

GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING OLD TESTAMENT HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Judges

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1. Determine the limits or boundaries of the narrative at hand, while recognizing its internal structural features.
2. Consider whether the narrative mode is direct, descriptive, dramatic, or commentary. Does the full context employ some combination of these?
3. Ask yourself whether the historical narrative functions basically as an account or report, or is it told in story form. Does more than one of these forms occur in the full context?
4. Come to grips with the respective roles of the author, reader, narrator, and narratee. Try to put yourself in the place of the narratee (or implied reader).
5. Examine the setting of the narrative. What do you learn from such features as geography, time, or culture within the narrative?
6. If the narrative is told in story form, look carefully for the flow of the story. Identify such features of the plot as its beginning, middle, denouement, resolution, and epilogue. Are these archetypal plot motifs present here? What biblical motifs and themes or resident in the full context?
7. In stories, identify the protagonist, antagonist, and what foils may be present.
8. Learn to appreciate the authors literary style, considering such features as dialogue, repetition, highlighting, irony, and satire.
9. Throughout the interpretive process employees sound exegetical procedures, noting the contributions of grammar, history, literary constraints, and theological emphases.
10. Join all of these data together, make a proper application to the contemporary situation. Ask how the narrative impacts the reader or hearers spiritual life.

