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QUESTIONS

1. In what areas within scripture is narrative the predominant genre?
2. What is the difference between prose and narrative?
3. What are some common issues that are experienced with readers who interact with narrative portions of scripture?
4. What is the most important feature of the narrative?
5. What profit can be gained from a narrative where the author's point is unclear at first?

ANSWERS

1. Narrative is the predominant genre in the Torah, all the books of the Earlier Prophets, in some of the Latter Prophets and books of the Writings. Narrative is a prevailing style throughout the Gospels and Acts. Narrative is the main supporting framework for the Bible.
2. In prose, things are stated directly. In narrative, principles and purposes are stated indirectly.
3. Readers and interpreters can become so involved with the stories and characters themselves, they become an end in itself. These readers can forget about the message that God is seeking to share from the story to the contemporary church.
4. The most important feature of the narrative is the scene.
5. We can profit by focusing for the moment on God's presence, actions, and comments each scene where they are relevant.

TERMS

Narrative: An account of specific space-time events and participants whose stories form the one grand plan and purpose of God, each with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Inclusio: A rhetorical device that biblical narrators use that is another form of repetition.

Chiasm: Another rhetorical device of biblical narrative, a literary device named after the Greek letter chi (c). It's named for the crossing, or inversion, of related elements within parallel constructions, thereby yielding forms like a-b-c with c-b-a.

SUMMARY

The larger portion of scripture includes a narrative style. The principles that are being taught may not be stated directly. Because of this, the reader must pay close attention to the literary devices that are being used in the narrative. The scene, the point of view, the dialogue and rhetorical devices all play a role in the purpose of the narrative being articulated.