

# Finding the Theme of the Ancient Text

ULBC Teacher Training #3 (Pastor Jeff McKeever)

## A. From Text to Application – Sound Bible teaching requires three basic moves

1. *Determining the original meaning*
2. *Determining the meaning in the context of the whole Bible*
3. *ONLY THEN . . . Determining the application of this meaning for us*

## B. Grammatical-Historical-Literary-Redemptive Interpretation

1. *Grammatical*

2. *Historical*

### 3. **Literary**

- a. Identify what literary genre (i.e., what kind of book) you are studying
- b. 66 different books but many different kinds of books
- c. Literary genre affects how you interpret the text
- d. Biggest categories: prose and poetry (couple that don't fit squarely in either)
- e. Scripture generally includes books in these genres:
  - i. *Old Testament Narrative (Genesis, Joshua)*
  - ii. *New Testament Narrative (The Gospels and Acts)*
  - iii. *Epistles (Galatians, Jude)*
  - iv. *Psalms*
  - v. *Wisdom Literature (Proverbs & Ecclesiastes)*
  - vi. *Prophecy (Isaiah, Amos)*
  - vii. *Apocalyptic Literature (Revelation, parts of Daniel)*
- f. A book in one genre often uses elements of other genres
  - i. *1 Timothy 3:16*
  - ii. *James 1:12*
  - iii. *Revelation 1:4ff*
  - iv. *Daniel 1-6 compared with Daniel 7-12*
  - v. *Job 29:18-20*
- g. Subgenres
  - i. Proverbs – Paul quotes Epimenides a 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. Cretan poet (Titus 1:12)
  - ii. Parable – Luke 15:8-10
  - iii. Parable & Allegory – *Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23*
  - iv. Hymn – 1 Tim 3:16
  - v. Dialogue – e.g., Genesis 23:4-16
  - vi. Satire – e.g., Ester 1
  - vii. Lament – e.g., Psalm 22

h. Literary devices

- i. Metaphor – John 15
- ii. Simile – Zephaniah 1:17
- iii. Anthropomorphism – Zephaniah 1:4
- iv. Personification – Proverbs 1:20
- v. Allusion – Revelation 12:9 alludes to Genesis 3:1, 14
- vi. Foreshadowing – Genesis 12:10-20
- vii. Hyperbole – Mark 1:5
- viii. Irony – Esther 7:10
- ix. Chiasm – Colossians 1:16; 1 Samuel 12
- x. Inclusio – Genesis 39:2-4 & 21-23; Mark 1:3,4 & 12,13; Mark 1:1

i. Category #1 – Old Testament Narrative (Genesis)

i. Plot

- Conflict
- Rising Action
- Climax
- Falling Action & Resolution (not always positive – 1 Sam 28:19)

ii. Characters

- Narrator (Omniscient?)
- Perspectives
- Character Development
- Foils
- Don't forget that God is often a character

iii. Setting

- Geography (Acts 14)
- Climate
- Topography
- Sights & Smells

j. Category #2 – New Testament Narrative (The Gospels)

- i. Plot, character & setting
- ii. Elements of a biography
- iii. "Witness Document" – Emphasis on identity and mission of Jesus
- iv. *4 different evangelists*
  - *Different audiences*
  - *Emphasizing different themes*
  - *Unity of the Gospels (Person & Progression)*
  - *Different expectation of history writers*
  - *Redaction Criticism*

4. Redemptive

*"[T]hings in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible" seems to be in an odd order: spiritual, physical, physical, spiritual. This is actually a literary convention known as a chiasm or chiasmus (which derived from the Greek term for the letter X) is a sequence of two phrases or clauses which are parallel in meaning, but reverse in the order of the corresponding words. In a chiasm, the outside words receive emphasis. So, here, the unseen, spiritual things receive emphasis, as we might expect given the heresy about spiritual beings or emanations. See 2:18. Abrams, M.H., A Glossary of Literary Terms @ 160-161; Melick @ 218.*