

**INTRODUCTION:**

- 1) TODAY WE WILL CONCLUDE OUR STUDY OF UNDERSTANDING GENRES BY LOOKING AT *GOSPELS, ACTS, AND THE EPISTLES*

**THINGS WE WILL LOOK AT IN THIS LESSON:**

- 1) GOSPELS: PORTRAITS OF CHRIST
- 2) GOSPELS: TEACHING METHODS OF CHRIST
- 3) ACTS: AN INTERPRETIVE HISTORY
- 4) EPISTLES: OCCASIONAL DOCUMENTS
- 5) SUMMARY OF LITERARY METHODS

**USING WORD PICTURES:**

“Word pictures help the hearer **experience** our words, not just **hear** them.”

**PART 1 – GOSPELS: PORTRAITS OF CHRIST:**

**Q 1) WHAT CAN WE COMPARE THE GOSPELS TO?**

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**Q 2) WHAT ARE PERICOPES?**

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**EXAMPLE 1) HOW PERICOPES ARE INTRODUCED IN MARK 2...**

Mark 2:1–12: “A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum . . . so many gathered” (vv. 1–2).

Mark 2:13–17: “Once again . . . beside the lake. A large crowd came to him . . . As he walked along” (vv. 13–14).

Mark 2:18–22: “Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked” (v. 18)

Mark 2:23–27: “One Sabbath . . . grainfields . . . Pharisees said” (vv. 23–24)

**EXAMPLE 2) TYPE, PURPOSE, AND EXAMPLES OF PERICOPES...**

<b>Type of Pericope</b>	<b>Purpose of the Pericope</b>	<b>Examples of the Pericope</b>
Annunciation/ nativity stories	These stories prove the uniqueness of Christ's birth and relate it to prophecy.	Birth of John (Luke 1:5–25) Birth of Christ (Luke 2:1–7) Visit of Magi (Matthew 2:1–12)
Calling stories	Someone is called to follow Christ or respond to a specific command.	Calling first disciples (John 1:35–51) Calling of Levi (Mark 2:13–17)
Miracle stories	These stories recount miracles of healing the sick, controlling nature, casting out demons, or resurrecting the dead. The miracles announce the coming of the King and His kingdom with power.	Calms storm (Matthew 8:23–27) Casts out demons (Matthew 8:28–34) Raises girl (Matthew 9:18–26)
Recognition and witness stories	In recognition stories, someone discovers who Christ is. In witness stories, someone testifies about what He has done. Both present Christ as the Messiah.	Peter's confession (Matthew 16:13–20) Witness of the man healed of a legion of demons (Mark 5:1–20) The centurion (Matthew 27:45–54)
Encounter stories	Jesus has face-to-face dialog with an individual. In the end, the person accepts or rejects the claims of Christ.	Nicodemus (John 3:2–21) Samaritan woman (John 4:7–26) Man at the pool (John 5:5–15)
Conflict stories	Jesus is confronted by an opposing person or group. These stories tend to be apologetic in nature. They show how Christ answers His critics and the accusations of His enemies.	Sabbath controversy (Luke 6:1–11) Hand washing (Matthew 15:1–20) Accusation (Matthew 12:22–37)
Pronouncement stories	These stories may overlap other types but are distinctive because they end with a memorial pronouncement of Christ that is linked to the story.	Paralytic healed (Mark 2:1–12) Levi called (Mark 2:13–17) Fasting question (Mark 2:18–22)
Sermons/ teaching	Watch for Christ's sermons to explain something about entering, serving, or proclaiming His kingdom.	Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7) Commission (Matthew 9:35–10:42) Last things (Matthew 23–25)
Parables	These stories illustrate a truth about Christ and His kingdom. Like the pronouncement stories, a parable (or group of parables) will end with Christ's own application.	The soils (Matthew 13:1–23) The wedding (Matthew 22:1–14) The talents (Matthew 25:14–30)
Passion stories	These stories are related to the death and resurrection of Christ. They all occurred in the last week of Christ's ministry.	Last Supper (John 13:1–30) Crucifixion (John 19:16–27) Resurrection (John 20:1–8)

**Q 3) WHAT DOES EACH PERICOPE CONTRIBUTE TO?**

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**Q 4) WHAT DOES THE KINGDOM OF GOD CURRENTLY REFER TO?**

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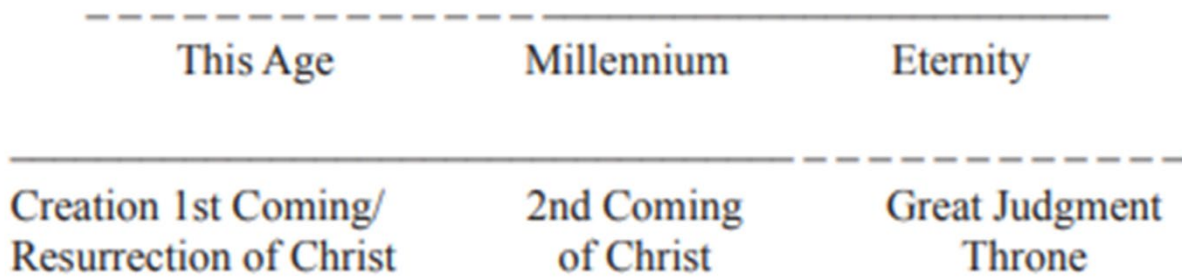
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**EXAMPLE 3) NOW/THEN PATTERN...**

- Present: “If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town.
- Future: “I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town” (Matthew 10:14–15).
- Present: “Whoever acknowledges me before men,
- Future: I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:32).
- Present: “But whoever disowns me before men,
- Future: I will disown him before my Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:33).
- Present: “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation,
- Future: the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38).

**EXAMPLE 4) THIS AGE AND THE AGE TO COME...**

*The Age to Come*



**Q 5) WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO READ THE GOSPELS VERTICALLY?**

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**Q 6) WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO READ THE GOSPELS HORIZONTALLY?**

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**PART 2 – GOSPELS: TEACHING METHOD OF CHRIST:**

**EXAMPLE 5) CHRIST'S CONCRETE IMAGERY...**

**Statements from one of Christ's sermons (Matthew 5-7) that are now common in everyday usage:**

- The salt of the earth (5:13)
- A city on a hill (5:14)
- Don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing (6:3)
- Our daily bread (6:11)
- The lilies of the field (6:28)
- Pearls before swine (7:6)
- Wolves in sheep's clothing (7:15)

**EXAMPLE 6) CHRIST'S SAYINGS...**

**How do you explain the apparent contradiction in the following statements of Christ?**

- "For whoever is not against us is for us." (Mark 9:40)
- "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters." (Luke 11:23)

**EXAMPLE 7) CHRIST'S USE OF EXAGGERATED LANGUAGE...**

**A General Rule:** If responding to Christ's statement *literally* causes conflict with other Bible teaching, is physically impossible, or would not achieve the desired result that Christ wanted, we can assume that the saying is a figure of speech.

The Statement	The Problem	The Meaning
"Remove the log in your eye" (Matthew 7:5).	This is a physical impossibility.	The sin you hide may be more serious than the sin you expose.
"When you pray, go into your room" (Matthew 6:6).	Christ did not limit His own prayer to a room, and restricting our praying to a certain location was not what Christ intended.	Do not pray just to show off your spirituality. Pray just as intensely in private as you do in public.
"Pluck out your eye" (Matthew 5:29).	Mutilation of the body would not have the result Christ wanted.	No sin is worth it if it keeps you out of heaven.
"Leave your gift at altar" (Matthew 5:23–24).	A person who had traveled weeks to worship at the temple would not be hurt by taking time to pray before he went home to make amends.	Do not delay to make things right with one who is in conflict with you.

**PART 3 – ACTS: AN INTERPRETIVE HISTORY:**

**Q 7) WHAT ARE THE THREE RULES FOR DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN WHAT IS NORMATIVE AND WHAT IS DESCRIPTIVE?**

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**EXAMPLE 8) THE PRINCIPLE DRAWN FROM THE DESCRIPTIVE EVENT...**

<b>Descriptive event</b>	<b>The principle drawn from the illustration</b>
Casting lots to find leaders (Acts 1:26)	We must seek the direction of God in the selection of leaders.
Peter's shadow and the healing service (Acts 5:15)	It is the power of God, not a method, that brings healing.
Burning books that teach witchcraft (Acts 19:19)	The believer should not keep anything that would tempt him or her to return to a life of sin.
Joining in purification rites in the temple (Acts 21:24)	To lead people into the future, a leader must relate to their past and present.

**PART 4 – EPISTLES: OCCASIONAL DOCUMENTS:**

**Q 8) WHAT ARE THE TWO KEYS TO INTERPRETING THE EPISTLES?**

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**EXAMPLE 9) DISTINGUISHING IF AN ACTION IS “NORMATIVE” OR “DESCRIPTIVE” ...**

**When you suspect that an instruction in the Epistles is descriptive rather than normative, you should ask the following four questions:**

1. *Is the instruction mentioned more than once in the Bible?*
2. *Is the instruction confirmed or clarified by other passages?*
3. *How does this instruction fit into the entire message of the Epistle?*
4. *What truth does the passage teach to the modern believer?*

**PART 5 – WRAPPING UP: SUMMARY OF LITERARY METHODS:**

**Important keys to remember when you are studying the different genres of the Bible:**

1. The content of a passage cannot be separated from the form in which it was written.
2. The variety of literary methods that God used to write the Bible should not be viewed as an obstacle to learning.
3. The goal is to touch our hearts, assist our minds, and transform our wills.

