

*What is a Story?*  
*Reading Biblical Narratives*  
September 12, 2018

*"A tale shall accomplish something and arrive somewhere." — Mark Twain*

**Last week: Our goal in reading biblical narratives:**

- What does this story teach me about God? And
- How should I adjust my life to this truth?

**The challenge of Biblical Narrative:**

1. The settings—time, place, and culture—are so different from our own.
2. Our familiarity with the stories makes us prone to overlooking important details in them.
3. We tend to “flatten” the stories.
4. Bible stories are not isolated “episodes,” but themselves part of a bigger picture.

**The Importance of Biblical Narrative**

1. Narrative makes up the vast majority of Scripture — 55-65%!
  2. Narratives show us the faithful way to live.
  3. Narratives teach us about God’s relationship to the world.
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Plots are the organizing principles of a story.

- Exposition — setting (time, place, culture); characters
  
- Conflict — incompleteness, disorder, or desire
  
- Intensification/Climax — the point of decision, “something’s gotta give”
  
- Resolution — The conclusion provides the clues for the meaning

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This week:

Read John 11:

- Setting (Place and Culture)
- Characters
- The words and actions of Jesus
- The narrator's comment
- People's response:
  - Jesus' disciples
  - Jews
  - Religious leaders
- The plot of the book