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In The Beginning Was The Word

An Introduction To Cross-Cultural Theology

Lectures, Courses, Articles

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German Editorial

Hinweise in deutscher Sprache zu dieser Ausgabe

Dieses Buch enthält Beiträge, die der Autor zu unterschiedlichen Zeiten zu unterschiedlichen Zwecken für eine divergierende Leserschaft ungefähr in der Zeit zwischen 2002 und 2016 geschrieben hat. Die meisten dieser Texte wurden in englischer Sprache für ein internationales Publikum abgefasst. Lediglich vier Texte davon sind auf Deutsch erschienen und decken Themenbereiche ab, deren Diskussion in vielen Regionen außerhalb Deutschlands, Europas oder des Westens überhaupt sicher nur mit einiger Mühe nachvollziehen lässt, sofern das überhaupt möglich ist.

Und das wohl erstens deswegen, weil diese Texte einem pastoralen Anspruch folgen, vom Ansatz her interkulturell und damit auf unterschiedliche Gegebenheiten und Bedürfnisse nicht nur in der westlichen Welt ausgerichtet zu sein, sondern auch jene Zustände, wie sie sich in anderen nicht-westlichen Gesellschaften und Kulturen manifestieren, zu reflektieren. Nicht zuletzt ist dies unter Anderem auch dem reichen Schatz an interkulturellen Erfahrungen geschuldet, die der Autor im Laufe seiner jahrzehntelangen pastoralen und wissenschaftlich-lehrenden und -forschenden Berufstätigkeit in den verschiedensten Teilen der Welt machen konnte und durfte.

Zweitens aber auch mit Blick auf die etwas ungewöhnliche Vita des Autors (als ehemaliges Heimkind in einer christlichen Anstalt in der Zeit der 1950er und 1960er Jahre). Erlebnisse, Erfahrungen und auch gewisse Traumata aus der damaligen Zeit haben in ihm die feste Überzeugung wachsen lassen, dass das karitative Handeln der Kirchen (nicht nur im Bereich der Diakonie) heute ohne das Prinzip der Gerechtigkeit und dem Stand auf gleicher Augenhöhe eigentlich nicht möglich ist und seine Zielstellung wirkungslos verfehlt, und anstatt Abhängigkeiten der betreuten Klientel zu festigen und aufrechtzuerhalten, gerade der Selbstermächtigung dieser Klientel und deren Emanzipation aus einer solchen Abhängigkeit dienen soll. Ohne den Einbezug der sozialen und politischen Rahmendaten ist ein solch emanzipatorischer Ansatz in der pastoralen und karitativen Arbeit der Kirchen heute nicht mehr möglich und vielfach auch wirkungslos, wenn es um die Überwindung von menschengemachten Strukturen geht, die als Ursachen von Not, Krieg und Elend stehen. Ich sehe daher gerade eine solche Tätigkeit gerne unter dem Aspekt, was man auch als „social gospel" bezeichnen könnte.

Dieses zuletzt genannte Anliegen lässt sich u. E. auch nahtlos auf die Situation und Bedürfnisse von Gemeinden und Kirchen in Afrika, Asien und Mittel- und Südamerika übertragen, die auch heute noch in gewisser Weise von ihren sie ehemals missionierenden „Mutterkirchen" in Europa oder den USA abhängig und damit nicht nur gewissen Fremdeinflüssen, sondern sogar vielleicht in manchen Fällen auch paternalistischen Tendenzen von Seiten dieser ehemaligen „Mutterkirchen" in Europa oder Nordamerika ausgesetzt sind.

Inhaltlich beschäftigen sich alle diese Texte mit Themen, die nicht nur in den verschiedensten Fachbereichen der akademischen Theologie angesiedelt sind, sondern auch verschiedene Aspekte der pastoralen Arbeit in kulturell diversen christli-

chen Gemeinden beleuchten. Untergliedert sind die Stoffe dieses Buches in die Bereiche *Lectures, Courses, Courses in Biblical Languages* sowie *Special Topics* und *Articles On Various Topics*. Diese beiden letztgenannten Bereiche enthalten insgesamt vier Texte in deutscher Sprache und richten sich an ein eher kirchenkritisches Publikum in Deutschland und Europa.

Wir hoffen, dass die Beiträge in diesem Band, die sich schon in der Vergangenheit als nützlich und segensreich für ihre damalige jeweilige Leserschaft als durchaus nützlich und segensreich erwiesen haben, auch heute noch so manchem Leser dieses Bandes von Nutzen und von Segen sein mögen.

Im November 2018

DER AUTOR

English Editorial

Hinweise in englischer Sprache zu dieser Ausgabe

This book includes a variety of theological topics and such pertaining to Comparative Religion. They were written for different purposes addressing a strongly diverse reading audience in the period between 2002 and 2016. Most of these texts are in English, and only four of them come in German, the latter of which are dealing with topics and issues that are mainly relevant for contemporary Western societies and are not easy to comprehend for anyone outside the Western world for obvious reasons of difference in culture and society.

The texts brought together in this book follow the aim of a cross-cultural challenge to cater for the diverse needs of churches and people differing in society and culture in terms of pastoral care and work. To some extent, this focus on such cross-cultural aspects may be due to the author's own rich cross-cultural experience he was able to gain by the pastoral and educational work in different parts of the world, their respective cultures and societies during several decades of his former active working-life.

Second, having been raised and grown up in a boarding-house setting of a Christian institution during the 1950s and 1960s in Germany, the personal experiences and various traumata associated with this time have left a strong conviction that all church-related work, including charity, must be in vain and would hardly mean anything if the same would not include the moments of social justice and an equal stand on the same level for the client and the church worker alike. Such a work should lead to self-empowerment of the client in the end and to final emancipation from depending on church-related charity projects. In a similar way, this also applies to the situation of churches in Africa, Asia, Middle and South America which, to some extent, still are subject to paternalistic influence from their former European or North American "mother churches" once missionising them.

In terms of contents, all the texts assembled in this book do not only cover topics pertaining to various academic disciplines within the realm of academic Theology but also reflect various aspects of practical pastoral work itself. The material of this book is divided into sections such as *Lectures, Courses, Courses in Biblical Languages, Special Topics* and *Articles On Various Topics*. The latter two sections contain a total of four longer texts in German and address an audience critical of churches and religion more generally in Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

It is our sincere hope and prayer that these texts, having proved to be of use and a blessing to a reading audience in the past, will also prove useful and to be a blessing to a current reading audience today.

November 2018

THE AUTHOR

Editor's Additional Note
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There is a general List of Contents on p. iii for all the contents in this book. A more comprehensive List of Contents for each part of the book can be found on pp. 2, 54, 132, 148, 176, 228, 254, 228, 402 and 502.

Ein allgemeines Inhaltsverzeichnis für den Gesamtinhalt dieses Buches findet sich auf Seite iii dieses Buches. Ausführlichere Inhaltsverzeichnisse zu den einzelnen Teilen dieses Buches finden sich auf den Seiten 2, 54, 132, 148, 176, 228, 254, 228, 402 und 502.

Lectures

1
OLD TESTAMENT EXEGESIS

pp. 1 - 82

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1. The Need To Interpret the Bible

The basic need to interpret Biblical texts (in general) must be considered in terms of the dimensions of time and the audience addressed. All the Biblical texts were written more than two-thousand years ago, and with no doubt have ways of living and the context settings in which these divine words and thoughts were uttered very much changed since then. Such context settings were meaningful to the contemporaries of their respective time, but this is not necessarily the case with contemporary readers of nowadays.

Such contextual settings relate to a) historical, b) cultural, c) spiritual circumstances at the time when these divine words were uttered. To understand the the spiritual message (the "kerygma") of a biblical periocope, we need to "explore" such background of settings to answer important questions such as: (i) What was the reason of such message from God?, (ii) what was the content, and (iii) what objective did it have to have An impact on the lifes of the people (audience) addressed? Only after having succesfully answered such questions, can we develop the "kerygma" behind and apply to our lives today. These are methodical requirements of such a preliminary procedure to "dig out" the kerygma behind, and in doing so, we avoid misinterpretation of the divine message in presenting biblically incorrect conclusions that lead people astray from what the Lord really wanted to communicate to mankind. Doing this is an analytic effort of some intellectual standing that we have to follow each time when teaching or preaching to other people around us. It must be done not only out of highest respect for God´s Word delivered to mankind but also of the huge responsibility we have in delivering it "uncorrupted" to our audience, without adding or missing anything that was transmitted to us. Church history, in the past and recently, teaches us a very important lesson: The fact that so many different denominations evolved during the course of time in the period after the Eearly Church in Jerusalem points out to differences in doctrine that have split Christianity and continue to do so today. They all have "interpreted" portions or the whole of the Bible in "their way", and exactly this shows the high potential of "private ontology" that can influence conclusions and concepts claimed to be in accord with the Bible but which are nothing else than human based "errors". Our point of orientation is that what the Bible actually says and not what we think it says. Therefore, we need proper analysis by means of exegesis before turning to working out the "kerygma", i.e. application in hermeneutical terms.

A second important issue is the historicity of divine message transmission in the Bible down to us in these days. The first audience addressed were the writers of these biblical texts who delivered it – either in speaking or writing – the audience of their times, i.e. their contemporaries. The third in line would be the reader of these texts nowadays. This is a line (sequence) of communication stages with the contemporary reader at the end of the transmission chain. Original manuscripts were lost during the course of time, and so the Biblical scholar depends on secondary literary sources which may be copie from copies from copies, etc. "Establishing the authentic text" is an absolutely essential prerequisite, and scholars have done this for us--the preachers, teachers and pastors in the various congregations. Ours then is the part to make good and responsible use of the results of this scholarly work in terms of a proper and methodically correct way of interpretation and application of biblical texts.

2. Interpreting the Old Testament in Translation

The task of interpretation has, to some extent, already been considered in the preceding essay. It may be repeated here that this task must primarily be seen in establishing what the author originally wanted to say, and after having done so in proper procedure (cf. above), preachers and teachers may base their application on that.

Every interpretation must, of course, be based on an authentic text, and if translations, due to their shortcomings they may always have in one form or the other, are such authentic texts would then be a good question to ask. In the long and dascinating history of Bible translation there always have been instances of translation influenced by doctrinal preconceptions, and this then in concequence may have contributed to unauthentical rendering of the original Biblical text in the target language. Another obstacle may be the availability of manuscripts in the original biblical language from which translation into the target languzage is tobe made: Martin Luther used an edition of the Greek New Testament by Erasmus of Rotterdam, and he and his team (in partiular with Philipp Melanchthon, German: "Schwarzerd") may have faced similar restrictions on authentic text sources when translating portions of the Old Testament. Especially since the discovery of new text witnesses in the latter half of the 19th centrury, many more sources of text "originals" (we better may term them "text witnesses") are available to us. This also holds true for OT text sources, of course.

However, text variants in the various text witnesses seem to be of less significance as one might expect, and in general, these witnesses do confirm a more or less authentic transmission of their first originals.

There are basically two ways to render an original text into a target language:
a) literal and
b) so-called free translation,
the latter of which would be a kind of paraphrase of the content in the original text. Both ways may have their potentials and also their limitations. While it is clear that the objective of translation should be an authetic rendering of the original text (either spoken or written) not adding or missing anything contained in the original, it depends very much on the details of genre, text structure, and context settings which determine the translator to decide on either approach of translation. Literal translations normally keep very close to the text original in terms of lexis (vocabulary), grammatical structures employed, and perhaps even "style". This could be useful when the objective would be to document what and how the content was commuicated in the original. It may be less or even not useful at all when the aim is understanding, and the audience addressed by this translation has a distance in terms of time and culture to the audience addressed in the original. A translation is not only to bridge a linguistic gap – that between a source and a target language, but also a cultural gap as well. The broader the gap, the more careful you must be in your literal translation when it is to be understood by a broad audience in the target language with people from all walks of life (and the Bible, most certainly is such a text).

Idioms in the source and their adequate rendering into the target langauge are a good example here to illustrate this "conflict". Free translation, on the other hand, differs from literal translation insofar that it attempts the communicate the original message as authentical as possible to the audience in the target language by using lexic,

structures and style appropriate to their linguistic environment, by thus departing from lexic, structures and perhaps stylistic means of expression in the source language.

Also culture sometimes sets limits for literal translation: Everyone knows what a house is but houses in different cultures are also different, and one aspect of house in the culture of the source language may play a crucial role in the text of the original language, and it may totally different in the culture of the target language. How do you translate items then? ---You would have to find some examples from the target culture to illustrate what the text original tried to say. Or, how do you translate certain passages with reference to camels, for example, made into the language of the Eskimos of Greenland (Innuit)?

The main objective in communication always is that the addressee understands what the writer/speaker wanted to say, and this objective also applies in translating such communicative content. Idiomatic expression, for example, then may be rendered in free translation while other portions of the text may rendered in a more literal way. The art of the translator would be to do a good combination of these two approaches whenever required and to bring them into a whole harmonious complete form. In Bible translation, you might follow a guideline such as this: Wherever possible, translate literally , but where this may be an obstacle in understanding for the audience of the target language in mind,use free translation!

As translators, we never translate lexical, grammatical, or even genre meaning. These are artificial divisions for heuristic reasons. In practice, we translate something more complex than that: communicative meaning, and this is made up of such sub-components that linguistis may call “lexical”, “grammatical” meaning. Communicative meaning is that what finally is being perceived and received by the end user of the translation product ---human language and communication is in the way it is: it is more than purely linguistic material for which translational equivalences in the target language must be found, and it is so very much even in our own, in anybody´s, native tongue.

3. Literary Forms of the Old Testament

In this brief lecture, I will commit myself to considering the different literary forms of the Old Testament in their listing (establishing) and how to classify them.

Even less trained people in Biblical Studies may easily appreciate that the texts of the OT use different literary genres in different text portions. So, for example, psalms are different and more appealing to the emotional apects of our personailty than a mainly decriptive account of the failure of Israel´s and Judah´s kings as found in 1 and 2 Kings and Chronicles relating to the period after the Unified Kingdom (1070 – 997 B.C.). And the literary genre of a text like that of Jeremiah, either in his prophecy book or his Lamentations, differs necessarily from that found in many parts of Genesis.

We may attempt a rough classification and listing of the genres involved as follows: prose, poetry, and prophecy. As even in prophecy, the may be significant stylistic dif-

ferences found among the different prophetical texts, this classification is not precise enough to make it work for our needs of correct interpretation of OT texts.

What are the main parameters for a more precise definition of OT literary genres that we can adapt to our task of interpreting OT Scripture? GIESE would list them as follows: form, content, and function (in Giese, R.L.: Literary Forms Of The Old Testament, in: SANDY & GIESE (edit.):CRACKING OLD TESTAMENT CODES, Nashville, 1995:5-27, here pp. 11seq.). These parameters, in the first instance, can be applied to any written piece of work, and probably to spoken texts alike. GIESE (ind., pp. 19- 23) refers to ten genres found in OT writing defined in terms of these parameters:

a) Narrative – the form is descriptive in terms of scenery, plot and description of events/persons/things portrayed. The content here is the persons/events/circumstances themselves described. The function may be to give an account of these events, especially of how God interacted with His people and what lessons may learned from that. Narrative can, but most not necessarily be an account of "history".

b) History as portrayed in the OT is not so much that what we may expect from an account found on a topic from so-called secular history. In terms not only of the OT, is is rather a history of interaction of God with mankind within a certain period of time. Historical texts in the OT thus may include a mixture of other literary genres in terms of form, the content is mainly focusing on the people of Israel in these times as a whole nation, and in terms of function it is a portray of interaction between God and his people.

c) Law ---form: suggestions, fixed rules, and solemnization, in terms of content covenant rules, rituals and casuistic laws/regulations are referred to, to be applied in everyday life for the good and the own benefit of the people following them. Predominat in all these provisions is to show that there is only one LORD without anyother deities next to him, and the Omnipotency of the Lord may demand respect from those whom he created and that He is the only one deserving to be worshipped (function).

d) Oracles of salvation --- the form of this genre may be recognised by such formulations as "Thus speaks the Lord" in many of the prophetic texts, content in general refers to promises/announcements/assurances that refer to aspects of salvation finally to be realized in the coming of Jesusand His death for the sins of mankind. Function here is to assure the people addressed of a perspective ofd salvation, make them optimistic and hopeful with a perspective to the end of times (eschatological aspects).

e) Announcements of Judgements --- Also here the form may sometimes include a statement that the divine message has been transmitted by an authorized person ("Thus speaks the Lord"), it then contains an accusation of wrong-doing with an announcement of judgement to follow in consequence.In terms of content, the details of accusation and the judgement resulting are referred to and may differ in each specific case. Function here may include either a fair warning or an announcement that such judgement had been made for the reasons indicated.

f) Apocalyptic pronouncements --- in terms of form, these include reference to monent, source and transmitter of pronouncement , in terms of content such pronouncements may be also largely eschatological (cf. Ezekiel´s prophecy), but they may also

refer to events in (more or less contemporary) world history (cf. the visions of Daniel on the successive appearance and downfall of certain empires). In terms of function, these pronouncements often are very harsh and describe rather terrible and brutal forms of judgement and sentencing of those who remain sinful and disobey. In terms of contextual setting, it is quite remarkeable that such pronouncement mostly seem to have been delivered and received in special hard times of oppression and persecution. Considering such a contextual setting, if it is to be applied, such pronouncements may then also serve to strengthen the spiritual steadfastness of the believers and followers of the Lord and give them a perspective of hope that the Most High and Omnipotent and All-Present Lord is still in control of his creation, even in the times of extreme hardship for his flock, and that He one day may intervene, destroy evil and change things to the better for His people.

g) Laments ---- in terms of form, these may be complaints on hardships endured (Job), pleas and requests, and an assurance of having trust in the Lord even at times of extreme hardship. Contents are concerned with grief and sorrow, a description of actual suffering and the emotions asscіated with each specific situation of suffering endured. The functions here may be requests, self-assurance of the Lord´s presence (maintaining faith),or even witnessing that even God´s people must suffer from time time and that this is universal to mankind. So all people, believers and non-believers alike, are equal in these human terms. Psalms with communicative content of lamentation and the Book of Lamentations may be taken as typical exemplifications of this OT genre.

h) Praise ---- in terms of form, GIESE (ibd., p. 23) lists a couple of sub-genres: hymns, enthronement psalms, song of Zion, etc. Hymns may be of a general spiritual significance easily to be apllied when relating it to present day circumstances in terms of "application". This may be much less the case with more cultural-specific praises such as enthronement psalms, royal psalms and similar. Here we would have to profoundly analyse the contextual setting to "dig out" its kerygma and the spiritual value in application to an audience in the present-day world.

In terms of content, praise refers to emotions of enthusiasm of what God has done to the speaker/writer and is quite the opposite of what laments may constitute in terms of content. The functions here to be considered are describing God for what He is and/or what great things he has done (descriptive praise/declarative praise, according to GIESE, ibd., p. 23). The latter may even include thankfulness.

i) Proverbs -in form, these are normally very short statements on some issues, casuistic in nature and referring to all kinds of specific situations. They may form part of "universal wisdom" of mankind in that similar pieces of wisdom may also be found in other and more remote cultures in terms of time and space. Their content is basically casuistic and life-ofientated, "down to earth", so to say. They may include concrete life situations with issues or moral(e), work, relations among human beings, issues of conduct and behaviour etc. In terms of function, they are to be taken as hints/suggestions/points of orientation of how practical conduct in daily life situations should be like when walking in the footsteps of the Lord. They form part of the spirituality of a faithful person but certainly do not make up the entire essence.

j) The OT book of Ecclesiastes may also be called a literary prototype of "Non-Pro-

verbial Wisdom". In terms of form, they are much more lengthy pieces compared to the brief form of statement found in Proverbial literature. They are also non-casuistic in terms of the issues addressed as they relate to fundamental questions of life and on the whole seem to present basic existential reflections of life, the meaning and significance of mundane and spiritual things and the relative significance they bear in relation to each other. In terms of content, they may address similar issues as those addressed in proverbial wisdom, but they are less practica and application orientated than proverbial wisdom pieces. They are much more transcendent and spiritual in their content. In terms of function, they seem to present a more fundamental spiritual reflection of life, appearing rather pessimistic at surface level, and they point our attention to the primary issue of our relationship with God Himself.

4. Literary Forms and Interpretation

In reference to this topic, considering the status of OT literary genres in the process of interpretation seems to be essential.

Considering OT literary forms (genres) in exegesis is one of other scholarly approaches referred to in literature (cf. WOODWARD, B.L./TRAVERS, M.E.: LITERARY FORMS AND INTERPRETATION, in SANDY/GIESE (eds.), ibd., pp. 29seq.). One basic thing we have to realize (and since this is so trivial a statement in itself, we normally should have) is that there is no piece of spoken and/or written literature without genre. Thus, interpretation of OT texts must also the genre of a written piece of text to be interpreted into account.

Where does the consideration of literary forms now fit within the framework of an interpretation process?

GIESE (in: Literary Forms of the Old Testament, pp. 5-6, in: SANDY/GIESE (eds.), ibd.) would call the consideration of literary forms of the OT "the middle level of context" within this framework of interpretation process. This

a) "middle level of context" is preceded by what he calls

b) "immediate context" referring to structure and lexis (vocabulary) of the text in question. Again, this "middle level of context" is followed by what he calls

c) "distant context", i.e. a holistic theological approach to the message of the Bible according to established canon of scripture. Methodologically, these items stand in a well-defined relation to one another: While items according to a) and b) refer to a specific pericope (text sample from the Scriptures) and its broader environment (cf. the pericope of Gen 39:7b-20 as a "middle level of context" is related to Gen 37-39:1-6 and Gen 39:21-50, the latter of which covers the entire cyclus of Joseph narratuves in the book of Genesis), the item under c), the "distant context" attempts to view a certain pericope (i.e.,Gen 39:7b-20) in the light of the intended holistic message revealed by the entire canonized scripture.

Again , in working out the interpretation according to what the writer wanted to transmit at spiritual level (kerygma), we make use of the parameters form, content, and function. Literary forms of OT texts may be grouped under the parameter of form, but this division is only an artificial one because this genre at least also determi-

nes the function parameter. Form and function may be largely determined by content, but here again the other parameters interact: Although function may not necessarily determine content (one and the same content can be presented in different ways, e.g. as narrative, as praise etc.), "function" determines the way of how content is being actually presented and thus also determining its form.

Preachers and teachers must develop a proper way of interpretation procedure and its respective methodology to be applied in order to really transmit that what the writer of a text originally wanted to say under divine inspiration. The criteria mentioned above seem to present an essential framework of how this could be properly and adequately done.

5. Literary Forms and Inspiration

Whenever God approaches Man and communicates with him, He is doing so straightforward and directly. It is therefore impossible to imagine that He would make use of means of communication incomprehensible to Man or being a closed book that needs particular efforts in understanding the message it tries to convey and communicate. This, however, may hold true for first and second stage of message transmission: the human author God had chosen to for the message to be transmitted and the immediate audience to which this message by the human author had to be transmitted. All succeeding generations of perceivers may be viewed as a secondary audience distant in culture and time requiring interpretation and aid in understanding the very message.

Even within the circles of God´s chosen people, there were times when succeding generations would no loner be able to really comprehend the original message laid down in the scriptures, due to linguistic shifts from Ancient Biblical Hebrew which was commonly spoken at the time of writing but some hundred years later was replaced by Aramaic. It seems that even already at the time of Nehemiah and Ezra, there was a need for rendering the Hebrew Scriptures into the common vernacular of their days (Targums). Probably not much later, there was a need of preserving the old Hebrew text of the sacred scriptures also in its linguistic "purity", the works performed by the Masorets and vowel punctuation of the consonantal Hebrew texts mostly below, less frequently above and besides the consonants, give evidence of it. And as time went by, not only the linguistic but also the cultural and spiritual gap may have increased, hence the need for commentaries (such as were found at Qumran, for example, ie. the commentary on Habakuk).

So, assigning a status of inspiration to the canonized sacred scriptures of the Hebrew Bible does not necessarily mean that they have been free from the limits of human transmission during the course of time and perception by the audience intended.

In the days of the first and second generation of the audience addressed, however, means of communication between God and His people may have been free from such "hindrances", and we could very well imagine that God may have intended the most natural form of language used and understood by the average citizen at that time. Furthermore, He in His Grace and Wisdom made use of messengers who mostly without

any scholarly background or other privileged background, so that for the communication of message to effective He employed those means of communication that most easily was to be comprehended by the human author He decided to choose.

If this is true, then first of all it would be hard to imagine that this would have been done without any literary genre employed. Such would violate one of the most basic principles in efficient human communication, as there is no communication without literary genre, and everyone of us does employ such "genres" more or less subconsciously in everyday communication: We want to be understood, and our form and content of communication always has a communicative function we intend to incite on the part of the addressee. To make Himself understood, the Most High God would also employ the same means because He decided to communicate to Mankind in human terms.

By referring to John I. Packer ("The Adequacy of Human Language", in Geisler, N. (ed.): Inerrancy, Grand Rapids, 1979:209), J.S. Feinberg lists a number of such communicative functions commonly found in human communication that also may be used in Scripture when God adressed mankind (cf. Feinberg, J.S.: Literary Form and Inspiration, in SANDY/GIESE, ibd., pp. 54-55). These are: a) the function of informing the audience, b) imperative function (commands etc.), c) illumination ("enlightment"), d) more formal pronouncement and declaration (I would not employ the term "performance" here because in Linguistics this is a technical term for actual communicative function of as an utterance, rooted in the former Transformational-Generative School by Noam Chomsky, Feinberg is using "performance" here but in different way than in the linguistic sense just referred to), e) the celebratory (or better: solemn) function. For all these functions, linguistic means are available in every human language, although cross-culturally and cross-linguistically, the linguistic means may differ to express one and the same "communicative function".

OT texts of the canon of sacred scriptures may embody all those functions listed, the only question is whether this list of functions is complete and comprehensive. But this point is not under consideration here.

So, even if we believe in the divine inspiration of Scripture, at linguistic and communicative level OT scripture is not a code that needs to be cracked like an encrypted file at software level. There is nothing esoteric about inspired scripture, it is clear and direct even for us today if we take the effort to interprete and comprehend in the proper way. Considering literary genre then would be a most natural and essential part of the interpretation process.

6. Why Preachers and Teachers Should Apply the Genres of the Old Testament

Preachers and Bible class teachers nowadays are non-inspired transmitters of the Biblical message from God to Mankind. In this sense, they are very much like messengers who had been called to tell others what they heard and were asked to transmit from an authoritative source (God Himself). If this transmission then is done in a proper way, it is clear and perhaps trivial to note that nothing regarding the content of this message may either be added to or omitted in its transmission. It is like giving witness at court where the witness is required to state what he/she actually heard, saw or ex-

perienced, nothing more and nothing less. Message transmission then must be accurate, comprehensive and authentic. Only this would be proper transmission.

This proper message transmission is comparable to the translation process – also a translation of either spoken or written text must authentic, comprehensive and accrate. The translator whose task is message transmission at the level of rendering this message from its source into a target language would employ linguistic means available to him in the target language that aim at an adequate translational equivalent. Translational equivalence, by definition, does not only mean the adequate linguistic rendering of lexical material and structure into the target language but also includes the more overall notion of "communicative function" of an utterance either in spoken or written form, i.e., the non-linguistic aspects of emotion, style, register etc., employed and expressed by the linguistic devices actually being used according to certain verbal and nonverbal conventions of the linguistic environment (culture) in question.

This communicative function is the upper level of a "hierarchy" reaching down of dividing an utterance – a single sentence or a sequence of sentences – into its "lower" sub-components such as structure and words etc. "Communicative function" thus is a notion applied in Communication and later Linguistic Theory and essentially constitutes a part of the copncept we call commonly "meaning". Most commonly, there are levels of lexical (word), grammatical (structure) and communicative (non-verbal aspects of meaning referring to such items as emotion, context etc) meaning. In Linguistics, it had been held for years that "meaning is shaped most significantly at genre level" and that hence "texts are multitieered things and the decisions made at the top level of the text influence all of the lower levels of the text as to their meaning" (RUSSELL, III, W.B.: Literary Forms in the Hands of Preachers and Teachers", in: SANDY/GIESE, ibd., pp. 287-288). In practice, this means that the decision on the part of the speaker/writer which lexical material (word) and structure to use "at the lower level of text" meaning is primarily determined by his intention in what form to communicate (communicative function such as descriptive narrative, or praise which may be lyrical in genre, etc.) and only based upon this makes a selection of the adequate linguistic material (lexis, structure) to communicate his message to the audience.

This is what natural language and verbal communication work like in practice, and so it also applies to transmitting the message of sacred OT scriptures in via preachers and teachers nowadays. They normally are not translators themselves 8as the mostly work with the product of Bible translation themselves), rather they are mediators in this transmission process. However, since also translation may be considered to be a special task of mediation (between source and target culture), the nature of the transmission process for preachers and teachers is, in many respects, very much the same as that of the translation process.

7. Identification Problems in OT Exegesis

A. Identify the scene in Genesis 3

a) Scene 1, Gen 3:1-7: Eve is tempted by the snake to eat from the tree in the garden, and she did, and also Adam did. Both are loosing their "innocence".

b) Scene 2, Gen 3:8-13: God meets Adam and Eve after they had eaten the fruit from tree. Being confronted with what they had done against God´s direction, the feel ashamed of their nakedness, and Adam is accusing Eve and Eve is accusing the snake.

c) Scene 3 - 5, Gen 14-19: God is judging the snake (Scene 3, vv.14-15), Eve (Scene 4, vv. 16), and Adam (Scene 5, vv.17-19) for what they have done and is announcing a "difficult life" for each of them.

d) Scene 6, Gen 20:24: God expelling Adam and Eve from Eden and puts Cherub angels as guards at the entrance. This sequence ordering may have some alternatives of grouping the single scenes (e.g., Gen 3:1419 as a single scene) but this may be a rather theoretical matter of debate. The entire text of Gen 3 can be broken up into several scene sequences if we considered this text to be the unit. From al larger perspective, for example by taking Gen 2 – 5 together, we may consider Gen 3 as a single scene with several sub-scenes in the text of Gen 3 itself. By breaking Gen 3 up into several subscenes, we actually may have considered some category like "plot". But it is only Scene 1 – 6 as mentioned above making up the "plot" of the narrative in Chapter 3 of Genesis. Alternatively, Gen 3 may be considered an entire scene that could be broken up into several sub-units. "Scene" is not taken here as a larger unit of events and characters acting like in drama.

B. Identify the plot in Genesis 4

The plot structure in Gen 4 is as follows: Adam and Eve have children (Gen 4:1-2); Cain murders Abel because of jealousy that Abel's gift is received favourably by God whilst Cain's is not and God condemns Cain for it (vv. 3-15); Cain subsequently separates from the Lord and henceforth has his own family (Gen 3:17-24); Adam and Eve, the parents, have a new son called Seth (Gen 3:25-26).

C. Identify the point of view in Genesis 6

a) Summary of content of narrative in Gen 6: Genesis 6 is a narrative about the increase of human beings created by God on earth (Gen 6:1) and the increase of evil committed by these human beings (vv. 2-5), so that God was shocked of what his "crown of creation" (human being) had become (vv. 6-7). God excludes Noah, the only human creature faithful to him and pleasing him, from this plan of destruction and tells Noah to build an ark to save him from the flood and take other human beings, female and male, and different kinds of birds with him to survive the flood that was announced by God, and Noah obeyed (Gen 6:9-22).

b) Perspective/point of view o view from which the narrative in Gen 6 is told: Gen 6:1-8 provides the background information why God intends to send a flood but decides to save Noah: It is the increasing evil finding its way among the increasing num-

ber of people inhabiting the earth, in the latter part of the narrative in Gen 6:9 – 22 God gives detailed instructions to Noah of what Noah should do to survive the flood with "prototypes" from each species on earth. By giving such detailed instructions, the point of view made here is that it was God´s intention and plan on a long-term perspective to begin a new era with his creation. Thus, the perspective (point of view) from which the narrative is told relates to one of the primary issues that the whole Bible is about: God cannot be pleased with a sinful people unfaithful to him and not following his commands, and the judgement of the flood is the tragic consequence for such evil. But God does not want to simply totally wipe out such a creation but aims at a "new creation" with the same species of people, thus he saves Noah.

This narrative illustrates the basic issue of God´s displeasure; distress and anger about a sinful mankind, but at the same time His loving kindness in saving mankind from total destruction because of its sinful nature. And just this may be the point of view for a Christian believing in Jesus from which this narrative is told and could be interpreted. The point of view is disclosed in this narrative, thus, is one of God´s plan of redemption that finds in climax in the coming of Christ.

D. Identify the characterization in Genesis 22

Gen 22 is the narrative about Abraham who was told by God to sacrifice his son Isaac. There are three main characters in this narrative: God, Abraham, and Isaac. The environment where the event narrated takes place is Mount Moriah, probably in larger distance from the place where his family and other relatives live.

A) Abraham is portrayed as a faithful human being obedient in all that he is told to do by God (by taking his son to the mountain as he was told to, etc.). No further details are disclosed about his personal feelings when he was told to sacrifice his son, but he must have been in a very desolate emotional state --- not only about being told to sacrifice his own "blood and flesh" and kill his own son, but also in the light of the fact that God had promised Abraham many descendants. So would God really keep his promise by giving such a command to Abraham that, at the surface, would be counter-productive to that promise given by God to Abraham? But it becomes very clear from the details mentioned that Abraham kept all his emotions at that very moment to himself and did not tell anything to anyone, even not to Isaac, his son.

B) The role of Isaac in this narrative is portrayed as rather passive, although he must not have been a small child anymore but a youngster about to enter adulthood. He is portrayed as trusting his father completely, although his father's behaviour in this situation may have appeared very strange to him, and he may have felt some of the emotional tension of Abraham (cf. v. 7a: Isaac to Abraham: "Father", and Abraham's response: "Yes, son", and Isaac's wondering about not having as lamb with them). No reaction of fear or shock is disclosed on the part of Isaac when being tight to the altar and wood was laid under it.

C) God is the initiator of the event in this scene by telling Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac on Mount Moriah. He does not tell Abraham that the purpose is to test Abraham's faith. Later, when Abraham was about to kill his son on the altar with a knife, he just intervenes at the right moment and sends an angel to stop Abraham from killing his son by providing a ram bock instead. After Abraham appears to have passed

this test to the satisfaction of God, God announces and promises many blessings for Abraham and his descendants. Thus, God´s way of acting here is: a) initiator/ the tester, b) intervening at the right point of time, c) the one who confers blessings on Abraham and descendants.

E. Identify the setting in Genesis 27

It would be helpful to view the setting of Chapter 27 of Genesis in the light of the setting that could be found in Chapter 25 of Genesis. The narrative content of Chapter 25 of Genesis seems to be a prerequisite to understand the continuing of the narrative of Isaac's family and the question of inheritance in the narrative account of Chapter 27 of Genesis.

A. Relationship between Gen 25 and Gen 27

First, there are two major textual content portions in Chapter 25: an account of Abraham's family with a listing of its genealogy (vv. 1-18). The second half of the Chapter is devoted to Isaac's family and the relationship between his two sons, Esau and Jacob (vv. 19-34). The first part of Chapter 25 dealing with the genealogy of Abraham's family (vv. 1-18) appear to be rather marginal in comparison with the remaining part of Chapter 25. This latter part is devoted to Isaac's family history (vv.19-34) where in addition to a mentioning of Isaac's sons events concerning these two sons are narrated.

Thus, the focus is evidently on the latter part of the chapter with the account of Isaac's family history concentrating on the relationship between the two sons of Isaac, Jacob and Esau.

In this part of Chapter 25, Esau sells his birthright, the inheritance right of the first-born, to Jacob (cf. vv. 29-34). Continuation of the narrative is in Gen 27 where Jacobs plays a trick on his brother Isaac (vv. 5-24), and their father blesses each of the two brothers. Esau apparently is at a disadvantage in comparison to Jacob (vv. 25-46).

B. Common Settings for Chapter 25 and 27 of Genesis

There seem to be common settings for Chapter 25 and 27 that can be listed as follows:

(i) The right of the first-born son to inheritance which may have been common not only among the Israelites and their predecessors but also among other surrounding ethnic groups;

(ii) Polygamy which must have been quite common, not only among the Israelites and their predecessors;

(iii) a) semi-nomadic culture (Isaac, Jacob) vs. hunters (Esau and his descendants);

(iv) The predominance of a family-related clan structure in the days of Jacob and Esau.

C. Clan Structure As A Common Setting in Chapter 25 and 27 of Genesis
This family-related clan structure seems to have a number of important implications:

(i) As polygamy was quite common, descendents and lineages must have played a major role in the clan societies of these days. The purpose was to exactly identify one's own family identity and also perhaps self-identity in relation to the rest of the clan or the relationship among different clans. Such different clans were perhaps closely related in ethnic and linguistic terms.

(ii) Some characteristic features of clan structured societies are:
-Its patriarchal structure with a prominent figure at the top (cf. Isaac or later Jacob and Esau as heads of their own clans);
-Clan loyalty and the importance assigned to lineage within the clan (due to polygamy which caused a diversity of descent and family links within one and the same clan). This may also explain the significance of genealogical accounts in such cultures (cf. also below).
-Clan loyalty implied that the social group of the clan as a whole was more important than the single individual forming part of this social group in terms of social values. The individual leaving the clan and separating from it (as Esau did later after the blessing by Jacob) would be considered an outsider, and in more extreme cases, also an adversary.

In polygamous clan societies, genealogies serve to clarify descendants and lineages within the clan. This is typical in situational contexts where some members of the clan claim to a certain status of legitimacy in terms of distinguishing uniqueness. The same may not only apply to intertribal relationships but also in the conduct of relationships among different clans.

During the course of time and the shift in generations, various family-related clans may form a union and thus transform gradually into a social unit at a higher level, the level of a tribe. Eventually, nations may gradually form from the union of tribes. This can be seen in the history of God's chosen people, Israel.

D. Conclusion
Chapter 27 in connection with Chapter 25 of Genesis reflects a development of Israel, God´s chosen people, from the clan-related societies into tribes to finally forming a nation. This was and is seen as a gradual process occurring over a couple of generations:

At the initial stage, we find a polygamous clan society in the days of Abraham and Isaac.

The numerous seed of descendants promised to Abraham by God, as a whole, may be traced to Abraham. This includes others, part of the seed promise, which evidently did not form part of Israel in the later stages of nation development by clan transformations. Ishmael and his descendants directly related to Abraham, Esau, and his descendants such as Edom who was indirectly related to Abraham via Isaac were "sorted out" before the formation of Israel as God's chosen people.

This lineage of Jacob that is portrayed as the "root" from which God´s chosen people were called developed as a nation. This emphasis on the lineage of Jacob, later called "Israel" after wrestling with a man (cf. Gen. 35) is a point of view from that God´s chosen people as nation used to defend themselves from closely related neighbouring nations. They were probably closely related in ethnic and linguistic terms.

Both nations – Israel (Jacob) and Edom (Esau) – with their common roots in Abraham and Isaac had a long and diverse history of mutual relationships for the most of the Old Testament period. Towards the close of the Old Testament period, a dynasty of High Priests and later the Herodian kings evolved with their roots in Edom[1]. According to Josephus, the Edomites were subjugated under John Hyrcanus between 130 and 120 BC and gradually absorbed by Jewish culture and society. Around 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem Temple by the Romans, they must have ceased to exist as a separate ethnic group and nation.[2]

F. Identify the dialogue in Genesis 32:22-32.

There are different kinds of dialogues in this Chapter:

Gen. 32:3-6: Jacob is sending messengers to Esau and the reply they bring with them on return.

Gen. 32:26-32: Jacob wrestles with a man at night.

The focus in this Chapter is on the dialogue in vv. 26-32; after the man wrestling with Jacob asked Jacob to let him go, Jacob asks for a blessing (vv. 26-27). The man after enquiring for the name of Jacob tells him that his new name will be Israel (v.28). Now, Jacob asks what the name of the man was but the man did not tell Jacob; instead, he asked Jacob why he enquired for the man's name (v.29).

The dialogue reveals information about the reason why the name of Israel was given to Jacob and his descendants from Abraham in the lineage of Jacob: "I give you this name because you have fought with God and men, and you have not been defeated" (v. 28). Thus, this dialogue is a key point in the sacred scripture of OT explaining the origin of the name of Israel. It is also to identify Israel with Jacob, one of Abraham's descendants via Isaac. The narrator has chosen to forward this information in form of a dialogue embedded in this narration. To the audience, this way of presenting the information is much more impressive than its mere recording in indirect speech or in form of a short reference in historical records.

G. Identify the scene in Genesis 37:39-50

"Scene" in biblical OT narrative is defined as an "action of the story" that "is broken up into separate sequences, each scene representing something that took place at a particular time and place" (KAISER Jr., W.C.:"Narrative", in: SANDY/KAISER (eds.):"Cracking Old Testament Codes", Nashville, 1995:71).

[1]The family roots of the Hasmonean dynasty is said to be of Idumean origin – „Idumea" is the Greek form of „Edom".

[2]Cf. Josephus, „Jewish Antiquities", XIII, XV.

Gen. 37, 39-50 cover the text of the Joseph narrative, and according to the definition mentioned above the Joseph narrative in Gen. 37, 39-50 may be broken up into the following scenes:

Gen. 37:1-17: Joseph, a son of Jacob is a dreamer and arouses the jealousy and suspicion of his elder brothers and also of his father.

Gen. 37:18-36: his brothers sell Joseph into slavery to some Midianite traders who take him to Egypt. His brothers return home and tell the father (Jacob) that some wild animal(s) must have eaten Joseph. Jacob is very sad for the loss of his son Joseph.

Gen. 39:1-6: Joseph is sold to Potiphar, an Egyptian official and assumes responsibility over all domestic affairs in the household of Potiphar.

Gen: 39:7-19: Joseph refuses the advances of Potiphar wife to have an adulterous relationship with her and is falsely accused of adultery and therefore thrown into prison.

Gen. 39:19 – 40:23: Joseph explains the wine server's and the baker's dream who had been sent to prison by Pharaoh. Later, the wine server and the baker were released, and the baker was hanged as announced by Joseph's interpretation of the baker's dream (cf. Gen. 40:18). And Joseph was forgotten by the wine server and had to stay in prison.

Gen. 41:1-52: Pharaoh has dreams of plagues that would hit Egypt, and his court magicians were not able to explain these dreams to Pharaoh (vv. 1-8). Therefore, Joseph is called to interpret the dreams (vv. 9-24), and after having done so (vv. 25-37), Joseph is released from prison and becomes an administrator at the court of Pharaoh (vv. 39-45). As a governor, Joseph did not only rise in position but was able to have his own household; he had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, with his wife Senath (vv. 46-52).

Gen. 41: 53 – Gen. 45:8: At the time of famine, Joseph's family go to Egypt to obtain grain. Jacob sends his sons to Egypt to obtain grain, and so they meet Joseph after many years for the first time without recognizing him. Joseph plays a game with his brothers, accusing them of being spies, he keeps Simeon as a hostage and asks his other brothers to bring Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son, along next time. His brothers report to their father Jacob about it, and so, Jacob allows them to take Benjamin along on their next trip to Egypt. Then, the brothers are at Joseph's house, and Joseph meets his brother Benjamin. Again, Joseph sets a trap, Benjamin is caught, and Judah feels pressed to plea for Benjamin (Gen.41: 53-Gen. 44:32). Finally, Joseph reveals his true identity (Gen. 45:1-7).

Gen. 45:9-47:12: Joseph invites his whole family to settle in Egypt (Gen. 45:9-28), after some doubt, Israel (Jacob) is assured by God to move to Egypt (Gen. 46:1-4), and Israel (Jacob) did so. Subsequently, there is an account of Jacob's family members who went to Egypt with him (vv. 826), and upon arrival, Jacob and his family (clan) settles in Goshen (Gen. 46:27-Gen. 47:1-12).

Gen. 47:13-26: As the famine becomes worse, Joseph is nationalizing land for the state by buying it from private owners (vv. 13-26).

Gen. 47:27-50:14: Jacob had become old and felt that his death was near. He, therefore, asks Joseph to make sure that he would not be buried in Egypt (Gen. 47:27-31). Jacob gives a farewell blessing to the sons of Joseph (Gen. 48:1-22) and also to his sons, the brothers of Joseph (Gen. 49:1-33). After Jacob's death, his body is taken back to the cave at Machpelah in Canaan and buried there (Gen. 50:1-12).

Gen. 50:15-21: the brothers of Joseph are still afraid of him and that he might take revenge on them, now that their father had deceased. But Joseph assured them of his continuing favour towards them.

Gen. 50: 22-26: Joseph dies at the age of 110 years and still lived to his grandson Makir, a grandchild of his son Manasseh. Josephs bids farewell to his brothers and asks them to carry his bones with them to another land in case of leaving Egypt. His body was prepared for funeral by Egyptian medical specialists, put in a coffin and and then buried.

H. Identify the plot in Ruth

The Book of Ruth is a rather brief text only comprising 4 relative brief chapters.

The beginning of the book is by introducing Naomi, a widow from Judah who had moved with her family to Moab. After the death of her husband and her sons, she feels lonely in this foreign land and decides to return to her homeland. In doing so, she takes one of her daughters-in-law, Ruth, with her (Ruth 1:1-22).

The main body of the narrative focuses on Ruth and Boaz – a man whom she met on one of his fields while she was picking grains there. Naomi hears about Boaz and tells Ruth how to arrange to get married with Boaz. Boaz could not sell that piece of land that belonged to Naomi's family; finally Ruth got married to Boaz, and she had a son with him (Ruth 2-4:13).

The close of the story contains a poetry of praise relating to Ruth's son by the name of Obed, and in the final section of the text, there is a short genealogy showing Boaz to be one of the forefathers of David (Ruth 4:17b-22).

I. Identify the point of view in Genesis 3

Gen. 3 is an account on the beginning of sin. The story seems to be told from a) a psychological point of view: Adam and Eve feel ashamed at their nakedness (v.7, 11). They are afraid of admitting their sin, and instead of doing so, they are blaming each other and the snake. Other elements in the narrative could be regarded as b) ideological: God pronouncing judgement on the snake, Adam and Eve, all of whom are being treated equally in terms of their guilt, and their final being expelled from the garden of Eden (vv. 14-24).

J. Identify the characterization in Genesis 4

The main characters in Genesis 4 are the first children of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and God. From an ideological point of view, Abel is presented as a faithful person whose gift of sacrifice was accepted by God while Cain's was not (vv. 1-7). Cain becomes jealous and murders his brother Abel (v. 8). God pronounces judgement of Abel and tells him that he will plant on infertile soil and will have to wander from place to place (vv. 10-12).

Cain complains and is afraid of getting killed (v. 13). But God put a mark on Cain to prevent anyone else from killing Cain (v. 15). From this account of the narrative, Abel is portrayed as a victim of his brother Cain. After "leaving the scene", the two main characters remaining are God and Cain.

Cain appears as a person who hardly feels regret for what he has done and no need to repent. Instead, he pities himself on the consequences of the judgement God is pronouncing on him.

God, on his part, he turns out to be the Holy One who cannot tolerate such a terrible act and therefore pronounces judgement on Cain. But the consequences of the judgement are not final ones (for example, death penalty for murder) and not more than Cain actually could bear. In marking Cain, God has mercy on him. Cain is portrayed here as a prototype of sinful Man who feels hard in admitting and repenting sin; God is shown in his loving and caring kindness to pronounce a final judgement on Cain for murder; he is shown in his patience with sinful mankind.

8. The Components of Narrative, including Structural Level and Stylistic/Rhetorical Devices

Components of narrative are: a) scene, b) plot, c) point of view, d) characterization, e) setting, f) dialogue, g) structural level, h) Stylistic or rhetorical devices. These components are related to one another in a special way:

The basic components making up a narrative and by which other components are functionally interwoven are Scene and Plot. Without them, there would be no narrative in terms of a literary genre.

Scene and Plot refer to events and their ordering of sequence in the narrative and thus constitute the elementary part of a narrative. Characterization comes in when the characters, normally the participants and acting members of Scene and Plot, are described. Also this would be quite typical of narrative. Setting provides the background (cultural traits, situational contexts etc.) upon which scenes, plots and characterization of acting members are portrayed. If the characters of the plot and the scene in the narrative are human figures or portrayed as human (for example, animals speaking in fables), communication in form of direct speech would constitute an essential part.

In biblical narrative, such direct speech is mostly in form of a dialogue.

The components named so far are essential components inherent to narrative itself. Structural Level and Stylistic and Rhetoric Devices, on the other hand, refer to special communicative techniques employed in a narrative to present events and characters in a certain order. By this, the latter components are narrator-and-audience-orientated devices to present the narrative material in a certain intended way.

Biblical narrative in the sacred scriptures of the OT displays to some extent features we would otherwise call “epic”. It thus may contain textual portions relating to other literary genres of OT Scripture, such as Poetry, Law etc. Poetry portions contained in OT narrative are presented a) as being “performed” by some of the acting members mentioned in the narrative (e.g. Jacob in blessing Joseph, cf. Gen. 48:15-16; Jacob blessing his other sons, cf. Gen. 49 etc.).

To tell a story well necessarily means adding atmosphere to a narrative that goes beyond a mere and then perhaps dry account of facts (events). This can be done by description of characters acting in the narrative (characterization), presenting the scene and plot in a certain way to make clear what the emotional or ideological of the narrator is (point of view). It is naturally an implicit "device" that only can be uncovered by reading "between the lines". Also the components of Structural Level and Stylistic/Rhetorical devices are techniques use to add atmosphere to a narrative.

Stylistic/Rhetoric devices may differ from culture to culture and from one speech community to another. Repetition and chiasm are special features in ancient and modern Semitic cultures (much of what could be said of OT literary genre and components of a narrative may also be applicable to Quranic texts to some extent) that would maintain their "communicative flavour" in the original language and the cultural setting related to it. It would be hard to feel the "aura" of such devices in modern Western cultures, for example, where a brief statement of facts, however comprehensive, without any additional "atmospheric touch" have become more and more important.

9. Guidelines for Interpreting Narrative

Interpretation of Biblical narrative basically means two things: "dig out" the deeper meaning, intention and teachings of a text based on the textual components themselves ("exegesis"): This means considering such components as scene, plot, point of view, characterization, setting etc. It constitutes "the first part of the job" commonly understood to be the essential preliminary "exegetic stage". The result would be a well-founded formulation of the narrator's intention of why and what he wanted to say this in a certain situation to a certain audience. This is what we might consider to be the "deeper meaning of the text" in front of us that is to be "dug out" in this initial stage of analysing the text. We then may formulate what the "deeper meaning" of the text in front of us may be, normally "revealing" a teaching that relates to divine will or purpose of action. This formulation of the "deeper textual meaning" is text-orientated and must contain what the text actually and objectively says, not what we think that it contains or says. The result of this initial stage provides "the essential empirical foundation" for the second stage of our working with the text---this is application (usually called "Hermeneutics"). Methodically, interpretation of OT narrative includes these two steps.

Textual components and the their techniques to analyse OT narrative at exegetic initial level have been considered in the previous essay, and to avoid repetition, we refrain from mentioning them here again. Suffice it to say that these essentially form part of the interpretation guidelines for OT narrative at this initial stage of exegetic work on the textual portion in question itself. For the stage of application remaining to be considered in this essay, interpretation here would mean to apply the Biblical teaching uncovered from the text by exegesis to the larger literary unit of Bible and its teaching. We may uncover some important doctrinal teachings that we also can "practically" apply to our life and situation nowadays.

10. The text of Gen. 32:22-32 (Jacob wrestles with God).
Addressing the Scene, Plot, Point of View, Characterization, and Setting

The text of Gen. 32:22-32 is preceded by two other textual portions: Jacob's separating and leaving from Laban (Gen. 31:55) and Jacob on his own way anticipating to meet his brother Esau (Gen. 32:1-21). In relation to these two preceding textual portions, Gen. 32:22-32 under consideration here provides a picture of Jacob who has not yet found his final way and is trying some point of orientation. This point of orientation seems now to be provided to him in Gen. 32:22-32 where he is told that his new name will be that of "Israel" (Gen. 32:28).

a) Scene: It refers to Jacob's wrestling with a "man" (v. 24). This first part (unit of the scene) is one full of action, although only narrated very briefly and without any further details relating to "style" of wrestling; it is only said that Jacob could not be "wrestled down" by the other person; Jacob's thigh joint got out of place during his wrestling with the other person; Jacob asks for being blessed (vv. 24-25). The next unit relates to the "phase" after the wrestling where Jacob is given the new name of "Israel" but the man would not reveal his own name to Jacob when the latter asked for it (vv. 26-29): The final part relates to the moment where the "man" had disappeared and Jacob called the place "Penuel" (vv. 30-31). V. 32 does not form part of the scene anymore as it contains an explanation of a custom of Israel in the later days relating to this event.

b) Plot: The plot can be broken up into three basic parts: Jacob's wrestling with the "man" (vv. 24-27), Jacob's getting a new name (vv. 28-29); Jacob naming the place where this event occurred "Penuel" (vv. 30-31 (32)).

c) Point of view: In this textual portion, it seems to be a psychological one – but not necessarily in the sense that some emotional or motivation would be recorded in the person of Jacob; it is much a moment of "tension" intended in that Jacob's wrestling partner does refuse to reveal his own proper identity. Obviously, Jacob is unsure about it, he therefore inquires about it. On the other hand, in the preceding verse of Gen. 32:26 the narrator tells us that Jacob requested a blessing from the person wrestling with him. He somehow must have had a "feeling" of the authoritative status of this person wrestling with him—why should he request a blessing from a "nobody"?

d) Characterization: There are two "action" partners in this scene: the "man" and Jacob himself. The other one starting to wrestle with Jacob is not merely an aggressor attacking Jacob; he is portrayed as a person who apparently keeps to regulations of "fair play" during the act of wrestling, and Jacob is being given the chance not to be "knocked out" by this "man" who, although appearing in some way superior to Jacob in status and power (Jacob asking for his blessing (v. (26)) (v. 28). Even though Jacob gets "hurt" (v. 25), he can prevail in the fight (v. 25). Jacob does not necessarily feel to be equal terms with his wrestling partner (v. 26, 30) but has the opportunity to experience his partner's personality in terms of fairness and non-selfish concern (v. 26, 28, 30). The identity of his wrestling partner remains to be unclear to Jacob and, probably on purpose, is not stated implicitly. Jacob should be given the chance to identify the person unknown to him by himself, and this later also happens: He learns to have wrestled with God Himself whose Holiness he must have somehow been aware of when asking him to be blessed without knowing his proper identity (v. 26, 30).

e) Setting: In the event narrated here, it is made explicitly clear that God's chosen people do relate to Abraham via Isaac and Jacob (the latter now being called "Israel"). Thus, a distinction and a specification are made in terms of lineage: This distinguishes the lineage of Jacob (Israel) from the other sons of Abraham and Esau and their respective descendants. Thus, this lineage from Jacob is made clear in relation to other lineages from Abraham and Isaac (Israel vs. Ishmael, Israel vs. Esau (Edom).

11. The Text of Gen. 32:22-32.
Addressing Dialogue and Structure

a) Dialogue: The dialogue portion of this scene can be found in vv.26-29; their dialogue seems to be the most important of the scene in terms of the reasons why the biblical narrator finds it worth of recording: It is primarily about identifying Jacob as one of the patriarchs in relation to God, portraying Jacob as the one called to be the direct lineage for the later generations of God's chosen people, Israel. It is an illustration of "name etymology", not so much in linguistic terms but rather in terms of history of faith (note Gen. 32:30-32). The narrative section on wrestling provides a kind of "frame" for the dialogue to follow where the wrestling man, later identified to be God Himself (v. 30) lets Jacob discover some of the most important traits of his personality (on this, cf. previous essay).

b) Structure: Important structural features in these textual portions have already been referred to in previous notes: relation of this textual portion to other preceding sections (cf. introductory statements in the previous essay), the relationship of dialogue to (other) actions recorded.

c) Final observations: Dialogue structure itself and its relation to other non-dialogue textual portions point to a focus on implicit and not explicit identification of Jacob's wrestling partner. His final identification (v. 30) is done out of an attitude of faith and made from the perspective of Jacob: God does not simply tell Jacob who he is when wrestling with him and leaves it to Jacob to identify Him. And it is a stylistic feature of the narrator in this text to emphasize this implicitness: The Hebrew text makes this even more obvious: The relevant text portion of Gen.32: 24b reads: …wayye´abeq ´ish…. No definite article ha or one of its morphological variants is used in front of ´ish, normally a grammatical device in Biblical Hebrew to indicate indefinite reference of the noun referred to. Furthermore, in some contexts ´ish may be used and translated as an indefinite pronoun like "somebody", "someone". The verbal predicate preceding ´ish is, morphologically, in the 3rd person singular masculine and the narrative-niphal mood. The root of this verbal form ´abaq is used in the Hebrew text in this textual portion of Gen. 32:24seq. Only, meaning, "to wrestle (with someone)". Also the mood of the verbal predicate seems to indicate at stylistic level, that the narrator's emphasis may not be so much on describing the act of wrestling itself but on the experience Jacob has with his co-wrestler and the conclusion he is given the chance to take in identifying his partner properly. So, it is self-discovery on the part of Jacob that is implied, and as such it is an act of faith.