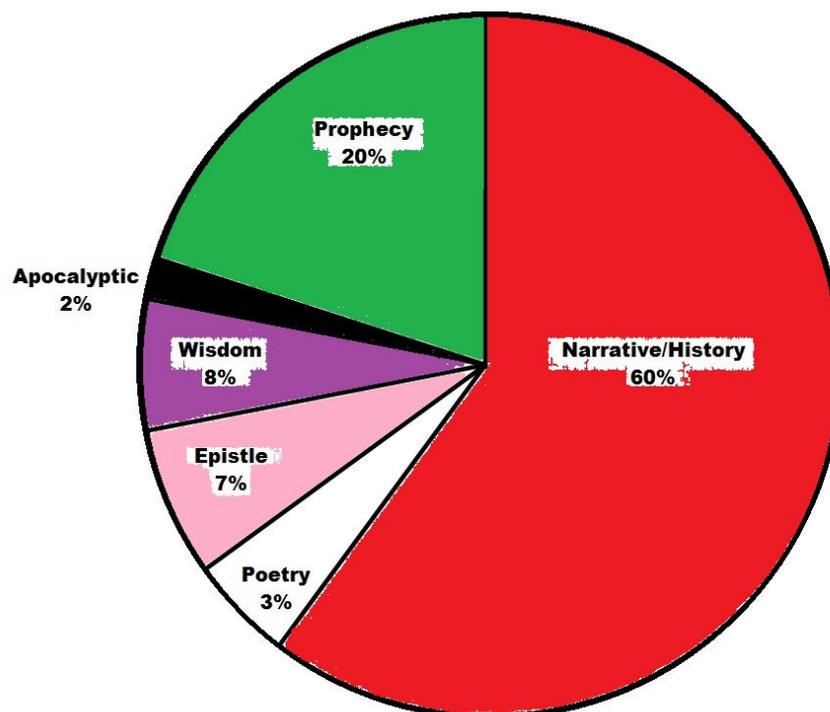


I. **THE GENRES OF THE BIBLE.**

- A. A brief review of past lessons:
1. Methods and rules of interpretation.
 2. The important of context (setting) and some figures of speech.
 3. Literal and figurative language; semantics.
- B. Notice the chart and how the Bible is written according to genre.



I. **HOW TO INTERPRET THE LAW OF MOSES.**

- A. The OT Law of Moses, when compared to earlier sets of laws in that time, represented a definite advancement over its contemporaries and predecessors.
- B. **Two Kinds of Law.**
1. Apodictic Law has to do with laws that begin with do or do not. They are direct commands, generally applicable, telling the Israelites the sorts of things they are supposed to do to fulfill their part of the covenant with God. As specific as this is, it is also paradigmatic-- it sets a standard by an example rather than by mentioning every possible circumstance. See Lev. 19:9-14.

‘Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the LORD your God.

11 ‘You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. **12** You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.

13 ‘You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob *him*. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning. **14** You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the LORD.

2. Casuistic Law is the counterpart to apodictic law and it is a law that is interpreted case-by-case. The elements of these kinds of laws are conditional. The law does not apply to everyone. It is conditional--based on a possible condition that may or may not apply to a given person at a given time. See Deut. 15:12-17.

“If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, then he shall serve you six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free. **13** When you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed. **14** You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you. **15** You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today. **16** It shall come about if he says to you, ‘I will not go out from you,’ because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you; **17** then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also you shall do likewise to your maidservant.

3. Casuistic or case-by-case laws constitute a large portion of the more than six hundred commandments found in the OT pentateuchal law. Interestingly, none of them is explicitly renewed in the New Covenant.

C. **Christians and the Old Law.**

1. The OT law is a covenant. In OT times, many covenants were of a type called suzerainty covenants. These covenants were given generously by an all-powerful suzerain (overlord) to a weaker, dependent vassal (servant). They guaranteed the vassal benefits and protection. But, in turn, the vassal was obligated to be loyal solely to the suzerain. Disloyalty would bring punishments as specified in the covenant. Jehovah, is the suzerain and His vassal is Israel.
2. The OT is not our testament. Testament is another word for covenant. We are no longer under the Old Law, unless in the New Law some of the provisions are renewed. For example, the Old Law said not to murder, but the New Law says the same thing. What is common for both covenants is loyalty. It is how that loyalty is shown that has been changed.
3. Some stipulations of the OT have clearly not been renewed in the New Covenant. This is why it is so “dangerous” to go to the OT to try and prove NT doctrine or conduct (Gal. 5:6). The fact is, that the new covenant can be quite different from the old covenant, yet not necessarily totally different.
4. The OT is for our learning. All of the OT law is still the Word of God for us even though it is not still the command of God to us (Rom. 15:4; 1Cor. 10:11; 2Tim. 3:15).

(Rom 15:4) For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

(1Cor 10:11) Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

(2Tim 3:15) and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

D. **The Covenant and the Ordinances.**

1. The covenant is the Ten Commandments (1Kgs. 8:9,21).
(1Kgs 8:9) There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the sons of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.
(1Kgs. 8:21) There I have set a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD, which He made with our fathers when He brought them from the land of Egypt.”
2. All of the other laws are the ordinances that are based on the covenant. This is why Jesus nailed the “decrees against us” to the cross, He fulfilled the covenant and took it away (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:15).
(Col 2:14) having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.
(Eph 2:15) by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained in* ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace,

II. HOW TO INTERPRET THE OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVES.

- A. The Bible contains more of the type of literature called “narrative” than it does of any other type. For example, over 40% of the OT is narrative.
- B. Narratives are stories. The OT narratives, however, have plots that are part of a special overall plot, and have a special cast of characters, the most special of whom is God Himself.
- C. **What the Narratives are.**
1. There are three levels of narratives in the OT.
 - a. The top level is that of the whole universal plan of God worked out through His creation.
 - b. The middle level is centered on Israel.
 - c. The lower level is where all the hundreds of individual narratives are that make up the other two levels.
 2. Note this carefully: every individual OT narrative (bottom level) is at least a part of the greater narrative of Israel’s history in the world (the middle level), which in turn is a part of the ultimate narrative of God’s creation and His redemption of it (the top level).
- D. **What the Narratives are not.**
1. The OT narratives are not just stories about people who lived in OT times. They are first and foremost stories about what God did to and through those people. God is the hero of the story—if it is in the Bible.
 2. The OT narratives are not allegories or stories filled with hidden meanings. There are some aspects of the narratives that are not easy to understand. The narratives do not answer all our questions about a given issue. They are limited in their focus, and give us only a part of the overall picture of what God is doing in history.
 3. The OT narratives do not always teach directly. They emphasize God’s nature and revelation in special ways that legal or doctrinal portions of the Bible never can. They do this by allowing us to live vicariously through events and experiences rather than simply learning about the issues involved in those events and experiences.

Although the OT narratives do not necessarily teach us directly, they often illustrate what is taught directly and categorically elsewhere. This represents an implicit kind of teaching, which in cooperation with the corresponding explicit teachings of Scripture, is effective in generating a learning experience that the Holy Spirit can positively use.
 4. Each individual narrative or episode within a narrative does not necessarily have a moral all its own. Narratives cannot be interpreted atomistically, as if every statement, every event, every description could, independently of the others, have a special message for the reader.
- E. **Warnings and Conclusions.**
1. Implicit does not mean secret! You will get into all sorts of trouble if you try to find meanings in the text that you think God has “hidden” in the narrative. That is not at all what is meant by implicit. Implicit means that the message is capable of being understood from what said, though not stated in words.
 2. No Bible narrative was written specifically about you. Do not be a monkey-see-monkey-do reader of the Bible. Your task is to learn God’s Word from the narratives, and not try to do everything that was done in the Bible. Just because someone in a Bible story did something, that does not mean that you have either permission or obligation to do it too.
 3. Narratives show God’s providence. They are precious to us because they so vividly demonstrate God’s involvement in the world and illustrate His principles and calling.