

Gospel Genres

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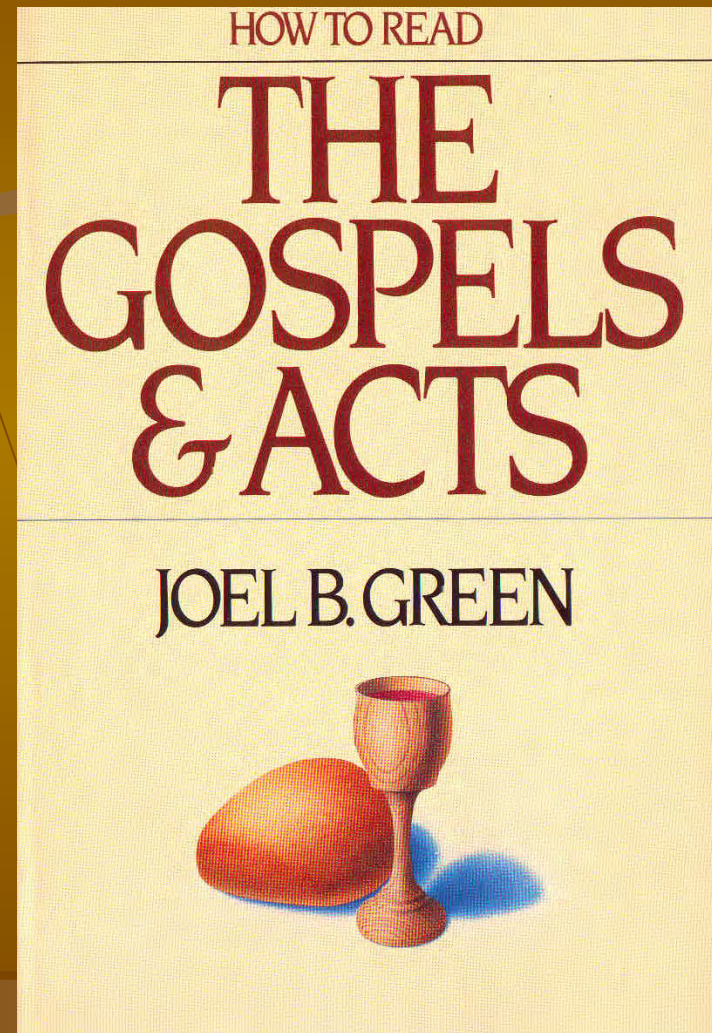


What is a Genre?

- "A kind, sort, type; said of works of literature, art, etc." *Webster's New World Dictionary*
 - Literature: fiction, biography, novel, poetry, murder mystery, limerick, sermon ...
 - Art: portrait, landscape, abstract, still life, cartoon, caricature, art deco ...
- A sort of written, oral or visual communication that arouses particular expectations in the reader/listener due to certain distinctive markers.

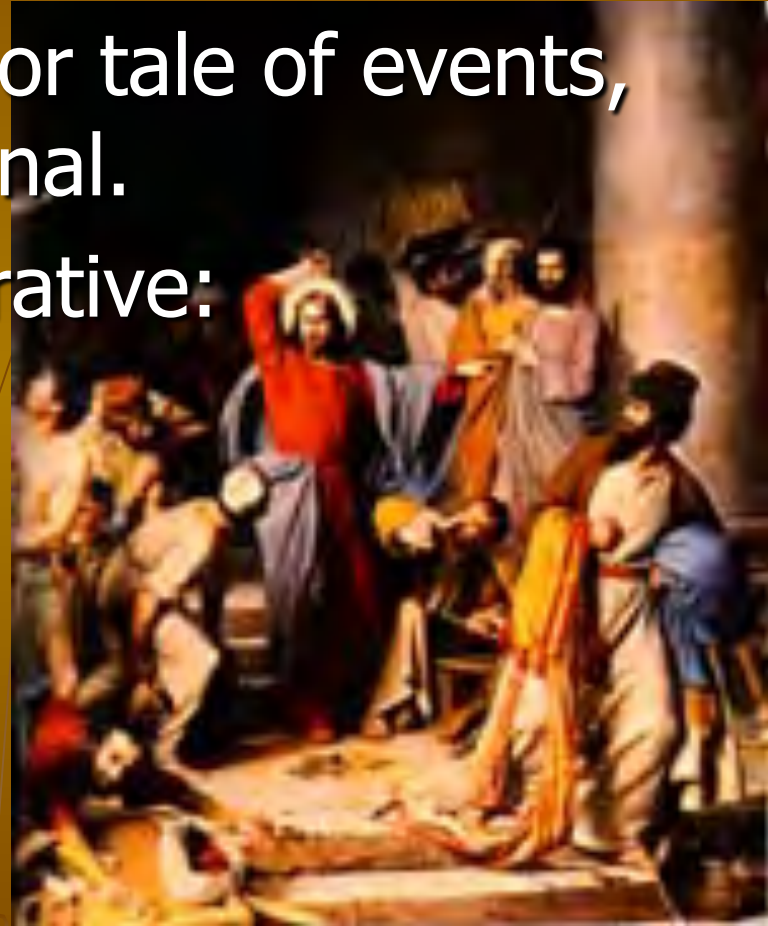
Common Genres in the Gospels

- Narrative
- Dialogue
- Miracle Account
- Controversy Account
- Discourse
- Parable
- Symbolic Action
- Genealogy



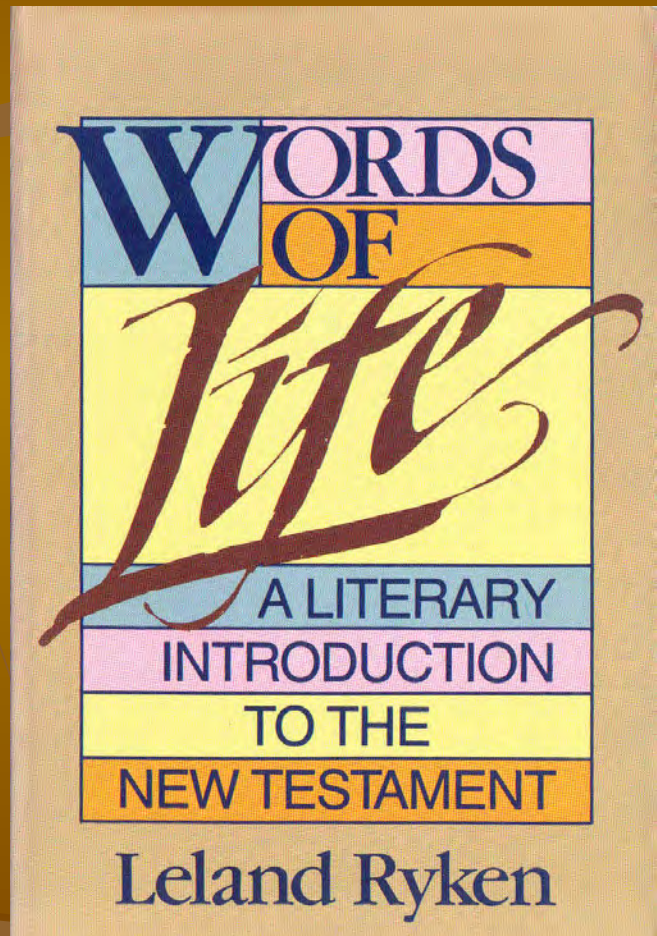
What sorts of things characterize narratives?

- A narrative is a story or tale of events, either factual or fictional.
- Components of a narrative:
 - Actors/Characters
 - Events/Action
 - Scene(s)
 - Plot(s)



Types of narrative in the Gospels

- Annunciation/nativity stories
- Calling/vocation stories
- Recognition stories
- Witness stories
- Encounter stories
- Conflict/controversy stories
- Pronouncement stories
- Miracle stories
- Passion stories
- Hybrid stories



What characterizes dialogue?

- Recorded speech of two or more speakers interacting with one another
- Characterized by:
 - Direct discourse
 - Relatively little narration
- Used to:
 - Show character
 - Record debate/argument
 - Answer questions



What characterizes a miracle account?

- Obviously, a narrative in which a miracle is the central action
- Characteristics:
 - The need is described
 - Jesus' help is sought
 - Person in need (or helper) expresses faith
 - Jesus performs miracle
 - Characters respond to miracle/Jesus



What characterizes a controversy account?

- Narrative dominated by a controversy
 - May be more dialogue or more discourse
- Interpretive Qs:
 - Plot – what is the controversy?
 - Actors – where are they coming from?
 - Actions – what do they say/do; how relate to the controversy?



What characterizes discourse?

- The speech of a single speaker
- May be included in narrative or may stand alone
- Things to look for:
 - What is the topic?
 - How is speaker developing the topic?
 - What is the flow of the argument?



What characterizes a parable?

- A brief story, told to illustrate a spiritual or ethical teaching
- So it has characteristics of:
 - narrative
 - story-telling
- It usually teaches by analogy:
 - Tenor – the lesson topic being taught
 - Vehicle – the story being used
 - Points of resemblance – how the tenor is analogous to the vehicle



What characterizes a symbolic action?

- This is an acted parable
- The action is often unusual:
 - Cursing fig tree, washing feet
- The audience/reader is expected to:
 - Realize that the action is symbolic
 - Try to discern what it is symbolic of
 - i.e., what is the tenor of which the action is the vehicle?



What characterizes a genealogy?

- More common in the OT than the NT
- A list of names of ancestors & descendants, usually marked to indicate which are which
- Interpretive questions:
 - What is the author's purpose in giving this genealogy?
 - Why does he include or exclude various items?



The End



There is probably no end to this sort of analysis, but this is a start, and we need to stop here!