

Hermeneutics: Foundational Principles

Revelation: God has spoken!

Christianity is a “revealed faith,” meaning that it is not based on mystical experiences of enlightenment or human wisdom, but on the claim that God has spoken directly to humanity in the Bible.

- **Revelation and language**

The Bible is the record of God communicating to humans through *words*.

“With language God creates the world; through language He reveals His design in history to men. There is a supreme confidence in an ultimate coherence of meaning through language that informs the biblical vision.”

Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*

The gift of language. Words are not just animal noises, like a bird chirping or a cow mooing, that cause neuro-chemical responses for the purpose of survival or reproduction. Words express *meaning* through propositions, or statements. Words are a symbolic form of communication possible only for conscious, rational, intentional beings concerned not merely with survival, but with the pursuit of the lofty realities of truth, beauty, goodness, and love. Through language, a person understands their inner life and discloses their thoughts and feelings to another. This ability is one of the evidences of humanity’s unique creation in God’s image and is the basis for His revelation to us.

For an excellent assessment of the relationship of language to the unique features of human consciousness and intentionality, see John Searle, “The Chinese Room.”

- **Power of God’s word**

God’s word in creation. All that exists flows from the creative power of God’s word. The Bible begins with the dramatic pronouncement, “God said... and it was... and it was good” (Gen. 1:3—31). *So life itself reflects the ordered, rational structure of language.* Molecular biologist Francis Collins, Director of the Human Genome Project writes,

"One can think of DNA as an instructional script, a software program, sitting in the nucleus of the cell. Its decoding language has only four letters in its alphabet (A,C,T,G). A particular instruction, a gene, is made up of hundreds or thousands of letters of code... All of the elaborate functions of the cell, even in as complex an

organism as ourselves, have to be directed by the order of the letters in this script. Investigations of many organisms, from bacteria to humans, reveal that this genetic code, by which information is translated into protein, is universal in all known organisms. No tower of Babel was to be allowed in the language of life."

Francis Collins, *The Language of God*

The scriptures teach that nature declares the creative, omnipotent power of God:

The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies declare the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. Psalm 19:1.2 NLT

God's word in history. The power of God's word in creation is also manifested in history, as we will explore in greater detail with theological narratives. Old Testament prophets were careful to make the connection between God's *omnipotent* word in creation and his *sovereign* word in history:

Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: "Ask Me about the things to come concerning My sons [history], and you shall commit to Me the work of My hands. It is I who made the earth and created man upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hands and I ordained all their host. [nature]" Isaiah 45:11,12

- **Provision of God's word**

Revelation and knowledge. How could human beings, limited by space and time, ever really know the eternal God unless He chose to make Himself known? Philosophers and religious sages have pondered the chasm separating time and eternity for centuries, leaving twenty-first century people cynical that there can be any real answer to our search. But what if God has spoken? What if God took the initiative to reach out into space and time to communicate? Then we would have a true basis for knowing. And this is the claim of scripture: God has spoken and consequently, we can know God!

Ways of knowing. When we say that we know something or someone, what do we really mean? What does it mean to *know*? *The Bible presents us with interrelated modes of knowledge, rooted in how God created us as personal beings.*

First, God's word comes to us in the *propositional* terms of language, or *de dicto* knowledge. That is, truths *about* God are revealed in the sentences of scripture. These are statements of fact, meaning that they can be weighed against the evidence of science, reason, experience, and history (see Luke 1:1—4).

Second, scripture provides *wisdom*, or *de re* knowledge. Wisdom is the practical art of understanding (Gr. *phronesis*) that comes from living out the truths of scripture. Cultivating wisdom brings forth awareness, an insight into the way things are, the essence of things (Gr. *sophia*). Like an apprentice learning his craft from a master, students of the Bible begin to think and assess life from God's perspective, according to his priorities, creating clarity and a discerning eye for life that results in blessing (Heb. 5:14; 1 Cor. 2:14; Ps. 1, 119).

Third, the scriptures cultivate *personal*, or *de se* knowing. That is, the scriptures not only reveal truths *about* God, they are also a means through which we can enjoy personal communion *with* God mediated by the Holy Spirit. That God's word is personal is evident in Christ: the Word made flesh (John 1:1—4). The written word, like the incarnate Word, is personal communication between God and His people.

Word of God and the mind of man. The scripture is more than mere words on a page. Biblical truth is "living and active" and able to expose the "thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). God communicates directly to our hearts and minds through His word. So scripture is "food" for the hungry (Deut. 8:3; 1 Pet. 2:2); a "shield" for the defenseless (Pr. 30:5); a "sword" for spiritual combat (Eph. 6:17); a guide to the perplexed (Ps. 119:105,169).

Word of God and the mind of God. The awareness that scripture is "God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16), that He speaks to us through His living word is truly transforming. More remarkable still is the realization that through the scripture, we actually think the very thoughts of God! This is worth a moment's reflection. All fields of knowledge seek ultimate reality, ultimate answers. Physicists try to form a "theory of everything," philosophers seek timeless, universal truth, religious seekers set out to discover transcendent reality. Humans by nature have a need deep within to fully know. As Socrates lay dying, he comforted his fellow seekers of truth saying,

[T]here is good reason for anyone who reaches the end of this journey which lies before me to hope that there, if anywhere, he will attain the object to which all of his efforts have been directed during life... to the place where there is a prospect of attaining the object of lifelong desire, which is Wisdom.

Plato, *Phaedo*

Students of the Bible, like Socrates, seek the Source of all truth. And the seeking is not without reward: Amazingly, through the scripture, we are transported into the counsel of heaven (Rev. 4:1,2). Because we are indwelt by the Spirit, we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:10—16). And like Moses at Sinai, we are transformed as we behold Him as in a mirror (2 Cor. 3:18), eagerly anticipating the moment we will

“fully know, just as we are fully known” (1 Cor. 13:12). This is the extraordinary pleasure and privilege of scripture—to enter into the mind and heart of God! We really should view our time in God’s word as worship and preparation for eternity.

For a helpful discussion of the range of knowledge, see David Lewis, “Attitudes De Dicto and De Se,” *Philosophical Review*, 88:513—543. See also Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 347—380.

- **Stewardship of God’s word**

A sacred trust. What could be more precious than possessing God’s word to humanity? For this reason, we are taught to “guard” this “treasure” (1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:14). Many people come in the name of God with all kinds of messages. But only in the Bible has God spoken. So as “stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor. 4:1), God calls us to guard the scripture against those who distort its meaning (1 Tim. 6:20,21; 2 Tim. 1:13,14). That means we must know how to “accurately divide the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Our ability to interpret the scriptures faithfully is a sacred task, something we must approach with humility and rigor, along with the delight and joy of discovery.

Further, we are entrusted with God’s word to encourage one another in the life of Christ (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; 2 Tim. 4:1—4). The church is to be a word-centered community and God calls us all to make a contribution by using His word to infuse His perspective and liberating truths in each others’ lives. And how sweet it is to sense the reality of the Spirit granting insight into God’s word and sharing it with your brothers and sisters.

Interpreting the Bible

Purpose of interpretation: Discovering the author’s intended meaning. Language is about communication and we speak or write so we can be understood. Understanding happens when the message received is a faithful representation of the message sent. It’s the responsibility of the student of scripture to stand under the author(ity) of scripture.

Yet meaning in language is not always clear. Unlike mathematical calculation, words are somewhat ambiguous and subject to *interpretation*—there is always a subjective aspect inherent in language. But of course it doesn’t follow, as some postmodern theorists have said, that all literature is like a Rorschach ink blot, where the meaning is forever obscured by subjectivity, and rests totally on each person’s impression, that it’s impossible to know what an author actually means. Denying all objective meaning to language is as ironic as it is absurd. Some years ago, Madonna sang a song that

went, “Words are meaningless, especially sentences” (Madonna, “Bed Time Stories”). Surely she thought we’d understand what she meant.... or did she? Are her lyrics meaningless?

We can strive for an ever more clear understanding of a text without having to possess absolute certainty about its meaning. We can gain *accurate*, but not *exhaustive* understanding. (note: W. Anderson’s three umpires / doctor looking at x-rays)

For a detailed discussion of “authorial intent,” see E. D. Hirsch, *Validity In Interpretation*.

Process of interpretation: Inductive method. There are lots of productive ways to study the Bible. *Topical* study looks for answers to doctrinal questions like, “What does the Bible teach about salvation?” Most people read the Bible *devotionally*, sifting through the scriptures, looking for truths that speak to inner needs or current interests. But if the purpose is to understand the author’s intended meaning, we’ll need the more disciplined approach that inductive method supplies.

Inductive method is a way of reasoning used in all areas of life from practical problem solving to the rigorous experimental methods of science. It is a common sense approach to giving an explanation for observed data. For Bible study, it is how interpreters take the data of the text and draw conclusions about its intended meaning. Each inductive study worksheet in this workbook is simply a systematic, step by step application of two key inductive principles:

Principle: *Scripture interprets scripture.* In inductive reasoning, we look for *meaning drawn from the text itself*, not some meaning imposed on it. *The interpretative principles are found explicitly or assumed in the text.* Like detectives, Bible interpreters look to the evidence of scripture for clues to its meaning.

Within the Bible we find hundreds of references and allusions to other passages that provide a clear foundation for understanding how the text is meant to be understood. In this way, the Bible supplies its own commentary, or guide to interpretation. Biblical writers used techniques like *repetition* to unify themes developed over hundreds of years by numerous authors. These repetitions are of four general types and provide the core of *inter-textual commentary*.

Technical terms. Words used by numerous biblical authors to convey the same idea or a growing theme in the scripture: “Branch,” “Son,” “Servant,” “Day of the Lord,” “Christ,” “kingdom,” “temple,” “grace,” etc.

Event repetition. Reference to key events, especially in Israel's history, that show a continuity and pattern of meaning over time: Exodus, creation, wilderness wandering, etc. This is called *motif*: the meaning of the present or future is defined in terms of a past event.

Direct quotes or allusions. Almost every biblical writer quotes or alludes to other biblical texts. Careful analysis will show *how* a later author understood earlier texts, thus shedding light on both the scripture cited and the passage in which the citation occurs.

Promises and covenants. No other point of repetition demonstrates the unity of the Bible more explicitly than promises and covenants. Key promises God makes are cited or alluded to in every book of the Bible.

For an excellent explanation of the concept of repetition as a literary and theological technique and inter-textual commentary demonstrating continuity and unity throughout the Bible, see Walter Kaiser, *Toward An Exegetical Theology*; Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture* and *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*; Richard Longnecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*.

Principle: *Interpretation is testable* by the standards of inductive proof.

Adequacy. This criterion relates to *completeness*. Does the interpretation explain all of the details of the text? Are all subordinate points meaningfully related to the main point?

Consistency. This criterion relates interpretation to *relevant factual information*. Has the interpretation effectively considered current cultural factors? Is the interpretation consistent with historical events to which the text refers? What does the text state or imply about nature?

Coherence. This criterion tests the *internal logic* of the interpretation and focuses attention on the *structure* of the text. Does the interpretation harmonize with other related scriptures? Does the interpretation include an appropriate understanding of literary context and genre, word meaning, and sentence structure? What is the basic argument of the text?

For a detailed description of inductive proof, see Patrick Hurley, *A Concise Introduction to Logic*, 440—456.

Biblical interpretation, like all literary interpretation, is a skill developed over time. It's part art, part science. The key to enjoying the process is to relax and build your

strength over time. Progress, not perfection, is the issue. I find the words of Old Testament scholar Walter Kaiser as encouraging today as when I first sat under his teaching:

“[The] aspiring exegete needs to have a patient persistence, a disciplined mind and methodology, a confidence motivated by a personal faith and born of a hunger to experience firsthand the transforming impact of what is discovered in the text. Rewarding results will come only if the search is sustained by an enthusiastic joy of discovery through the long hours of hard and patient work. And in all, it must be tempered by the experience of prayer and suffering. The exegetical route is not easy; it requires a lot of work, but in the end it is just as rewarding as it is awesome in its initial demands.”

Walter Kaiser, *Toward An Exegetical Theology*

Inductive Study Worksheet: Old Testament Narrative

Overview

Summarize the historical situation, the main themes of the book and its place in the OT story

Structure (skeleton) of the individual narrative

- Identify and chart *each scene* in the narrative:

setting	plot and dialogue	purpose clues
<p><i>Context:</i></p> <p>briefly summarize narratives coming before and after</p> <p><i>Identify:</i></p> <p><u>who</u>—characters</p> <p><u>where</u>—location</p> <p><u>when</u>—time</p> <p>(shifts in setting signal shifts from one scene to another)</p>	<p><i>Narration:</i></p> <p><u>how</u> the story is told</p> <p>“point of view”</p> <p>space & tempo</p> <p>editorial insertions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction • conclusion • clarification • evaluations 	<p><i>Identify:</i></p> <p><u>what</u> the story is really about</p> <p>often the <i>main point</i> of the narrative is found from these clues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summary statements • repetitions • God speaking

	<p>why actions & people matter</p> <p><i>Action:</i></p> <p>plot movement and character development</p> <p><i>Dialogue:</i></p> <p>summarize the flow of conversation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promise or covenant • context • decisive or symbolic actions • irony • moment of realization
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- state the *main point* and how each scene supports, illustrates, or applies it

Content (muscle) of the narrative

- *Historical/cultural:*

identify customs, objects, events, and persons relevant to the story

Theology:

Identify and define key theological terms or concepts

What the narrative teaches about God’s nature or the plan of salvation

What the narrative teaches about the human condition

How the narrative reflects or advances key theological themes in the OT

Application (skin) of the narrative

- How the narrative instructs God’s people to be faithful to him

What Is Old Testament Narrative?

Narrative in scripture

Narratives are stories told by a narrator and which include substantial elements of dialogue. Genesis—Esther and substantial parts of many of the prophets are narratives.

I. Old Testament narrative as history

History vs. myth

It has been widely taught that the narratives of the Old Testament are basically nationalistic myths, not intended to be taken historically or factually. This view emerged out of the critical scholarship of Europe in the 19th century and was rooted in the assumption that the miraculous is impossible and that the Bible was the product of cultural evolution. However, several reasons exist to view Old Testament narratives as written from the perspective of history. *First*, these narratives are cited all over the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New as history. *Second*, the idea that we should view these narratives as myth unless corroborated by archaeology is an unfounded assumption not applied to any other purportedly historical account. *Third*, the literary style of Old Testament narrative is significantly different than the characteristics found in the obviously non-historical mythology of Israel's neighbors.

“The ancient Hebrew writers purposefully nurtured and developed prose narration to take the place of the epic genre which by its content was intimately bound up with the world of paganism, and appears to have had a special standing in the polytheistic cults. The recitation of the epics was tantamount to an enactment of cosmic events in the manner of sympathetic magic. In the process of total rejection of the polytheistic religions and their ritual expressions in the cult, epic songs and also the epic genre were purged from the repertoire of the Hebrew authors.”

Shemaryahu Talmon, “The Comparative Method in Biblical Interpretation—Principles and Problems,” in Robert Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*.

Narrative as apologetic

A key purpose of Old Testament narrative is to contrast the actually existing God of Israel, a God capable of acting in history, with the nonexistent animistic deities worshipped in the ancient near east. (see 1 Kings 18; Isaiah 46:1—11; 40:18—24)

Biblical faith is a challenge to commitment, and even the historical literature as we have it was edited, preserved, and for the most part originally written with this definite evangelical purpose. Decide on the evidence and act accordingly! What is the evidence? It is the evidence of history. What God has the power to do what he wills

and to fulfill what he promises? Virtually the only comparative religion which the Old Testament possesses is of this type.

G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment*

For examples of comparison and analysis of OT historical narratives and mythological sagas of the ancient near east, see Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*; James Prichard, *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, vol. 1,2; Bruce Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 5—17 and *Genesis*, 21—78; Henri Blocher, *In The Beginning*, 15—38.

Hebrew concept of “linear time”

The Bible stands in startling contrast with all ancient conceptions of time. Following the cycle of nature, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, African, Mayan, and Chinese writing from antiquity described history as a wheel or circle. Time leads to nothing, but just repeats the endless turning from season to season, life to death. However, in the biblical view, *history progresses through a meaningful and coherent drama toward an end*. Without this notion of linear time, concepts like “progress” or “meaning” or “purpose” are inconceivable.

Creation and election, promise and fulfillment, were the means by which history was interpreted. Thus it came about that the biblical sense of history was born. The contemporary polytheisms, having analyzed the problem of life over against nature, had little sense of or concern with the significance of history. Nature with its changing seasons was cyclical, and human life, constantly integrating itself with nature by means of cultic activity and sympathetic magic, moved with nature in a cyclical manner. ... [But] Yahweh was the God of history, the living God unaffected by the cycles of nature, who had set himself to accomplish a definite purpose in time... Both beginning and end, creation and eschatology, therefore, became an integral part of the Israelite view of time.

G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment*

Commenting on God’s call to Abraham to “go forth from your country to the land I will show you,” (Gen. 12:1) historian Thomas Cahill writes,

On every continent, in every society, [Abraham] would have been given the same advice that wise men as diverse as Heraclitus, Lao-tsu, and Siddhartha would one day give their followers: do not journey but sit; compose yourself by the river of life, meditate on its ceaseless and meaningless flow—on all that is past or passing or to

come—until you have absorbed the pattern and have come to peace the Great Wheel and with your own death and the death of all things in the corruptible sphere.

Thomas Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews*

II. Old Testament narrative as theology

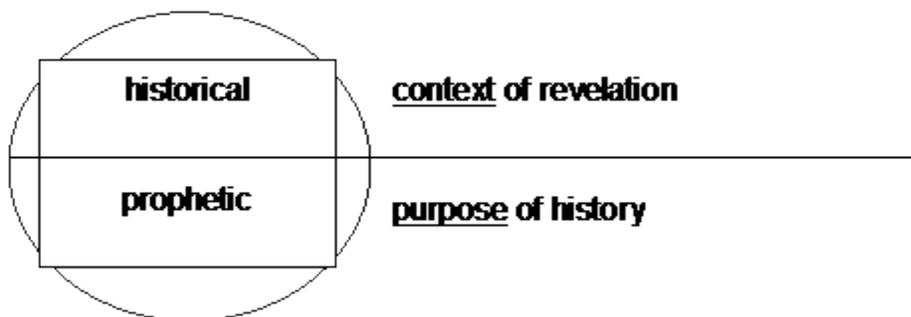
Prophetic history

Historical narratives of the Old Testament were *written by prophets to demonstrate the faithfulness of God to his promises in and sovereignty over human history* (see 2 Chron. 32:32; cf. Isaiah 36—39; 2 Kings 18—20). So historical narratives are written for a deliberate theological purpose.

Unfolding God's plan

Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, “My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish My good pleasure; calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.” Isaiah 46:9—11

Old Testament narratives are interrelated, progressing accounts of what God's purpose for history is and how He intends to accomplish it.



III. Old Testament narrative as literature

Narrative's theology points to the literary center, the *main point* of the story.

Principle: Theological narrative is *selective* and *purposeful*. Events and persons anchored in history are to be understood in relation to main stated or implied theological point of the narrative.

Principle: The main point of any particular narrative is based on its relationship to the broader structure of the canonical whole. This is much like understanding a particular act of a play in the context of the whole story.

Implication: Interpreters must *inductively* identify the theological *framework* or structure of Old Testament narrative—*derived from the text itself*.

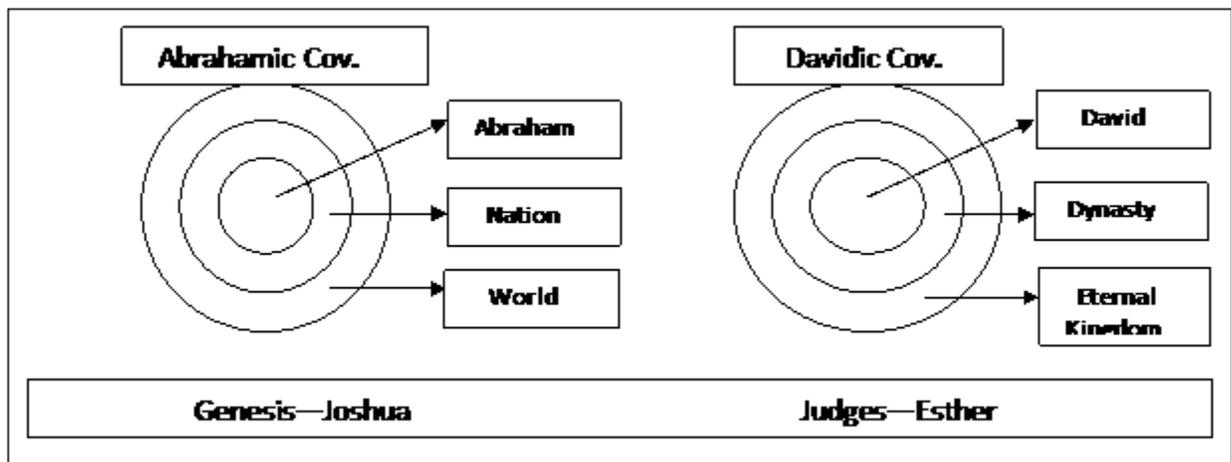
How we know what the story is about: Key theological statements serve as “**markers**,” or literary centers to OT narrative. Meaning of the narrative is rooted in these theological statements:

- Blessings—*Be*: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” Genesis 1:28.
- Covenants—Law of Moses (Exodus 20ff); the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31)
- Promises—*I will*: Unconditional statements of God’s intent (see below)

Two key theological markers as structural literary centers of Old Testament narrative:

Genesis 12:1—3 God’s promise to Abraham

2 Samuel 7:8—17 God’s covenant with David



Abrahamic Promise as structural center of Genesis—Joshua narrative

Blessing on Abraham

Nationhood

- Gen. 15—Exodus 19: Forming a people
- Exodus 20—40, Leviticus, Deuteronomy: Ruling a people

- Joshua: Inheriting the land

Davidic Covenant as structural center of Judges—2 Chronicles

Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel: Preparation for monarchy

2 Samuel 7—24 (1 Chron. 17—29): God’s blessing on David

1 Kings 1—11 (2 Chron. 1—9): God’s faithfulness to Solomon

1 Kings 12—2 Kings 25 (2 Chron. 10—36): God’s faithfulness to David’s line

See Walter Kaiser, *Toward An Old Testament Theology*, 41—70

Essential markers controlling Old Testament development can be recognized in the promise, blessing, covenant theme:

Salvation History Through The Old Testament

Era:	Date:	Book(s):	Historic Events:	Key Theological Markers:
Prehistory		Genesis 1—11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation • Fall • Flood • Babel scattering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation blessing • Adam Covenant • Seed blessing • Shem blessing
Patriarchal Era	2160—1876 B.C.	Genesis 12—50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call of Abraham • Four generations from Abraham 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covenant with Abraham • Heirs • Land • Judah blessing
Egyptian Captivity and Exodus	1876—1446 B.C.	Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moses • Plagues • Exodus • Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God remembers and redeems • Mosaic Law

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanderings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nation of priests • Sub. Atonement
Conquest and Judges	1406—1050	Joshua, Judges, Ruth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canaan conquered • Cycle of apostasy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulfillment of land promise • Chaos without king
United Monarchy	1050—931 B.C.	1, 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1—11; 1 Chronicles—2 Chronicles 9; Wisdom Lit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saul, David and Solomon • Israel’s “Golden Age” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covenant with David: • Eternal kingdom • Eternal dynasty
Divided Monarchy	931—586 B.C.	1 Kings 12—2 Kings; 2 Chron. 10—36; Hosea, Micah, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah 1—26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division of Israel from Judah • Conquest of Israel (722 BC) and Judah (586 BC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prophets predict God’s temporal judgment and future promise: • Davidic King • Day of the Lord • Servant of the Lord
Exile and Resettlement	586—400 B.C.	Jeremiah 27—52, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Malachi, Zechariah, Haggai,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judah in Babylon for 70 years • God restores a remnant in Judah; rebuilds Jerusalem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Covenant • Revelation of the future of human history • Triumph of God’s kingdom

Each era (broad literary unit) is *connected* to preceding and following eras, establishing the continuity and unity of OT as a narrative whole.

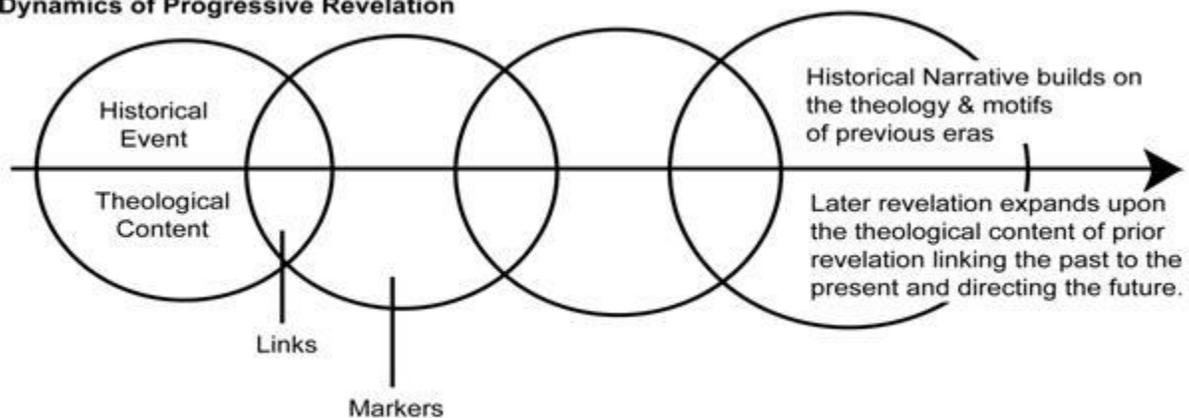
Connections between eras can be identified by the presence of “links” that connect the present with the past and future

- Links are found at crucial *transitions* throughout biblical narrative, explaining how the present narrative relates to the broader structure of the Old Testament .

As past revelation is injected into a subsequent narrative, *progressive revelation* takes shape—the story builds

- Awareness of these links is central to demonstrating inductively the theological and literary unity of scripture.

Dynamics of Progressive Revelation



Links uniting eras of biblical narrative: an overview

- Prepatriarchal to Patriarchal:
 - “Fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 8:17; 9:1,7;17:6; 26:24)
 - “Seed” connecting blessing/curse of Gen. 3 to Noah (Gen 5:29)
 - Transfer of blessing from Noah to Shem (Gen. 9:26)
 - Transfer of blessing from Shem to Abraham (Gen. 11:10—32)
- Patriarchal to Egyptian Captivity and Exodus:
 - God remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex. 2:23—25; 6:5)
- Exodus to Conquest and Judges:
 - God with Joshua “just as” with Moses (1:5; 3:7)
 - Repetition of Exodus events in Josh 3—5
- Joshua/Judges to United Monarchy:
 - Judges era plagued with the problem, “no king in the land” (Jud. 21:25)
 - Ruth’s genealogy as bridge to David
 - Prophetic words of Hannah linking final judge to king (1 Sam. 2:10)

- Link of Judges era and Law to monarchy (1 Sam. 8:1—9 cf. Deut. 17)
- United to Divided Monarchy and Exile:
 - God will divide the nation, but remain faithful to the Davidic Covenant (1 Kings 11:4—13)
 - God will judge the nation based on the conduct of the kings (1 Kings 9:4—9)—Note the link to the Law.

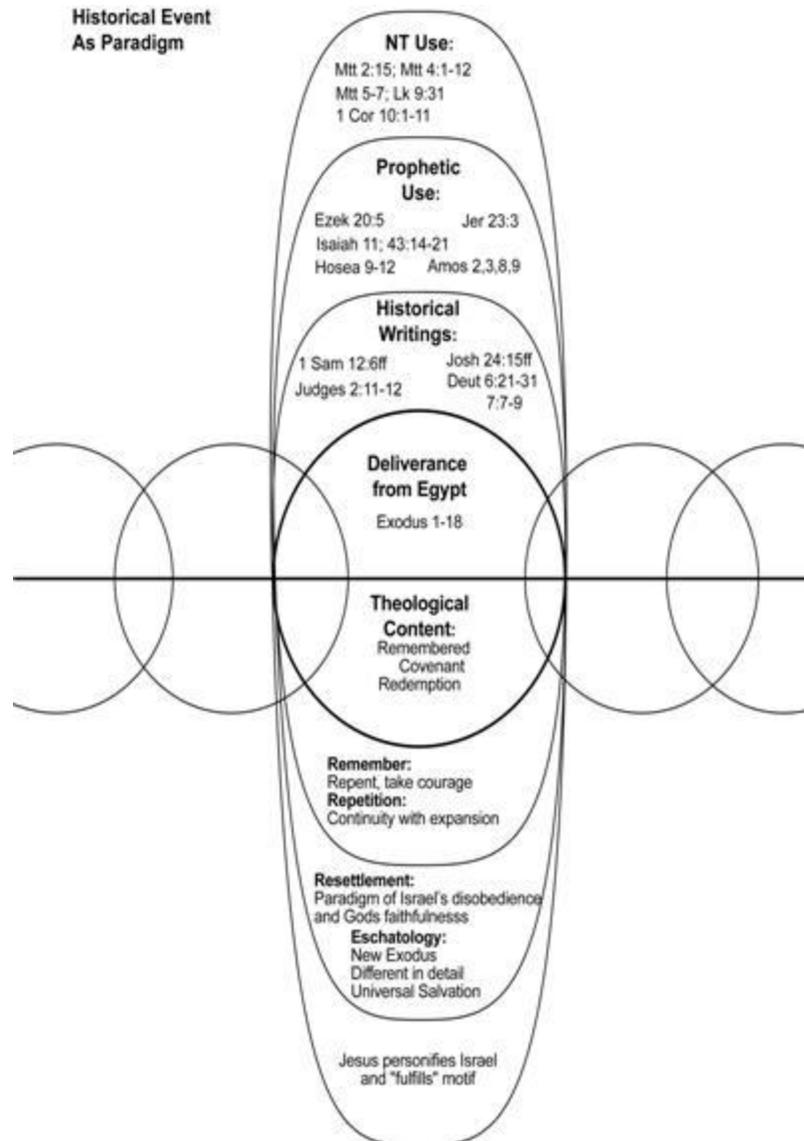
Old Testament narrative and the flow of history

Principle: In Old Testament narrative, the historical past is incomplete, being “filled,” and ultimately “fulfilled” in subsequent revelation.

Key elements in history can become *thematic paradigms* or *motifs*, repeated in various ways in later narratives and prophecies anticipating ultimate fulfillment at history’s end, uniting both Old and New Testaments.

The theology of the *prototype* informs the meaning of the later event. Examples of this pattern in Old Testament narratives include the “barren” theme, beginning with Sarah and reaching its “fullness” in Mary. In each case, God’s plan in history is continued by the miraculous birth of a hero figure (see Gen. 21, 25, 30, 1 Sam. 1).

- Central narrative themes in salvation history: from Genesis to Revelation (**this is really crucial**—unity of scripture around this: Rev. 19:7,8 also Col. 1:13-23)
 - *regeneration*—creation of life out of chaos and lifelessness
 - *reconciliation*—forming a unique covenant people
 - *redemption*—rescuing the enslaved from their bondage



- Exodus 1—8.
 - God remembers Abrahamic Covenant
 - Redemption
- Historical writings.
 - Remember:
 - Repent
 - Take courage
 - Deut. 7:6—11
 - Josh. 1:5; 3:7; 4:23 (Ch. 3—5)
 - 1 Sam. 12:6—8
 - Ps. 114:1—3 (exodus and conquest are one event)
- Prophetic use.
 - Ezek. 20:33—36 Exodus as paradigm of Israel's disobedience

- Hos. 11:1 (cf. Num. 24:7,8) Israel called from Egypt as God's son
- A greater exodus promised (Jer. 23:7,8; Isaiah 11:1)
- Exodus reaches its eschato-logical fullness (Is. 19:19ff)
- N.T. use.
 - Completion of motif: *pleroo*
 - Mt. 2:15; 4:1—12; Lk. 9:31; 1 Cor. 10:1—11

“Such a transfer of a designation used pointedly of Israel (Exodus 3:10) weighed heavily on ancient Jewish translators. Unable to tolerate such a theological paradox, the Septuagint and Targum traditions renationalized the text and substituted Israel for Egypt.” Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture*

Use of narrative as motif identified by:

- Using language rooted in prototype in later texts (Isaiah 19; Jonah 4:2))
- Rhetorical formulas: “just as... so” (Josh. 3:7; 4:4; Is. 11:16...)
- Relating “first” things to “new” or “last” things (Is. 43:18; 65:16,17; Jer. 31)

Assignment: Read Genesis 12—36. *Note* each time God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1—3) is referenced and *describe* how these references unify the narratives in this section of Genesis.