

Reading in Context
Reading Biblical Narratives
September 19, 2018

Our goal in reading biblical narratives:
What does this story teach me about God? And
How should I adjust my life to this truth?

Steps to Interpret a Narrative

1. Observe the Story – Identify the Plot

A. Exposition – Define the setting and the characters

B. Conflict – What is driving the plot forward?

C. Climax/Intensification – “Something’s gotta give!”

D. Resolution – The ending is usually key to interpreting the story.

2. Read the Story in Context

Three Avenues for Reading a Text: Behind, In, In-Front of the text.

- Behind the Text – Historical Context
- In the Text – Literary Context
- In-Front of the Text – Whole-Bible, Canonical Context

1. **Identify the Historical Context** – The historical context is the historical circumstances in which the narrative occurred and the circumstances in which the passage was written and first read.

A. Who wrote this passage?

B. When did they write it?

C. For what purpose was it written?

D. To whom was it written?

2. **Identify Literary Context** – The literary context is the flow-of-thought or overall story being communicated by the author. The author controls the meaning!

A. How does this passage fit into the story being told by the book?

B. What themes of the book are revealed in this passage?

What does this story teach me about God?

How should I adjust my life to this truth?

This week:
Read Genesis 6–9:
Observe the Plot
Read in Context