

# Principles for Interpreting Narratives

1. A narrative does not necessarily directly teach a doctrine.
2. A narrative often illustrates a doctrine or doctrines taught propositionally elsewhere.
3. Narratives record what happened - not necessarily what should have happened or what ought to happen every time. Therefore, not every narrative has an individual identifiable moral of the story.
4. What people do in narratives is not necessarily a good example for us. Frequently, it is just the opposite.
5. Most of the characters in OT narratives are far from perfect and their actions are, too.
6. We are not always told at the end of a narrative whether what happened was good or bad. We are expected to be able to judge that on the basis of what God has taught us directly and categorically elsewhere in the Scripture.
7. All narratives are selective and incomplete. Not all the relevant details are always given (cf. John 21:25). What does appear in the narrative is everything that the inspired author thought important for us to know.
8. Narratives are not written to answer all our theological questions. They have particular, specific limited purposes and deal with certain issues, leaving others to be dealt with elsewhere, in other ways.
9. Narratives may teach either explicitly (by clearly stating something) or implicitly (by clearly implying something without actually stating it).
10. In the final analysis, God is the hero of all biblical narratives.

## Author

Background, Current Context

## Audience

Spiritually Significant Issues, Culturally Significant issues

## Tell the story

Outline or diagram the story. What are the scenes that the author emphasizes? Is there a climax? At what point? Is there an explicit lesson taught?

## Application

What can I learn about God, His World and/or His child (me) from this passage?