

History

Hermeneutics Pt.8

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Definition

Narrative is simply something that is narrated (someone telling a story). Historical narrative is the telling of a true story (actual history). So another word for historical narrative is “Bible stories.” Bible stories are extremely important, because the meaning and validity of our whole religion rests squarely on the veracity of the historical events. In a parable, it doesn’t matter if it is something that ever actually happened. The only thing that matters is the principle being taught. And most people in the world probably think that’s how it is with everything in the Bible.

But much of what we believe are doctrines that, if the historical events of Scripture didn’t happen, are without meaning. For example, the story of Jonah. Liberals have suggested that those events may not have happened, the important thing is what is being taught. But what is being taught is drained of meaning if the events didn’t happen. Without an appreciation historically of the brutality of the Assyrians, and the significance of Nineveh in that world, much of the meaning of the book is lost. The greatest example of that is the cross. Paul summarizes the Gospel in 1Corinthians 15:3.

3 Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve...

Paul goes on to point out that if those actual events didn’t happen, we are to be pitied more than all men. (There are some exceptions. The message of Job is not dependent upon the historical setting. I believe the story of Job is a description of actual events, but if someone doesn’t, that isn’t heresy.)

The purpose of the Bible stories: Bible stories are probably the most misused, misinterpreted parts of Scripture - which is tragic, since they comprise a huge percentage of the Bible. If you hear a sermon on a Bible story, 99 times out of 100 the focus will be on some man or woman in the story and the lesson will be a character study. If the character is bad, we are exhorted not to be like him. If he’s good, we are given a list of godly traits we are to emulate. There are a few occasions when that is appropriate, because Scripture itself presents the person as a model to follow. But the vast majority of the time that is the wrong approach, and misses the purpose of the Bible story. For example, if you hear a sermon or Sunday school lesson on Jonah, what is the lesson going to be about? What does the average Sunday school teacher try to accomplish in the lives of the kids by teaching that story? (Don’t disobey God like Jonah did!) How about Daniel and the Lions? (Trust God like Daniel did.) How about Joseph? (Be like Joseph.) We tend to reduce almost all the historical literature down to character studies. Which is why we get real confused when we run into characters like Samson. What is he – a good guy or bad guy? Do you want your kids to grow up to be like him? How about the story of Judah getting his daughter in law Tamar pregnant? (You don’t know the answer – you may not even know the story, because your Sunday school skipped over that one).

The purpose of the historical narratives is NOT character studies. Think about it – if the point of the Jonah story is to teach us not to disobey God, tell me what verses in Jonah tell us that we should obey God. There are none. So how do you know, after studying Jonah, that you should obey God? There is no way to know, unless you already knew. But if you already knew, what good is the book? No wonder kids grow up thinking the Bible doesn’t have much to offer other than stating the obvious. This is especially important for you who have children or teach children. In most children’s ministries, we usually only teach two things to kids: Bible stories and Christian behavior. It’s a rare church in which kids in the children’s ministry are taught anything other than Bible stories and behavior. And the point of the Bible story is always behavioral,

so really they only learn one thing. But that leaves out something very important. There is something far more important than teaching kids how to behave. And guess where that thing is taught in Scripture? Bible stories! That one thing that our kids need the most has been right under our noses this whole time. All we have to do to get it is interpret the Bible stories correctly.

The purpose of historical narrative is found in Psalm 143:5. Psalm 143:5 **I remember the days of long ago** (he is remembering history from the historical narratives in the Bible). And what is his response? To focus on character studies? No. I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.

The purpose of Bible stories is to show us what God is like by showing Him in action. The Bible is not the big book about behavior. It's the big book about God. And we rob our children when all we do is teach them about behavior. Bible stories aren't hard to interpret when you understand that God is the main character of every story. If you think David is the main character or the David and Goliath story, or that Daniel is the main character of his story, you don't understand the story. They are only secondary characters. When you look at some supporting secondary character and think he is the main character, of course you are going to be confused as to the meaning. That's why people run into a wall when they try to interpret the Samson story or the Judah and Tamar story. The stories in the Bible are not like Aesop's fables – where you try to pick out a moral to the story. Don't look for a moral. Look for information about what God is like as you see Him in action.

A Different Kind of History

Before we look at some examples of Biblical history, we need to become aware of the difference between the kind of history we are used to, and ancient Near-Eastern history. In ancient times, history was propaganda for the person who commissioned the history. Its purpose was to make that person look good. A king would hire a writer and say, "I want you to chronicle a history of my reign, and it should clearly portray me as..." That sounds a little shady to us, but it's only shady if the writer lies. For example, if Ronald Reagan had commissioned a biography of himself, and he told the person, "I want you to portray me as a conservative who worked for lower taxes, and who was aggressive in the arms buildup, taking a peace through strength approach to the cold war" – that's not shady. That's exactly what he was.

Propaganda is when you present selective information for the purpose of promoting a certain point of view, or a certain person. The biblical historical information is propaganda for YHWH. The writers don't tell you about what was going on in Egypt with the pyramids, or about Europe, or Africa, or anything that wasn't relevant to His purpose. You can't look into ancient history and find a record of a king like the record of David. Because under the normal procedure, King David would commission the historian to write propaganda for him, and anything that reflected poorly on him would be left out. So how is it that we have information about this king, including the bad things? Because the writers were not hired by David to write about his reign, they were commissioned by God to write about *His* reign, and David is included because he is one of the secondary characters that interacted with God.

The biblical historical information is designed to chronicle God's reign, and to present His character in an accurate way. One more thing we need to understand about how God intended the material to be read. It was written for an ancient Near-Eastern audience, and those people read history differently than we read it. First of all, they understood it to be propaganda for a king. But there was another difference. Moderns always explain events in human terms.

If you asked someone why America and Iraq went to war and they replied, "Because God decreed that it would happen before the world began," you would say, "Well, besides that." You would rather hear that it is because George Bush did this or that or because Hussein did this or that.

The ancients were the opposite. If an Israelite told you that Babylonia destroyed Jerusalem because the king kept giving Nebuchadnezzar a hard time, they would say, "Besides that. Why do you think *God* did it?" Both Israel and the Near Eastern people thought in this way.

The ancients believed that God caused everything that happened. So very often the Bible writers won't bother to tell you that God did something, because it was so obvious to the original readers. One final piece of background: The ancient pagan people did not have a concept of a transcendent God. The gods they worshipped were not all-powerful, and could be acted upon. They were inconsistent, unloving, and capricious. Much of the Old Testament is devoted to combating pagan ideas of God. Since they had no concept of what the true God is like, the writers have to go out of their way to present God as transcendent, all-powerful, consistent, loving, etc.

How To Approach a Bible Story

STEP 1 - Isolate the scenes.

Each story is made up of scenes. A scene is a single event in the story. It's like TV – when one scene is over, and the camera takes you to another setting, that starts a new scene. A scene usually has two or three characters, and one of them is always God.

STEP 2 - Determine the purpose of the scene.

Think of a Bible story as a paragraph in the Epistles. The scenes are like the sentences. Listen very closely to the narrator. The Bible stories are told from the perspective of a narrator who seems omniscient. The person telling the story will tell you the character's inner thoughts or motives. He will describe scenes taking place in two different locations simultaneously, etc. All that reminds us of the transcendent, omniscient view of God, who inspires the writer. Every once in a while the narrator will break from the story and make a comment. Pay *very* close attention to those. Often these will be in the form of a repeated or emphasized phrase, or a conclusion statement. Those are usually the key to understanding the story.

STEP 3 - Watch for implied detail.

A good storyteller will often abbreviate detail. Sometimes you can just say one thing and have an entire scene be automatically planted into the reader's head. Example: "It was Dec. 23rd and he winced as he pulled into the Flatirons mall parking lot." Your mind fills in the rest (crowds, long lines, no parking, irritation from the shopping season having gone so long, etc.) The writers often expect you to fill it in yourself. Those original readers would have automatically done that – it was their world. Just one word, "Passover" meant volumes to them. But that is lost on us. So to get the intended effect of the story, we have to provide a little filler (taking cues from what is said). 1 Kings 17 – story of Elijah and the Widow

1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."

Sets the setting for the narrative. Like in a movie when a scene begins with the camera sweeping across the landscape to show you what kind of place this event happens in, or when you see at the bottom of the screen, "Washington DC, December 5."

2 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: 3 "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. 4 You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there." 5 So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

Shows God controlling the creation to care for His prophet in accordance with His Word.

8 Then the word of the LORD came to him: ...

Shows God miraculously caring for the widow in accordance with His Word.

23 Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house.

He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!"

24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth."

God restores life to the son in accordance with His original promise (word). All this proves God's Word as announced through Elijah to be true and reliable. So that's the main point. Therefore when you teach this story, the main point of your sermon shouldn't be that God provides, or that He cares for widows, etc. It should be that God's Word is reliable.

STEP 4 Determine how the passage fits into the flow of the book.

Example 1: the Joseph account – Genesis 37-50

The old way: Joseph does some things good and some things bad. The text doesn't tell you, so you have to decide.

Problem: if you can do that, you already knew, and don't need a lesson! Also, Judah and Tamar are totally out of context appearing right in the middle of the Joseph story. In the old way, Joseph's rise to becoming a successful administrator is because of his skills. That's not in the Bible. Let's look. Study his rise to power in 39:1-7. Keep your eye open for a repeated theme.

Genesis 39:1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt.

Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

Genesis 39:2 The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master.

3 When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, 4 Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant.

Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.

5 From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph.

The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field.

6 So he left in Joseph's care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

What about his rise to power in the prison? (Read vv.21-23.) Over and over you see the phrase, "And God was with Joseph". Joseph was a great man of integrity, but that's not why he rose to power. God is the main character, and it is the story of the dramatic preservation of the Messianic line. Read 50:20. That explains the Tamar story. (Suggested O-line:) The Hero that saved the family. God started a family to be His special family, and said someday a man in that family would be the Savior (Jesus would be born into the family). He called the family Israel. God gave them a nice place to live, and they were happy, and everything was fine – but a famine was coming! They were all going to die! BUT *Somebody* knew that the famine was coming, and he decided to save the family. But how? Did he stop the famine from happening? NO – the famine really happened. So how? (Any good drama includes an impossible dilemma.) He picked a teenager out of that family, and took him to another country (the family thought he was dead) – and made him king of that other country! Then He told the teenager about the famine. So the teenager saved up huge piles of extra food. When the famine came, the family came to this country because they heard about the food. They saw the King, and it was that teenager (older now)! It was their own brother! He gave them food and none of them died! Now read the story and make a game out of them figuring out who it was that saved the family. When they do, ask, "How did He do it?" Answer: by letting bad people do whatever they wanted.

Example 3: Jonah

Some stories don't need anything added – everything is right there. It just needs to be noticed and thought about. NOTHING WILL MAKE YOU A BETTER BIBLE INTERPRETER AND TEACHER THAN MEDITATION. Look carefully at the text and think it through.

TRADITIONAL APPROACH

If you got a Bible study guide on Jonah, what would you say would probably be the main point? Obedience. How do they get that? It doesn't say anywhere that he should have obeyed. (Again, you would already have to know, then who needs the book?) Someone: "Well, when he disobeys, he ends up in a fish." Yes, but when he does obey, he ends up out in the hot, miserable desert with a dead plant and at the end of the book he is suicidal. Besides, isn't that a little obvious? One more thing – if the book is about obedience,

what about chapter 4? Let's take a new look. By the way – who do you think is the main character of Jonah?

1 The word of YHWH came to Jonah son of Amiti saying: 2 “RISE AND GO to Niniveh, the great city and cry out against her for their evil has come up before me.” 3 And Jonah ROSE AND WENT to flee from the presence of YHWH Tarshishward.

And he went down to Joppa and found a boat going to Tarshish, and he paid the fare and boarded to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of YHWH. And YHWH hurled (first of four hurlings) a great wind into the sea and there was a great storm on the sea, and the boat was thinking it was going to be broken to pieces.

5 The sailors feared and each man cried out to his god and they hurled the cargo from the boat into the sea to lighten the boat.

Jonah went down into the recesses of the boat and lay down and passed out. And the captain of the ship approached him and said to him, “Why have you passed out? Rise, and call to your god. Perhaps he will think to himself and we will not perish.”

7 And each man said to his friend, “Let's cast lots and we will know because of whom this evil had come upon us.” And the lots fell to Jonah.

And they said to him, “Tell us because of whom has this evil come? What is your occupation? Where are you from? What is your homeland? Who are your people?”

9 And he said, “I am a Hebrew, and YHWH, the God of the heavens whom I fear, made the sea and the land and the men feared with a great fear, and they said to him, “Why have you done this?” for they knew that he was fleeing from the presence of YHWH for he had told them.

11 And they said to him, “What shall we do so the sea will be quiet?” for the sea was going on and storming. 12 And he said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea and it will be quiet. I know that it is because of me that this great storm has come upon you.” 13 And the men rowed to return to the land but they were not able, because the sea was going on and storming upon them. 14 And they cried out to YHWH and said, “Please, YHWH, may we not perish because of the soul of this man and do not put his innocent blood on us, because you have done as you pleased.” 15 And they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea and the sea stood still from its anger. 16 ...and they offered sacrifices to YHWH and vowed vows.

These are pagan men who knew what Jonah was doing and were helping – and they had just got done crying out to false gods. They deserved judgment, yet at the slightest sign of repentance, God spares them. (They care nothing about YHWH until they are about to die, then they cry out to Him – but only after nothing else worked.)

17 And YHWH appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

This is the first of four appointments in Jonah. God appoints a fish (here), a plant (4:6), a worm, (4:7), and an east wind (4:8). God controls not only the mighty workings of nature, but also the minute crawlings of worms.

1:17 But YHWH appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights.

There is a joke about a girl and an atheist:

“How did Jonah survive in a fish three days?”

“I don't know. When I get to heaven I'll ask him.”

“What if Jonah isn’t in heaven?”

“Then you ask him!”

I believe this verse is true without the slightest hesitation.

2:1 Jonah prayed to YHWH his God from the belly of the fish.

2 He said: "In my distress I called to YHWH, and he answered me from the belly of the grave; I called for help, and you listened to my cry.

This is Jonah’s second prayer. In this prayer he recalls his first prayer which he prayed before the fish came. This is a summary of the whole prayer: Jonah cried out for help, and God answered.

2:3 You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the rivers swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.

Look at 1:15. Who hurled Jonah into the sea? (The sailors and God) Who sent Joseph down to Egypt? (The brothers and God) Who brought about the crucifixion of Jesus? (The Jews and the Romans and God) Who cut you off in traffic? (That driver and God) What about things that happen due to nature - where no people are involved? Notice, “**Your waves.**” (Remember – God hurled the storm.) Why did God hurl Jonah? Judgment (for the radical disobedience described in ch.1).

2:4 I said, 'I have been driven away from before your eyes; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.'

Jonah says, you banished me, but I will turn again to you. In other words, he is going to repent.

Now we see Jonah’s plight: The waters engulfed my soul forever, the abyss surrounded me; seaweed was tangling around my head.

2:6 To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever.

Jonah was sinking down to the bottom. That is why there was seaweed (v.6 - the very bottom). Any chance of rescue was lost - the bars slammed behind him. He had held his breath as long as he could. He was doomed **forever**. His life was over. There was no hope.

2:6 But you brought my life up from the grave, O YHWH my God.

2:7 "As I was fainting away, I remembered you, YHWH, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.

He must have just been passing out. Held his breath as long as could with his lips upward - the terror of death overwhelmed him, and he cried out to God. Have you ever been at the end of your rope, but it was because of your own foolishness or sin so you didn’t want to cry out to God? God wants you to look to him even then.

2:8 "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the kindness that could be theirs.

Everyone has access to God’s kindness, but when they refuse to worship God, they forfeit it.

2:9 But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you.

What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from YHWH."

2:10 And YHWH commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Now we see the fish hurl (not one of the hurlings). Literally, “vomited” (a disobedient prophet is enough to make anything sick). Again, God is in control. Notice that Jonah never showed any anxiety with

being in the fish. Often when God begins to help us, we tend to assume he will not follow through. But Jonah had confidence in God.

Conclusion: Jonah deserved death, cried out for mercy, and was given mercy. Consider God's mercy, Jonah blatantly disobeys right in God's face. Even in the storm he will not repent. But in the last seconds before death, Jonah finally "remembers" God. You would expect God to say, "It's too late now." We should never presume upon such mercy, but we should praise him for having such mercy. And the Word of YHWH came to Jonah a second time. The God of the second chance. We may think Jonah would be unreliable, send someone else. But God doesn't have to worry about the reliability of his servants. He controls everything. He wanted to use a disobedient prophet for this job saying, Rise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and announce to it the proclamation which I am speaking to you." And Jonah rose and went to Nineveh according to the Word of YHWH. Nineveh was a great city to God, a three day's walk. And Jonah began walking in the city the first day and he cried out and said, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." And the men of Nineveh believed in God, and they declared a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least. And when word reached the king of Nineveh he rose from his throne and took off his robe and covered himself with sackcloth and sat in the dust and cried out and said to Nineveh, "By decree of the king and the great men saying the men and the cattle, the herds and flocks, are to eat nothing, are not to graze or drink water. And the men and the cattle are to put on sackcloth and they are to call out to God with strength and turn each man from his evil way and the violence which was by their hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from wrath and also we will not perish." God made no promises to them. Jonah's message was not, "Repent and be saved" it was just "You are doomed" - they had gone way too far for way too long

And God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way and he relented from the evil which he had declared he would bring upon them and he did not do it. All their wickedness over the years is overlooked. All their violence - all their taking advantage of the weak - forgotten. God just let them off the hook. Just like that... Why? Did God need this city for something? Was there some special individual there (like Sodom)? No. This city was of no special value. They could have disappeared off the scene without consequence. The reason God had mercy had nothing to do with who they were. It was because of his nature. He just loves showing mercy. He hates sin, but he absolutely delights in showing mercy.

1 And it greatly distressed Jonah, and he was very angry. 2 And he prayed to YHWH and said, "please YHWH, was this not what I said when I was in my land?"

Therefore I forestalled to flee Tarshishward because I knew that you are a gracious God and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in kindness. He relents from evil.

Jonah was angry because God had mercy. This is what he feared would happen all along. When God first told him to preach judgment (just judgment, not repentance), Jonah put two and two together and figured out what would probably happen. You would think Jonah would have been thrilled to preach this message. He was not because he understood what so few today do - that the purpose of preaching judgment is so God can show mercy. Every time you see an announcement of judgment in the Bible, put it under that category of mercy (color code).

compassionate, slow... Foundational statement about God in the Old Testament – repeated over and over. Those who say God is wrathful in the Old Testament and gracious in the New Testament are way off. The Old Testament picture of God is one of extreme tenderness.

gracious from the root word meaning "favor" closely related to (for nothing) Genesis .29:15. There is a big difference between love that is just a re-payment, and love that is for nothing. (Job 1:9). "Gracious" is a good translation.

compassionate This comes from a root that means to show tender love toward the helpless. The verb is infrequently used of men. Most of its uses are for women or God. It is a feminine characteristic.

Isaiah 49:15 "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?"

Men are capable of it.

Psalm 103:13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; but it is mostly associated with women.

It is a picture of very tender, soft, compassionate love toward the helpless. Another form of this word is a Hebrew word for “womb.”

slow to anger patience the opposite of someone who is quick-tempered and out of control (Pr.14:29,16:32) We are never “walking on eggshells” with God.

and abounding in kindness (hesed) He doesn’t just hand out small bits of kindness here and there like a king throwing crumbs to the peasants. He piles it on.

YHWH, please take my soul from me for it is better to die than to live.

And YHWH said Is it right for you to be angry?

(Remember that question) Jonah went out from the city and sat on the east of the city. The significance of the east side is that is the opposite of the way home. Jonah isn’t leaving and looking to see what happens, he is waiting and made for himself a shelter there and he stayed under the shade until he saw what would happen to the city.

And YHWH appointed a plant and made it grow up for Jonah to provide shade for his head to take away his distress.

And Jonah rejoiced about the plant with a great rejoicing.

And God appointed a worm the morning of the next day and it struck the plant and it withered.

And the sun was beating down hard, and God appointed a harsh east wind and the sun struck Jonah’s head and he was fainting. And Jonah asked with all his soul to die and he said It is better to die than to live.

And God said to Jonah Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?

And he said It is right and I am angry unto death.

And YHWH said, you had pity on the plant for which you did not labor and you did not grow it. It came overnight and it perished overnight. Should I not have pity on Nineveh, the great city in which there are 120,000 who do not know their right hand from their left and many cattle?

And YHWH appointed a plant and made it grow up for Jonah to provide shade for his head to take away his distress.

And Jonah rejoiced about the plant with a great rejoicing.

The average temperature there is around 120. The east winds can raise it another 20 degrees. They say it gets so dry it makes the skin feel like it is too small. I read one quote talking about how when these winds come even the nicest, friendliest people become irritable and snap at people over nothing.

Discussion: what is the point of the plant?

And God appointed a worm the morning of the next day and it struck the plant and it withered.

And the sun was beating down hard, and God appointed a harsh east wind and the sun struck Jonah’s head and he was fainting. And Jonah asked for his soul to die and he said It is better to die than to live.

Jonah seems childish, but don’t be distracted by that - that isn’t the point that is being made.

And God said to Jonah Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?

And he said It is right and I am angry unto death.

The key is to note the repeated questions. This time he does answer - yes.

And YHWH said, you had pity on the plant for which you did not labor and you did not grow it. It came overnight and it perished overnight. Should I not have pity on Nineveh, the great city in which there are 120,000 who do not know their right hand from their left and many cattle? (Either 120,000 children or 120,000 people who are like children in that they are ignorant.)

My view: The idea is, God is showing Jonah what it is like when something you care about perishes. When God asks if he is right to be angry about Nineveh, Jonah does not answer. (Obviously it is right for him to be upset about God showing mercy). But when God asks the identical question about the plant, Jonah answers, “yes” without equivocation. As soon as he answers “yes” he proves God’s point - that it is bad when something you care about perishes. The fact that it is such a menial thing makes the point even better.

Q: What city does God care more about - Denver or New York? (NY) God loves people. He even cares about cows (which are important to people). Jonah is a book about God’s mercy and grace. First we

see his mercy and grace on disobedient Jonah when he rescues him by means of the fish (ch.2); then we see his mercy on wicked, gentile, pagan Nineveh (ch.3); then God gives an object lesson about grace and mercy with a plant and a worm (ch.4).

New Testament Historical Narrative

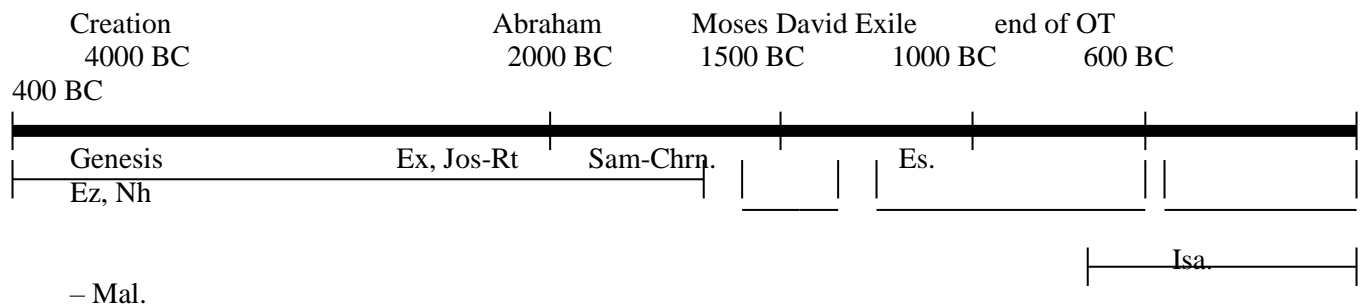
Interpret the same as Old Testament historical. narrative.

Gospels: who is the main character? (Jesus)

Acts: who is the main character? (Jesus)

Remember, just because something happens does not mean that is to be normative. Watch for clues as to the meaning of the event.

Old Testament History:



Homework: Pick a Bible story and try these principles out.

