

Principles of Bible Study

Biblical
Genres



Two Kinds of Context

Historical Context

- Involves time, culture, author and reader, geographical, and political factors which are relevant to correct interpretation
- The most important historical context question is *occasion* and *purpose* of the text
- Read and observe with these contextual factors in mind

Two Kinds of Context

Literary Context

- “The most important contextual question you will ever ask – and it must be asked over and over again of every sentence and every paragraph – is, ‘**What’s the point**’. ... trace the author’s train of thought.”
- This question will vary for different genres
- The goal is to discover the original author’s intent

Genres of Biblical Literature

| LAW | HISTORY | WISDOM & POETRY | PROPHECY |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <i>OLD TESTAMENT</i> | <i>OLD TESTAMENT</i> | <i>OLD TESTAMENT</i> | <i>OLD TESTAMENT</i> |
| Genesis | Joshua | Job | Isaiah |
| Exodus | Judges | Psalms | Jeremiah |
| Leviticus | Ruth | Proverbs | Lamentations |
| Numbers | 1 Samuel | Ecclesiastes | Ezekiel |
| Deuteronomy | 2 Samuel | Song of Songs | Daniel |
| | 1 Kings | | Hosea |
| | 2 Kings | | Obadiah |
| | 1 Chronicles | | Jonah |
| | 2 Chronicles | | Micah |
| | Ezra | | Nahum |
| | Nehemiah | | Habakuk |
| | Esther | | Zephaniah |
| | | | Haggai |
| | <i>NEW TESTAMENT</i> | | Zechariah |
| | Acts | | Malachi |
| | | | <i>NEW TESTAMENT</i> |
| | | | Revelation |

- **Law** – The Pentateuch (5 Scrolls) - also known as the Torah (Instruction or Law)
- **History** – “Former Prophets” (4 books - Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings)
- **Prophecy** – “Latter Prophets” or “Writing prophets” – Major prophets first 5, the rest minor prophets. Daniel could be considered both history and prophecy

Genres of Biblical Literature

GOSPEL

LETTERS

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

PAULINE

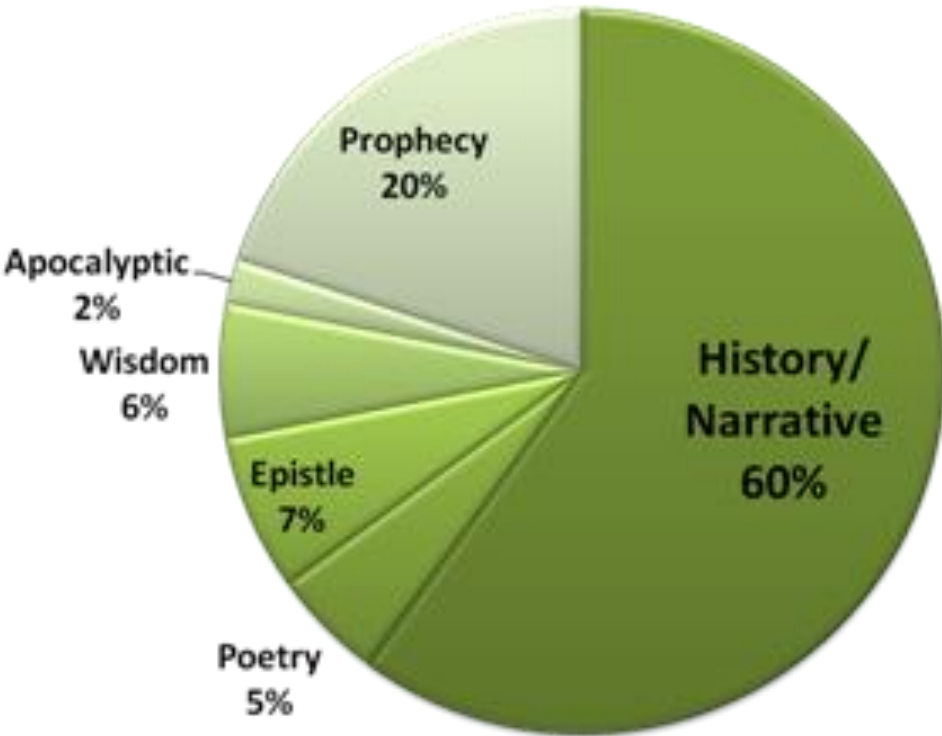
Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon

GENERAL

Hebrews
James
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude

- **Gospel** – Contain a variety of genres – *genealogy, historical narrative, prophecy, parables, allegory, biographical narrative, discourse, apocalyptic, ...*
- **Letters** – Epistles communicate to specific audience with varied purposes. These are “*occasion documents,*” all 1st century, this form contains 6 parts (author, recipient, greeting, prayer, body, final greeting).

Genres of Biblical Literature



Literary Observations

Literary Relationships Chart (rev 09/03 kt)

Logical Connectives

| Connective | Literary Relationship | Connective | Literary Relationship |
|-------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| After | Chronological Relationship, Cause-Effect | Likewise | Comparison |
| Also | Comparison | Much more | Comparison, Contrast |
| Although | Contrast | Nevertheless | Contrast |
| As | Chronological Relationship, Comparison | Not | Contrast |
| As . . . so | Comparison | Now | Usually Progression, sometimes Temporal |
| Because | Explanation | Only | Emphasis, Contrast |
| Before | Chronological Relationship, Effect-Cause | Or | Contrast, Series of Statements or Facts |
| But | Contrast | Otherwise | Contrast |
| Finally | Summarization | Since | Explanation, Cause-Effect |
| First of all | Progression, Series of Statements or Facts | So | Comparison, Cause-Effect |
| For | Explanation | So also | Comparison, Cause-Effect |
| From there | Geographical Progression | So that | Explanation, Statement of Purpose (look for <i>result</i>) |
| However | Contrast | Then | Chronological Relationship, Cause-Effect |
| If | Conditional Cause-Effect | Therefore | Explanation, Grounds-Conclusion |
| In order that | Explanation, Statement of Purpose | Thus | Explanation, Cause-Effect |
| Indeed | Emphasis | Until | Chronological Relationship |
| Instead | Contrast | When | Chronological Relationship, Cause-Effect |
| Just as ... so | Comparison | Where | Geographical Relationship |
| Last of all | Summarization, Series of Statements | While | Chronological Relationship |
| Like | Comparison, Simile | Yet | Contrast |

Literary Relationships

Literary Relationships

| | |
|--|---|
| Cause-Effect - >From action to the result produced | Grounds-Conclusion - the basis or substantiation of an argument with the logical conclusion (e.g., if . . . then) |
| Climax - a series of advancing events or ideas, with focus on the highest or greatest point being realized | Identification - the meaning or significance of something is established by being equated with something else |
| Comparison - similarity between two or more particulars, association of like things | Instrumentality - a reference to the means by which an end or result is achieved. The means is identified apart from the cause |
| Complementation - two paired items wherein one is the counterpart of the other; the latter fulfills what is called for in the first (question/answer, promise/fulfillment, problem/solution, disease/remedy, beginning . . . [interruption] . . . sequel) | Interchange - the alternation of elements (persons, places, things, events, ideas) that occur in a series; or the exchange of one element with another |
| Completion - a progression of events or ideas to conclusion or resolution | Particularization - one or more specific references or statements which are part of a more inclusive reference; a movement from the general to the particular; many to one |
| Continuity - a recurrence of similar but not identical terms, phrases, clauses, statements, or events | Pivot - a movement of events or ideas to a crucial point on which subject matter turns in another direction |
| Contrast - a difference between two or more particulars which in a broad sense are comparable | Preparation (Introduction) - the background or setting for events or ideas that enable the reader to understand what follows |
| Effect-Cause - from result produced to source action | Progression - an extension or development of a particular item in a certain direction |
| Explanation - the presentation of an event or idea followed by a reason, interpretation, illustration, or clarification | Repetition - a recurrence of the same terms, phrases, clauses, or statements; repetition of word family |
| Generalization - an inclusive reference or statement that embodies on or more particulars; a movement from the particular to the general; one to many | Summarization (Conclusion) - a wrap-up or survey of material that has been (or is to be) presented |