



Adult Learning Opportunity
Next Steps with the Bible: Going Deeper and Growing Stronger

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Oct 23: Understanding Biblical Narratives: How the Stories Unfold

1. Review of Week 5: Letters

- Letters are direct instruction and exhortation from the apostolic circle for specific church situations.
- The "body" of a letter contains a logical "argument" that needs to be contextually analyzed.
- Outline of Jude

2. How we got biblical narratives

- God acted in history and his people responded.
- Believers told of God's acts *orally* and in *writing* for the faithful community (Luke 1:1-4).
- Those who told of God's acts interpreted their *significance* for the community.
- Narratives *faithfully* represent *what* actually happened.
- These records *creatively* portray the *so what?* of what happened.

3. Literary Narrative vs. Historical Chronicle

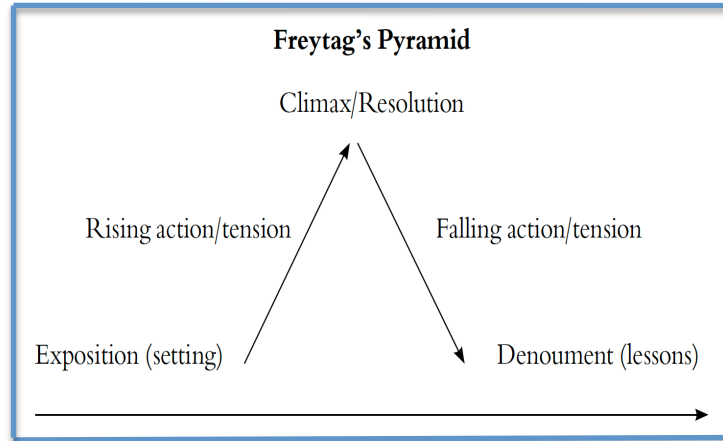
- *Selective* not comprehensive (relevance for audience)
- *How* it happened not just *that* it happened (information designed for transformation)
- Readers should be actively engaged *participants* in the event, not a passive *observers* standing apart from the story.
 - *Empathy*. Hebrews 12:1 and "so great a cloud of witnesses"

4. Characteristics of Literary Narratives

- *Point of View*
 - The author tells the story from his/her worldview and purposes.
- *Characterization*
 - Major characters are portrayed as *protagonist(s)* and *antagonist(s)*.
- *Plot*
 - Episodes tend to portray rising *suspense*, a key moment, and the *resolution* of the issue.

5. "The Plot Thickens": A Common Pattern of Narrative

- Story-plots typically build suspense until the protagonist comes to a *test*.
 - In a *comedy*, the protagonist passes the test ("and they all lived happily ever after"?)
 - In a *tragedy*, the protagonist fails the test (but there is always another test tomorrow).



6. Examples

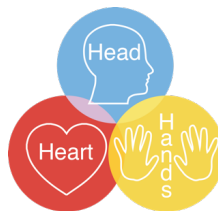
- The Bible taken as a whole

- Ruth

- Esther

- The calming of the storm (Matt 8/Mark 4/Luke 8)*

- The parable of the Sower/Seed/Soil (Matt 13/Mark 4/Luke 8)



Sanctify them through your truth; your word is truth. (John 17:17)

* For details go to <http://mathaytes.blogspot.com/2011/08/bible-study-tips-use-plot-diagrams.html>

