

Grammatical

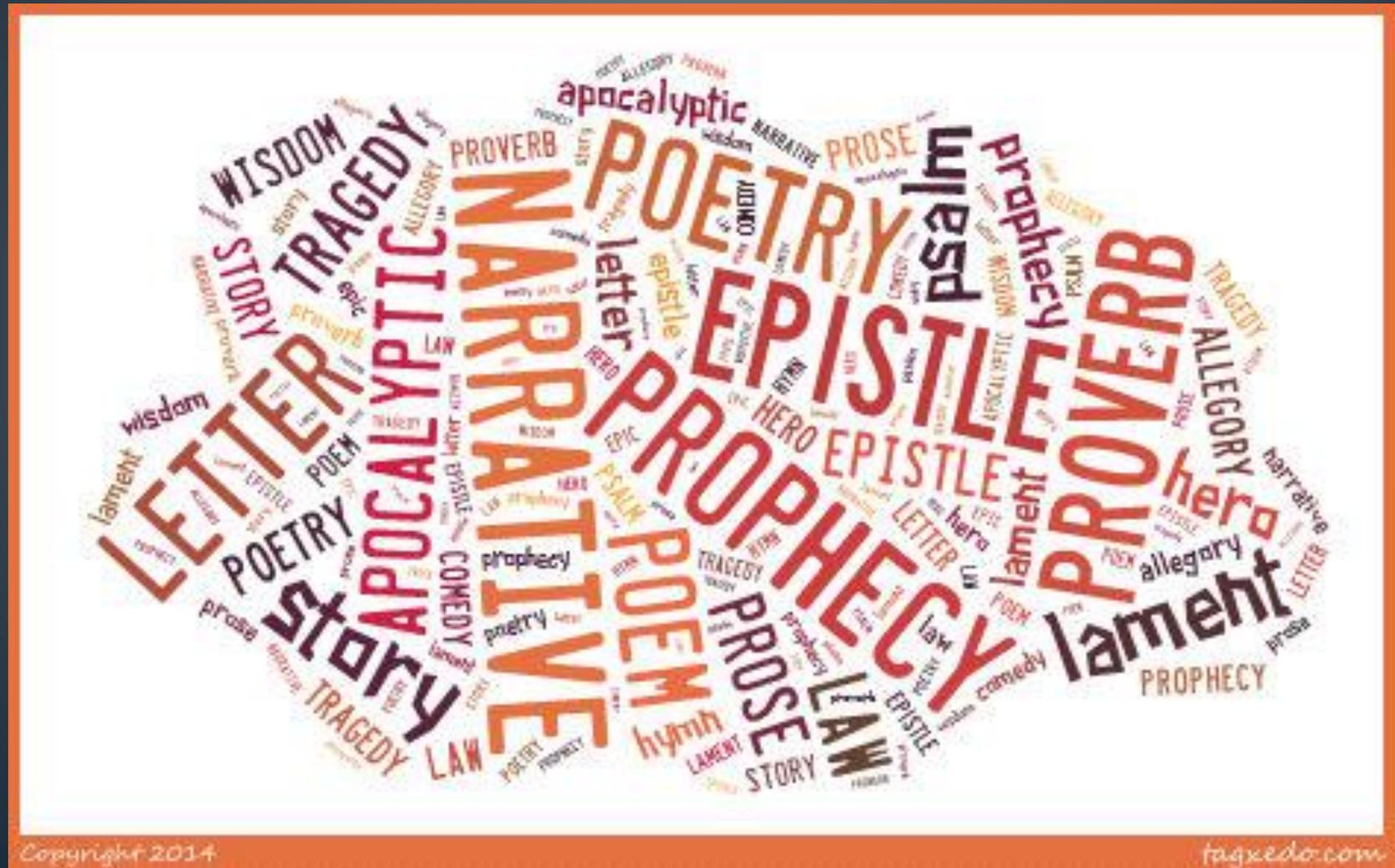
Historical

Literary

Redemptive

Finding the Theme of the Ancient
Text

What **literary genre** are you studying?

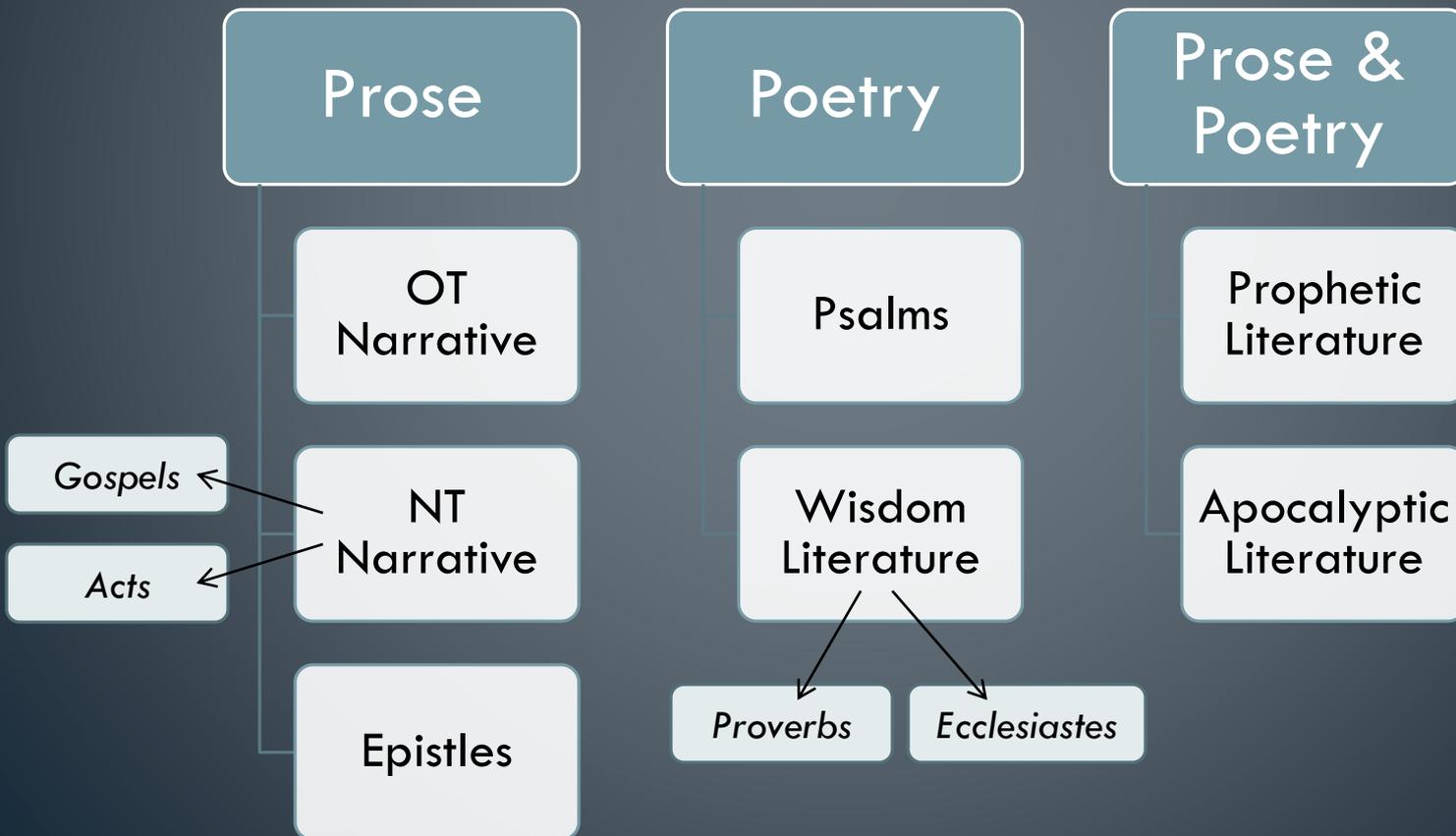


Literary Genre Affects Interpretation

- Different kinds of books have different rules of interpretation
- We know this instinctively
 - *News article vs political cartoon*
 - *Text message vs press release*
 - *Love poem vs instruction manual*
 - *Casual conversation vs courtroom testimony*
 - *Box scores vs sportswriter's editorial on coaching mistakes*
 - *When we counsel someone: "Don't take any offense, he was just joking."*

Literary Form (Genre) Affects Interpretation

- Not 1 book, but 66 books
- Many different kinds of books (or literary genres)



One kind of book can have aspects of another kind

- Epistle containing elements of wisdom literature (James 1:12)
- Apocalyptic literature beginning as an epistle (Revelation)
- Prophecy beginning as narrative & has apocalyptic parts (Daniel)
- Narrative with heavy poetic influence & little action (Job)

Sub-Genres Affect Interpretation

Speech

Dialogue

Oracle

Song

Hymn

Satire

Tragedy

Lament

Proverb

Parable

Law

Treaty

Literary Devices Affect Interpretation

Foreshadowing

Metaphor

Simile

Hyperbole

Irony

Foil

Allusion

Personification

Chiasm

Anthropomorphism

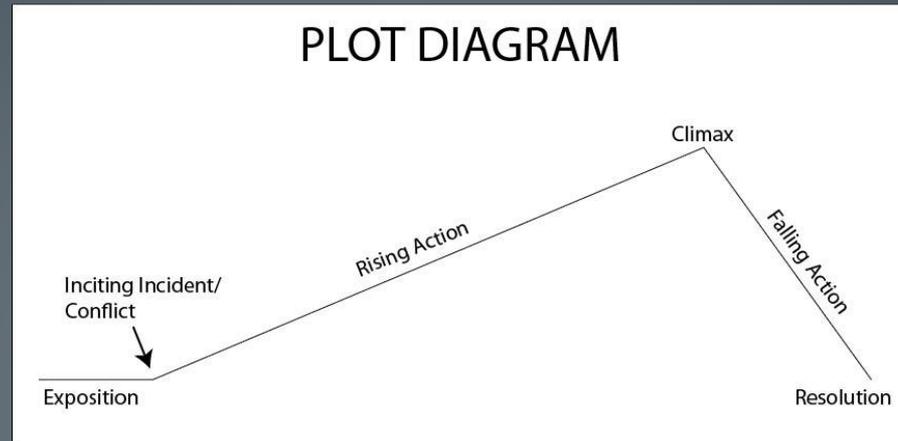
Inclusio

Synecdoche

Narratives (Old Testament)

- Plot

- *Conflict*
- *Rising Action*
- *Climax*
- *Falling Action*
- *Resolution*



Denouement

Lit. "tying up loose ends"

- Characters

- *Narrator*
- *Perspectives*
- *Character Development*
- *Foils*

- Setting

- *Geography*
- *Climate*
- *Sights & Smells*

Narratives (The Gospels)

- They have elements of a historical narrative requiring careful attention to plot, characters and setting
- They have elements of a biography because of the countless details of Jesus' life, teachings and miracles.
- Brand new type of literature: Witness Document
 - *"It is intended to be neither a formal historical treatise nor a biography of Jesus, but proclamation." –Wm. Lane, NICNT*
 - *Gospels emphasize Jesus' identity (e.g., God, Prophecy-Fulfiller, Savior)*
 - *Gospels center around statements of mission/calling [SEE NEXT SLIDE]*

Matthew

- “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” Matthew 5:17
- “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother...and a man’s foes will be those of his own household.” Matthew 10:34-35

Mark

- “And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.” Mark 8:31 (similarly 9:31; 10:33)
- “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45

Luke

- “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5:31-32
- “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Luke 19:10

John

- “For God so love the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He who believes in him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already.” John 3:16-18
- “I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me might not remain in darkness.” John 12:46

Narratives (The Gospels)

Announcing a New Era in Redemptive History

- [An angel to Joseph]: “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21
- “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Mark 1:1
- “As was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’ And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’” Luke 4:16-21
- “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth...For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” John 1:14-18

Narratives (The Gospels)

- Why 4 different evangelists (gospel writers)?

Portraits

- *“These four verbal portraits of Jesus clearly present a unified picture. They are talking about the same person. And yet the Bible provides four separate accounts for a reason. The Lord did not leave just one testimony. Each Gospel writer emphasizes slightly different themes, and we can learn something fresh about Jesus from each one. Ultimately, all four will enrich our understanding of Jesus himself.”*

–Mark Dever, *The Message of the New Testament: Promises Kept* @ 40-41

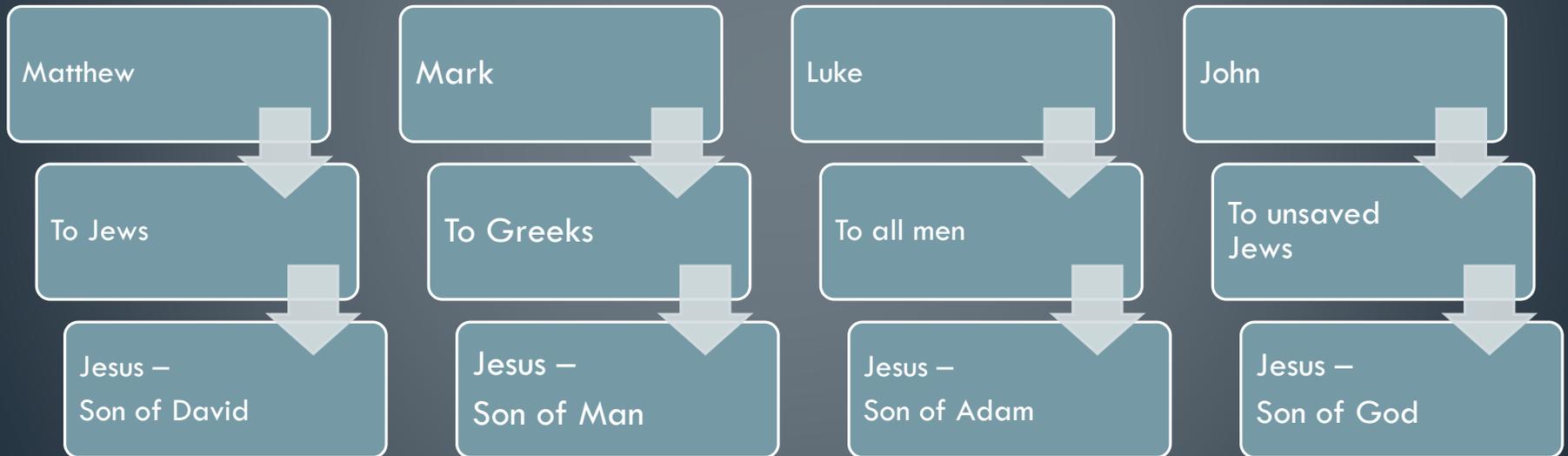
Instant Replay in Sports

- *“In these replays the action can be dramatically slowed down so that one is able to see much more than one was able to see in the action as it actually occurred. If one is given the full treatment – close-up, slow-action, forward-and-reverse, split-screen, the same scene from several perspectives, and with the verbal commentary and interpretation of an expert superimposed – one has a fair analogy for what the evangelists do.”*

–Donald Hagner, *“Interpreting the Gospels”*

Narratives (The Gospels)

- Why 4 different evangelists (gospel writers)?
 - Writing to different audiences
 - Emphasizing different themes



Narratives (The Gospels)

- Unity between the Gospels
 - *Unity of Person – the teaching, miracles and character of the Savior*
 - *Unity of Progression – events moving to climax of Christ's death & resurrection*
- History writing did not require exact quotes or strict chronology
 - *Freedom to quote in a certain way for emphasis*
 - *Freedom to arrange events in a certain order for emphasis*
- Each Gospel is a creative work in its own right, so we must ask:
 - *“Why is this account different than another gospel's account?”*
 - *“Why did he describe it this way?”*
 - *“Why did he include this detail?”*
 - *“Why did he omit this other detail?”*
 - *“Why did he place this event here (i.e., in its immediate context)*

Redaction Criticism