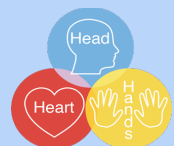


Understanding Biblical Poetry

4. So What? How does all this impact us?



- We are richly blessed to have the Bible in our language, along with the freedom and opportunity to study and teach it.
 - **Are we faithful stewards of this blessing?**
- Jude saw his church's situation in continuity with Israel's history as the ongoing one people of God.
 - **Do we read the OT like Jude did?**
- Jude speaks frankly and clearly about dangerous teaching and its judgment.
 - **Are we following Jude's example?**





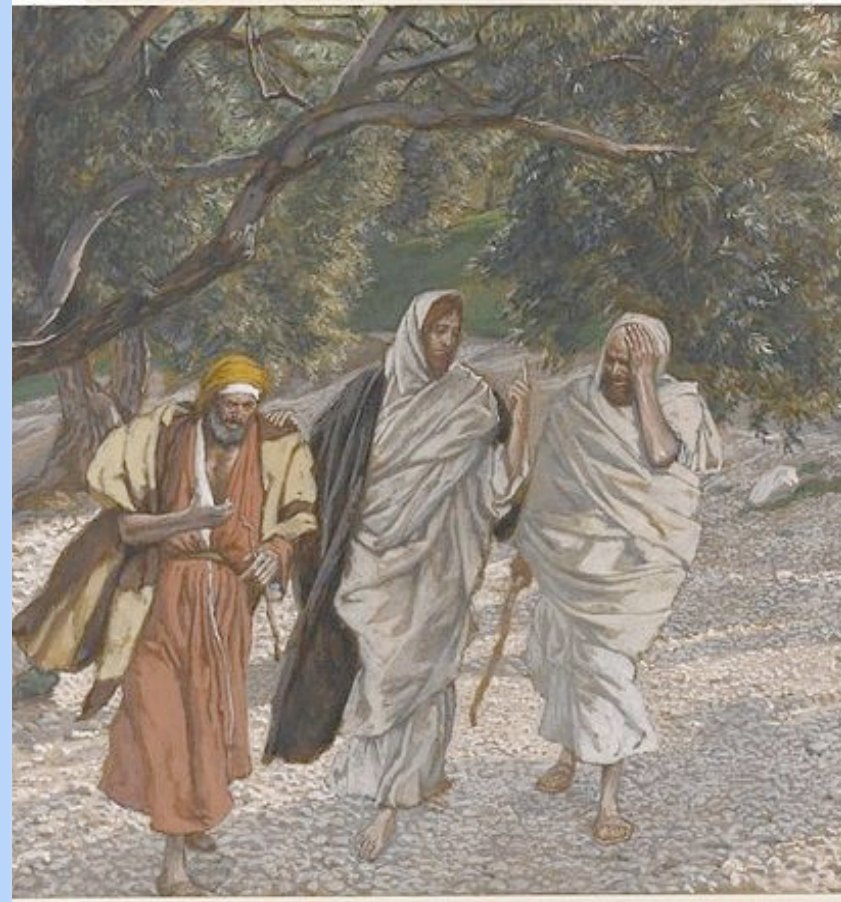
Understanding Biblical Poetry

Luke 24

²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, **he explained to them** what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. . . . ³² They asked each other, “**Were not our hearts burning within us while he . . . opened the Scriptures to us?**” . . .

⁴⁴ He said to them, “. . . **Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me** in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

⁴⁵ **Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.** ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ **You are witnesses of these things.**



James Tissot (1836-1902)