

Grasping Biblical Literature

Sunday January 9, 2021

Series: Knowing the Unknown—Confidence in God’s Plan

*“The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.”
Psalm 119:130 ESV*

I. How Do I Determine the Writing? Seven Types of Literature

1. Legal

Definition– the body of material that includes **commandments** for the nation of Israel.

Two Types:

A. Apodictic Law- (direct commands)

“You shall have no other gods before me. “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

Exodus 20:3–8 ESV

B. Causistic Law - (Case by case law)

“If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him.”

Exodus 23:4–5 ESV

2. Narrative

Definition: A Biblical story told for the purpose of **conveying a message** through people and their problems and situations.

(Also 1: John 4:1-3)

Six Kinds of Narratives

A. Tragedy

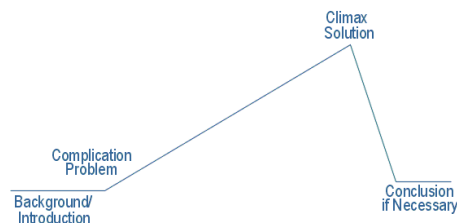
C. Romance

E. Satire

B. Epic

D. Heroic

F. Polemic



3. Poetry

Definition– is usually two (sometimes three and four) lines that are stated in **parallel** form.

Purpose of Psalms

- **A guide to worship**, enable us to praise God, to make appeals to Him, and to remember His attributes and what He has done for us.

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”
Psalm 27:1 ESV

- help me to **relate honestly** to God expressing joy, disappointment, anger or other emotions.

“Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.”

Psalm 41:9 ESV

(Also Note Handout: Descriptive Praise, Psalm 19:1–14 ESV)

4. **Wisdom**

Definition– is a type of **poetry**.

Two Kinds

A. **Proverbs** - maxims that communicate general truth based on broad experience and observation.

“An evil man is ensnared in his transgression, but a righteous man sings and rejoices.”

Proverbs 29:6 ESV

B. **Reflective** – the discussion of the mysteries of life.

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? “Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb,””

Job 38:4–8 ESV

5. **Gospels**

Definition– the **life and ministry** of Jesus Christ.

6. **Logical Discourse (Epistolary)**

Definition– refers to the **epistles** of the New Testament from Romans through Jude.

Two Kinds

A. **Expository Discourse** - which expounds certain truths or doctrines.

“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,”

Ephesians 1:13 ESV

B. **Hortatory Discourse** - includes exhortations to follow certain courses of action or to develop certain characteristics.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.”

Ephesians 6:10 ESV

7. **Prophetic**

Definition– includes **predictions** of the future at the time of writing of the material with injunctions often included that those who hear the prophecy adjust their lives in light of the predictions. Also includes **apocalyptic** material.

(Also Daniel 4:9 ESV)

“Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.””

Daniel 4:27 ESV

Am I Missing Out By Ignoring my Bible?

“The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.”

Psalm 119:130 ESV

Several Types of Poetry in Psalms.

(Source: Zuck, Roy, B. *Basic Bible Interpretation*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 1991. Print.)

1. Lament of the people- “usually has an introductory petition, the lament itself, a confession of trust, a petition for the psalmist to be heard and delivered, and a vow of praise.” -(Psalms 12, 44, 80, 94, 137)

2. Lament of the individual- “usually includes an introduction (with an address to and/or turning to God , and a cry for help), the lament itself..., a confession of trust, a petition to be heard and delivered, and expression of confidence” -(Psalms 3, 22, 31, 39, 42, 57, 71, 120, 139, 142)

3. Declarative praise of the individual- “proclamation is given, and an introductory summary is included, reflection on a past need is cited, and the report of deliverance follows, with a renewed vow of descriptive praise and/or instruction.” -(Psalms 18, 30, 32, 34, 40, 66, 92, 116, 118, 138)

4. Descriptive Praise- “includes a call to praise,...a statement of the cause of praise,... and a conclusion which gives either a renewed call to praise, a restatement of cause for praise or a statement of blessing.”

A. Praising Him as Creator -(Psalms 8, 19, 104, 148)

B. Praising His as Protector -(Psalms 66, 100, 111, 114, 149)

C. Praising His as Lord of History-(Psalms 33, 103, 113, 117, 145-147)

5. Songs of Zion -(Psalms 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122)

6. Wisdom -(Psalms 36-37, 49, 73, 112, 127-128, 133)

7. Trust Psalms (ten) -(Psalms 11, 16, 23, 27, 62-63, 91, 121, 125, 131)