



## Old Testament Categories

### The Law

- Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
- Pentateuch
- Torah

### The Prophets

The Prophets have two sub-groups:

- The Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings
- The Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets (Hosea to Malachi)

### The Writings

The Writings are divided into three sub-groups:

- Psalms, Proverbs, and Job
- The Five Scrolls: Song of Solomon, Ruth, Esther, Lamentations, and Ecclesiastes
- Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles

## Old Testament Genres

### Narrative

A narrative is a story.

There is a pattern that is typical for narratives.

1. There is a setting in history, which leads to
2. A specific situation, in which
3. A problem or crisis arises, leading to
4. A turning point in the story, which then results in



5. A resolution.

The book of Ruth is a self-contained narrative.

1. Setting – Ruth 1:1 gives us the setting, “In the days when the judges ruled.” So the setting is the time of the judges.
2. Situation – The situation is found in the rest of verse one and in verse two.
3. Problem – The problem is found in verses three through five.
4. Turning Point – Verses six through eighteen contain the turning point.
5. Resolution – Verses 19 through 22 give the resolution.

What are the Grand Narrative, the Big Picture, and the Plot Line?

- The Grand Narrative – God shows his covenant faithfulness. Elimelech and Naomi reject God’s promises and leave the covenant land, which results in death and bareness. However, Naomi returns to the covenant land, which results in blessing.
- The Big Picture – The story of Ruth is part of the Abrahamic covenant promise that in his offspring, which is also the offspring of the woman in Genesis 3:15, all the families of the earth will be blessed. Ruth is a Moabitess, a Gentile, not part of the people of Israel.
- The Plot Line – The book ends with David. At the very end of the book we discover the bigger story. Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz are part of the line that takes us to David. This story is not just about Ruth. It is part of the offspring of the woman’s story; it is part of the story of Abraham; it is part of the story of David; and it is part of the story of Christ.

## Poetry

Poetry in Psalms, but there is poetry in some historical narratives, the Prophets, and the Writings.

Parallelism uses two or three lines to describe one reality by presenting different aspects of that reality. There are three types of parallelism.

- Synonymous – The second line says the same thing as the first line except with different words. Proverbs 22:1
- Synthetic – The second line adds more than is found in the first line. Psalm 42:1
- Antithetic – The second line presents a thought opposite to the thought in the first line. Proverbs 10:1



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A chiasm takes what is said in the first half and reverses the order in the second half.

Poetry uses non-literal language. Psalm 22:12-13

## Wisdom

- 1 Corinthians 1:30
- Proverbs 1:1-7
- Proverbs 9:10

The two broad categories of Proverbs are

1. Practical detail on how to incorporate God's wisdom into daily life.
2. The ways Satan seeks to divert us from God's way and thus destroy us.

- Proverbs 26:4-5

## Prophecy

- Amos 3:7
- Hebrews 1:1-2

Three things to keep in mind when reading Old Testament prophecy:

1. Prophecy was given in a particular historical context.
2. Prophecy is often conditional.
3. Prophets expressed their message in the thought forms and ideas of their own time.

- Amos 9:11-12



## Example

- 1 Kings 19:9-18.

Narrative pattern:

1. The setting is a cave on Mount Horeb.
2. The situation is the Lord appears to him and asks him “What are you doing here, Elijah?”.
3. The problem is Elijah feels he is alone in being faithful to the Lord, and he is afraid.
4. The turning point is the Lord does not come in the wind, earthquake, or fire, but Lord speaks to Elijah in a low whisper. Elijah covers his face and moves to the entrance of the cave. The Lord again asks, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”. Elijah gives the same reply.
5. The resolution is the Lord sends him on a mission back to Israel and Syria and reminds Elijah that he is not the only faithful one in Israel. The Lord has a faithful remnant.

What are the Grand Narrative, the Big Picture, and the Plot Line?

- The Grand Narrative is God is faithful to his covenant with Abraham by restoring Elijah, sending him to continue covenant work, and by keeping a faithful remnant.
- The Big Picture is seen in that the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent continues. Elijah is discouraged because of this conflict. The defeat of the prophets of Baal was not the final victory.
- The Plot Line continues towards the final prophet with Elijah being sent anoint new kings of Syria and Israel and to anoint Elisha as his successor. The unfaithfulness of the people is revealed, but God is still sovereignly directing history towards redemption in Christ.