

What's the Story?

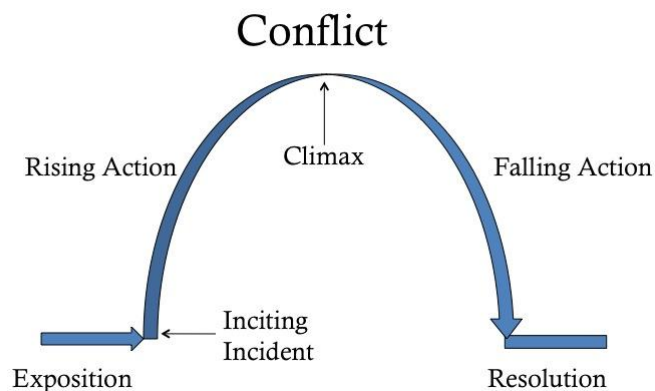
Interpreting Biblical Narratives

Survey

- The same for all genres. Nothing unique about narratives.

Observe

1. Setting: establishes the mood of the story, and says when and where it takes place.
 - When does the story take place? (Time)
 - Where is this story located in the history of redemption?
 - What is the state of God's people at the time of the story?
 - What covenant are they living under?
 - Are there historical events that significantly shape the characters and the plot?
 - Does the story occur during the day or night?
 - Does the action occur in one episode, or over a period of time?
 - Where does the story take place? (Location)
 - Does the story occur inside or outside?
 - Does the story occur in a holy space (temple, synagogue), or a common space?
 - Are the main characters at home or on enemy or pagan territory?
 - Does the location of the story have significance in other places of Scripture?
 - Social setting: Time and location may combine to form a special social setting (e.g. meals).
2. Conflict: a state of tension produced by people or forces that are opposed to one another.



- Exposition: Introduces the normal state and circumstances of the characters before the conflict.
- Inciting Incident: The event that causes the conflict to arise.
- Rising Action: A series of events that result from the inciting incident and escalate the conflict, making a solution more difficult.
- Climax: The point of maximum tension, which results in the resolution of the conflict.
- Falling Action: Decrease in the conflict as a result of the climax.
- Resolution: The conflict is fully resolved.

3. Characters

- **Protagonist:** the main character. The center of the story's conflict and events.
 - What are the protagonist's objectives and motives?
- **Antagonist:** the primary opponent or obstacle to the protagonist.
 - What are the antagonist's objectives and motives?
- How does God function in the story?
- How does the text display the traits of the characters?
 - Direct Statements from the narrator
 - Show character traits through speech and actions
- Compare the words, thoughts and actions of a character. Is there coherence or variance?
- In the Gospels, look for three different kinds of characters: believers, unbelievers, and the undecided.
- A character can be an individual, or a group (e.g. "Israel" or "the Pharisees").

Analyze

- Does the setting indicate the story's theme or message?
- What is the primary conflict driving the story?
 - What key issues, problems, or questions are addressed? How are they addressed?
- How is the conflict resolved? (Climax)
- Does the narrator or a character give comments on or a moral for the story?
- Does the protagonist accomplish his objectives? Why or why not? What does this communicate about the message of the story?
- What key symbols, metaphors, or images are used? What do they mean?
- What unifying idea ties all of this together?
 - Create a one-sentence description of the story's message.

Respond

- What situation does the text address? What aspect of human fallenness is displayed in that situation?
 - ***For Narratives: look at each of the main characters. How do they each display fallenness?***
 - Are they all wrestling with the same aspect of fallenness, but in different ways?
- How do we experience the same aspect of fallenness?
 - Personal Application: is there one character that you particularly resonate with?
 - Teaching Others: focus on each of the main characters. People in your audience will experience fallenness in different ways.
- How does the message of the text minister to us in these situations?

Interpreting Exodus 14