

Preaching from Old Testament Narratives

2 Kings 17:6-23

- 'ninth year', 'the people of Israel', 'they' – History
- 'Because' - History with a point
- 'the LORD' x 16 – sin is against him, personal anger of husband God
- 'Out of Egypt' – crying out "Put me in a Bible overview" (cf. similarly the first and last verses of Judges or Ruth)
- 'Covenant' (v15), 'removed' (v18), 'afflicted' (v20)
 - Especially important drivers of OT narrative:
 - The kingship code: Deut. 17:14-20
 - Blessings & Curses: Deut. 28; Lev. 26
 - o Life, health, prosperity, agricultural abundance, respect, and safety. Or death, disease, drought, dearth, danger, destruction, defeat, deportation, destitution, and disgrace.
 - o Relationship with God the giver
 - o Corporate
 - o Historical
 - o Upped in the NT (Rev. 20-22)
 - o Fulfilled in Christ (Gal. 3)

So questions to ask of an OT narrative:

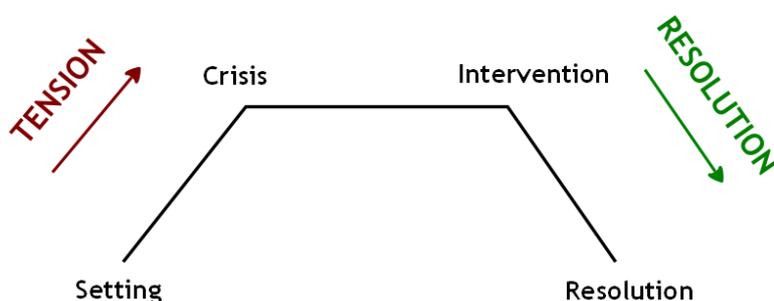
1. What actually happened?
2. Why is the author telling us this and in this way – what is his theological point?
3. Where does this come in salvation history? How are the promises doing?
4. How is the Mosaic covenant working out?
5. What is the LORD teaching us about the LORD in this story?

How the author makes his point:

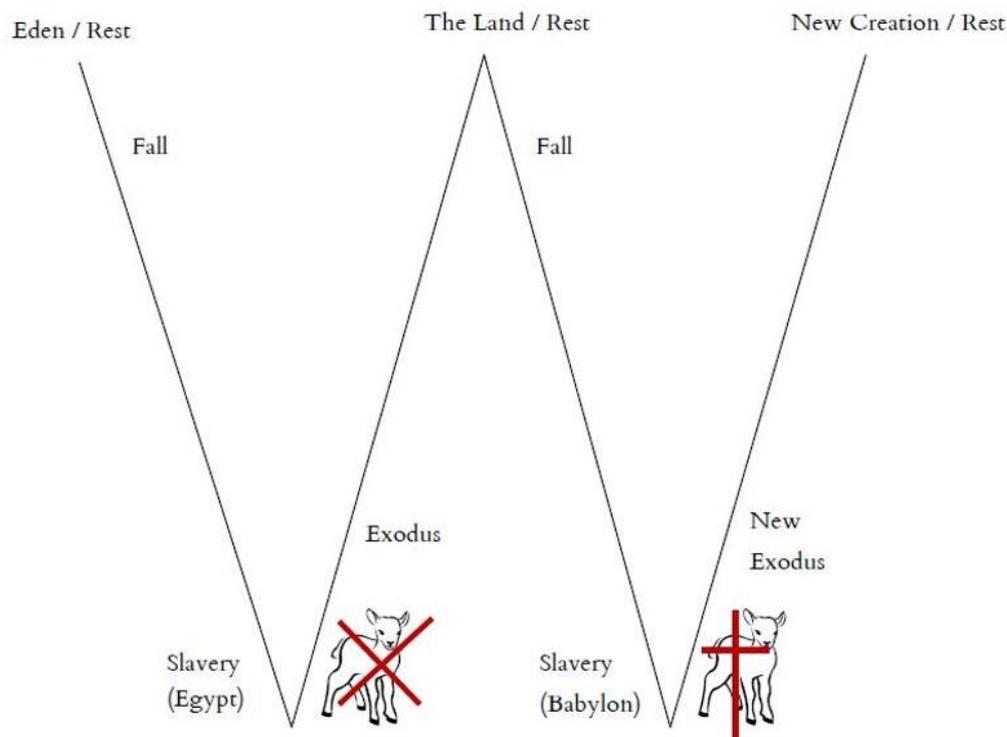
- Explicitly
- Through selectivity and pacing
- Through repetition
- Through **stories**

Scales of narrative:

- Bible
- Book
- Part of book
- Story



(diagram used by
P. Sudell at RTB 2013)



(diagram by Jim Sayers)

1 & 2 Kings

1 Kings 1:1-10:29 Golden Age, Temple	1 Kings 9:10-2 Kings 25:30 Downhill pretty much all the way → destruction of the Temple	
1 Kings 1:1-12:17 United monarchy	1 Kings 12:18-2 Kings 17:7 Israel (& Judah)	2 Kings 17:8-25:30 Judah
	1 K 17:1-2 K 2:11 Elijah in Israel	2 Kings 2:12-13:21 Elisha in Israel

He Gave Us Stories

- Read, read, read
- Feel it – the emotions, the tension, the surprises
- What does the author make a big deal about?
- Break it down
 - By place
 - By time
 - By dialogue
 - By characters
 - By key phrase
- Summarise each episode in terms of the interaction between God and the characters
- What is the big problem or conflict? How is it resolved? Is there a reversal? What is the turning point?

Preaching it:

- The author's point is our point
- We need to show how the story works to make the main point
- We need to apply and drive home the main point

How do we apply?

- Not so fast! – History not parable or la
- What was God teaching the faithful remnant living in Israel and Judah amid rampant paganism?
What was God teaching those who would return from Babylon?
- Theology - challenging our convictions about God (e.g. 1 Kings 20:28)
- And challenging our understanding of the world, ourselves
- Human heart same then as now – same temptations as them – be convicted
- So take the warnings (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-13)
 - e.g. Baal – Prosperity
 - Asherah & Ashtoreth – Sex
 - Golden Calves – Yahweh domesticated
 - High places – Anything goes religion
 - Chemosh – A god who must be cajoled with desperate sacrifices
 - Molech/Milcom – Child sacrifice
- Take the encouragements (cf. Rom. 15:4)
e.g. God’s faithfulness, His tendencies, and similarities between our situation and theirs
- Beware ‘values’ and ‘principles’ disconnected from Christ (e.g. unity - Gen. 11:6). Ethics flow directly from Christ and the gospel (e.g. unity - Eph. 4:1-6). Find Christ in the OT and then apply that to us (e.g. Rom. 15:2-3).
- All about Christ E.g. Genesis 3
 - Promise serpent crusher
 - Pattern clothing of Adam & Eve
 - Presence LORD walking in the garden

1. Promise

- Especially his suffering and glory: Luke 18:31; 24:25-27; Acts 2; 8:30-35; 26:22-23; 1 Peter 1:10-12
- Some important promises:
 - **Gen. 3:15**
 - Gen. 12:1-3 cf. Gal. 3:7-14
 - 2 Sam. 7:12-16 cf. Luke 1:67-79

2. Pattern

- Events, People & Things:¹
- Events
 - Flood (cf. Matt 24:36-42)
 - Exodus/Passover (cf. John 19:29, 36; 1 Cor. 5:7)
 - Other Judgment/Salvation events: e.g. battles where God fights for his people
- People
 - Adam – from Gen. 3:15 onwards the search for the 2nd Adam - Noah? Isaac?
 - Moses & Joshua - men used by God to deliver and bring in his people
 - Judges – saviours (2:16); Adam/Samson/Christ (14:1-9; 16:5,21,30)

¹ This threefold classification of types has been around since at least the time of Jonathan Edwards.

- Kings/Christ –
 - e.g. 1 Sam. 17 (1) How have you heard this preached? (2) How does it make sense when you see David as the Christ, the forerunner to Jesus?
 - Representative of the people
 - Christ-like character – e.g. 2 Sam. 9
 - But always disappoint – 2 Sam. 11; 1 Kings 11
- Prophets in narrative – e.g. Elisha:
 - Follows Elijah and is greater than him (2 x spirit and 2 x miracles)
 - Shunam/Nain son raised (2 Kings 4:18-37 // Luke 7:11-17)
 - Miraculous feeding with barley loaves, boy, objection, food left over (2 Kings 4:42-44 // John 6:1-14)
 - Heals a Gentile leper (2 Kings 5 // Luke 17:16) – parallel drawn by Jesus (Luke 4:27)
 - Weeps as he foresees the crushing of God's people by their enemies (2 Kings 8:11-12 // Luke 19:41-44)
- Priest – e.g. Gen. 14
- Innocent sufferers: Abel, Job, Joseph, Daniel
- Things:
 - Temple - John 2:18-21 –
 - Exodus 25: the place of the dwelling, the word, atonement, bread, light
 - E.g. Kings and Chronicles – look what happens to the Temple
 - E.g. 2 Chron. 7:14 – turn to presence/face in Temple
 - Sacrifice – e.g. Gen. 22
 - Feasts, Jubilee, offerings, first fruits
 - Means of grace and salvation – e.g. Snake on a pole – Numbers 21 cf. John 3; Rock – Exodus 17 cf. 1 Cor. 10:4

3. Presence

- The Bible is Trinitarian from the first chapter onwards: Gen. 1:2, 26; 3:22; 11:6-7; 19:24.
- The unseen God and the seen God: John 1:18 cf. Exodus 33:20, 11; 24:9-18
- At least 28 clear theophanies.² Plus many more references to the Angel of the Lord or other figures who are almost certainly the pre-incarnate Christ (e.g. 2 Kings 19:35; 1 Chron. 21; Isa. 63:9; Dan. 3, 10). Plus 'the glory of the LORD' (e.g. Lev. 9:4,6,23). Plus 'the name of the LORD' (e.g. Deut. 12:5; Isa. 30:27).
- John 14:6 – in OT and NT.
- It was Jesus who saved his people out of Egypt (Jude 5;³ Num. 20:16).
- Christ has always been the object of true faith, the one in whom the faithful OT saints looked to and the one the unfaithful rejected (Hebrews 11:26; 1 Cor. 10:9⁴).

² Gen 3, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 26, 28, 31, 32; Ex. 3-4, 13-14 19-20, 24, 33; Numbers 22; Joshua 5; Judges 2, 6, 13; Isa 6; Jer. 1; Ezek. 1-2; Daniel 7; Zech. 1.

³ [The best manuscript evidence](#) is 'Jesus who saved a people out of the land of Egypt',

⁴ Has [the best manuscript evidence and textual arguments](#) for 'Christ' as the one the wilderness generation put to the test.

A few general pointers:

- Expect to find Jesus. Expect to find the gospel.
- Read, read, read. Context, context, context. Look at the stories, the flow. The more carefully you read the text, the more of Jesus you'll see.
- Look at how the NT uses the OT – allusions, quotes. Look at how it treats themes like the restoration of Israel (Acts 15:14-16), the land (e.g. Heb. 3:7-4:11; 11:13-16), Israel/Sonship (Exodus 4:22 cf. Matt. 2:15; 3:17; 4:1-11; 5:45)
- Take everything through the Cross.
- It's about Him and His grace. As opposed to a focus on us, our works, our problems (Jesus as fixer). May be just as difficult to preach Christ from the NT!

E.g. Chronicles

- *Adam* – That's how 1 Chronicles starts. Adam was the blessed one meant to be a blessing to the whole world. He was the great king and priest - king of the world and high priest of the garden-Temple. His privilege was to rule and to worship. Of course he was also the one who broke faith with God bringing the curse and expulsion from Eden. We're all born in Adam, descendents of Adam. The question is whether we are also descendents of Abraham, in God's people (Ezra 2:59)? And more than that: How are we to regain the blessing and glories of Adam and Eden? We need a new Adam. Zabez (of *Prayer of Jabez* fame/infamy) looks like a candidate (1 Chron. 4:9-10) with the mention of the pain of childbirth, blessing, enlargement, removal of evil and pain (cf. Gen. 1:28; 3:8, 16) but David and his kingly line are our real hope. Sometimes they're good... but then they lose it (e.g. Uzziah (2 Chron. 26) – like Adam he's a gardener, marvellously helped, spreading dominion, and then he becomes proud, is cursed and excluded from God's presence).
- *Temple* - Chapter after chapter on the ark, the musicians, the gatekeepers, the priests, the construction, the repeated restorations. The famous promise of 2 Chronicles 7:14 is found in the context of the inauguration of the Temple. It's an answer to Solomon's prayer of 2 Chronicles 6 that if the people sin, even rebel to the extent of exile, if they then turn and *pray toward this house* – this place of God's name, and his Word and his glory and his *sacrifice* – then He would hear from heaven and forgive. Throughout 2 Chronicles you see this 7:14 pattern – even Manasseh, the worst king of all, fulfils it and is a pattern for the exiles (2 Chron. 33:10-13). But it is not the humbling and seeking and turning which buy God's forgiveness. The humbling and seeking and turning are simply a turning to face the *Temple*, a stretching out of empty hands (2 Chron. 6:29) toward the place of atonement to receive God's grace –healing of sin and healing of the land which had vomited out its people, access to Eden restored through the blood of the lamb.

E.g. Esther – God is absent in name but his fingerprints are all over the book in the 'just happened...' perfect timing. Moreover, he is the God who works through weakness. His power is not in armies and dictators but in a weak oppressed vessel. Esther is a pattern of Christ and Haman is the seed of the serpent. The 'Cross' that Haman plans as the means of his victory turns out to be the place of his defeat (cf. Col. 2:15). The day ordained for the Jews defeat turns out to be the day of their triumph. Before that final triumph the messengers of the good news go out to tell of this salvation. For more on Esther see [here](#).