

Old Testament Narrative

Introduction: what is Old Testament Narrative?

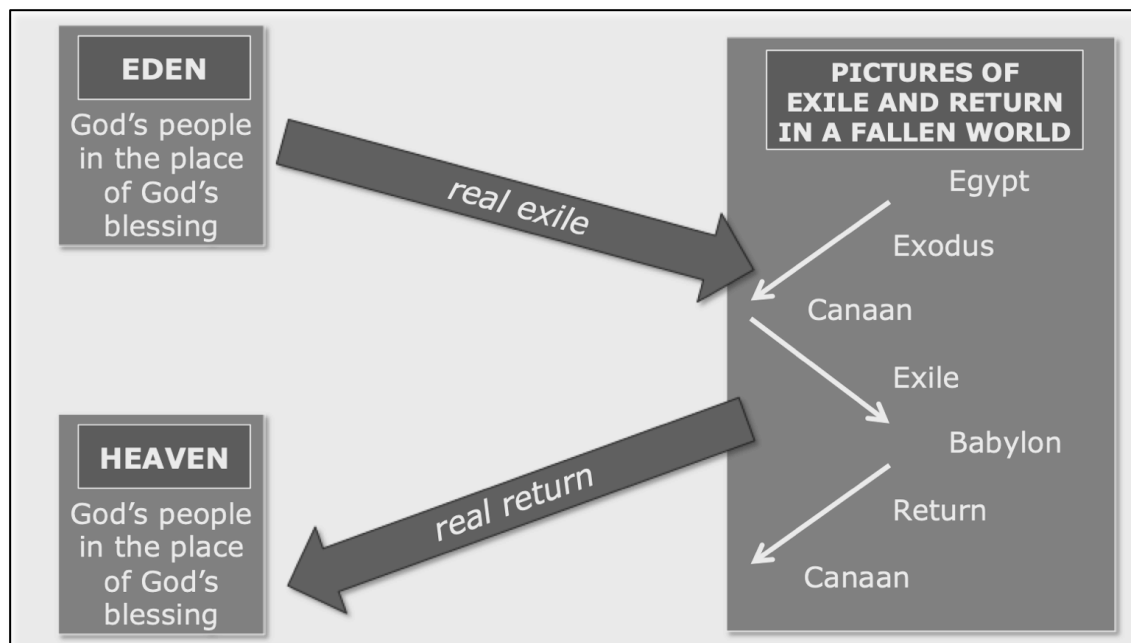
God hasn't given us a systematic theology. He's given us, primarily, a storybook.

*God has given us a book full of stories,
which was made for His people of old,
it begins with the tale of a garden,
and ends with the city of gold.*

(Maria Matilda Penstone, 1859-1910)

Old Testament Narrative is ...

- a big genre
- part of God's single story



Event	+	Explanation	=	Revelation
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(David Jackman)

- a story about Christ

Biblical theology shows us the process of revelation in the Bible leading to the fulfillment of all hope in Jesus Christ. Since Christ is the goal to which all revelation points he himself, in his person and acts, is the key to the interpretation of all scripture
(Graeme Goldsworthy)

Luke 24:27, 44-47

lots of different ways for Old Testament stories to be 'about Christ'

This is from Andrew Reid's new commentary Teaching 1 and 2 Samuel (PT, Christian Focus 2019)

Luke 24

Luke 24 is often cited in relation to preaching from the Old Testament, and rightly so. However, it is not always rightly understood. The particular verses are set within a discussion by Jesus with some disciples on the road to Emmaus and are focussed on verses 25-27 wherein a number of things are said.

First, the disciples are described by Jesus as 'foolish' and 'slow of heart', indicating that Jesus considered that the reality of what had happened to him should not have been unexpected to them given 'all that the prophets have spoken!'

Second, in verse 26 Jesus asks the rhetorical question which will set the stage for his revelation to them in verse 27. The question concerns the necessity which he indicates is evident from the prophets, that the Christ would suffer and then be exalted ('enter his glory'; verse 26).

Third, Jesus gives to the disciples present the perspective of 'all the Scriptures' concerning himself. The combination of 'beginning with Moses and all the Prophets' with 'all the Scriptures' implies comprehensiveness, that is, that 'he went through the entire Scripture, front to back'.¹

Verse 27 needs to be understood in this context. Jesus is giving the disciples enlightenment from Scripture about the things concerning him. There does not appear to be any sense here that every verse or even every passage points toward Jesus. Rather, it is that the (Hebrew) Scriptures in every constituent part, not every verse, contain scriptures that speak about the Messiah and his suffering, resurrection, and entering into his glory.

However, the picture is not yet complete and so we need to look at verses 44-46 as well. In between the 'slowness of heart' in verse 25 and verses 44-46, Luke uses a number of key descriptions which demonstrate how he wants us to understand this narrative. In verse 31 the eyes of the disciples are *opened* and they *recognise* Jesus. In verse 32 they describe how their hearts had been burning within as he *opened* the scriptures to them. These references provide a link to verse 45 where Jesus is among the larger group of disciples and *opens* their *minds* so that they can *understand* the Scriptures. In other words, he repeats the pattern seen with the two disciples in the central narrative.

The background to this 'opening' is found in the Old Testament itself. Since the sin of the golden calf, after which God spoke about the people being 'stiff-necked' (Exodus 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9), the scriptures often talk about a fundamental problem affecting the heart and sensibility of God's people (e.g. Ps 95; Isa 6:9-10; 48:4; Ezek 2:3-5). This is picked up in the New Testament in such places as the disciples' reactions in the Gospels, Romans 11, 2 Corinthians 3, and also here. Such hardness of heart demonstrates itself in an inability to understand God's purposes as outlined in the Old Testament Scriptures. However, as this passage demonstrates, association with Jesus, faith in him, and education by him reverses this. Those taught by Jesus become people who *recognise*, whose eyes and minds *are opened*, and whose hearts are warmed by what they find in those Scriptures.

With this larger picture in mind, the detail of verses 44 to 46 can be explored. In verse 44, Jesus refers back to his own words earlier concerning his own destiny as outlined in scripture (such as those found in 9:22, 44; 17:25; 18:31-32; 22:37). He remarks that just as it was *necessary* for him to suffer (24:26), so it was *necessary* that everything written about him in the Scriptures be fulfilled. He then outlines what it is that he sees to be prophesied in those Scriptures. The key elements are clear: a suffering Messiah, resurrection, and mission consisting of proclamation in his name throughout the world.

The implication of the teaching of Jesus here is that from now on the Old Testament Scriptures must be read in reference to him, just as he himself had read them. Similarly, there can be no doubt that Jesus considers that the whole of the Scriptures are in some sense about him. Hence, following on from this, it may be appropriate to say that Jesus considers that the whole of the Old Testament is speaking about him or even that he is the subject of the whole of the Old Testament. What the scriptures testify to has been realised in him and that to know him is to know and understand their purpose and direction.

The key to understanding the plot and purpose of the Old Testament is therefore to see it in the light of who Jesus is, but particularly in what he has done through his death.² This stirs us up in our preaching of Samuel and gives us both a reason and a rationale as we go about it. First, we should preach it because it will speak of him and will direct us toward him and his suffering. Second, we will be aware as we do so that we shouldn't force passages to speak of him that don't. However, we will constantly expect and keep our eyes open for those which do contain the things 'concerning him'.

¹ Darrell L Bock, *Luke* (vol. 2: 9:51-24:53; Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 3B; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 1917.

² Note the references to the necessity of the Messiah suffering that frame these two key references.

DANIEL

1. WHAT IS THE BOOK'S MELODIC LINE?

A tale of two cities

Babylon

Jerusalem

How do I live in Babylon when my home is in Jerusalem (cf Philippians 3:20)?

1 Peter is the New Testament book with perhaps the closest thematic parallels (1 Pet 1:1, 17; 2:9-12; 5:13).

A tale of two realities



1:1 and 1:2

9:1 and 9:2

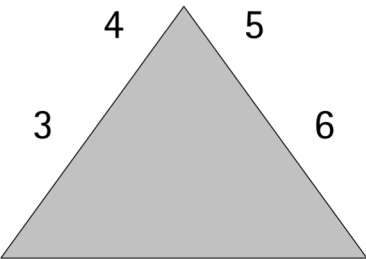
10:2-3 and 10:12-14

John Calvin's theme for *Daniel*: God must win!

A tale in two languages

Shinar (1:2) takes us back to Genesis 11:1-9

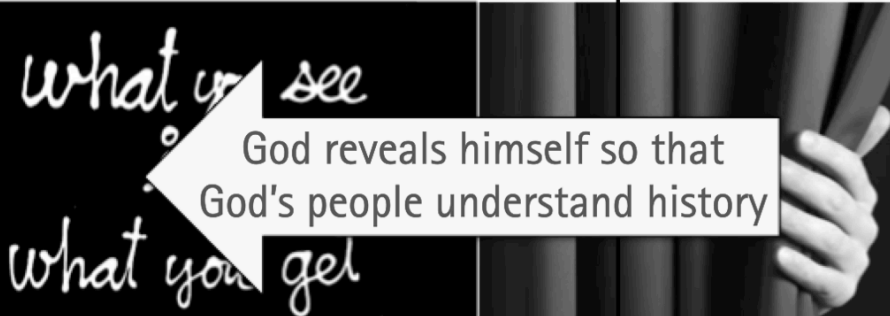
build a city	not spread	defy God's word
build a tower	make a name	defy God's rule

1	2-7	8-12
intro	THE BABYLONIAN COURT	THE HEAVENLY COURT
	<div>4:37b</div> 	

2. WHAT IS THE BOOK'S PURPOSE?

1:21

1 Peter 5:13

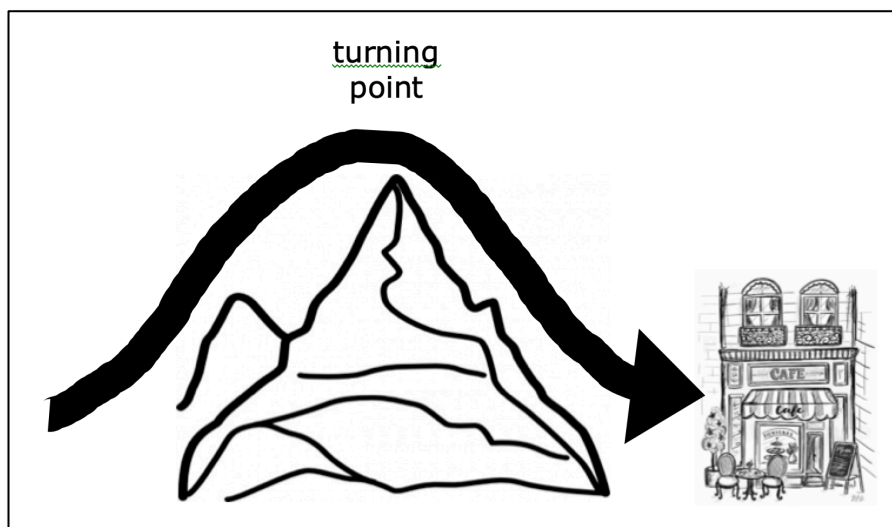
1	2-7	8-12
	THE BABYLONIAN COURT	THE HEAVENLY COURT
HEBREW	ARAMAIC	HEBREW
intro		

How NOT to preach OT Narrative

- history lectures
- fables with 'a moral'
- allegory
- Jewish sermons

How to preach OT Narrative

1. WHAT IS THE BOOK'S MELODIC LINE?
2. WHAT IS THE BOOK'S PURPOSE?
3. STORIES HAVE A SHAPE



Exodus 1-2

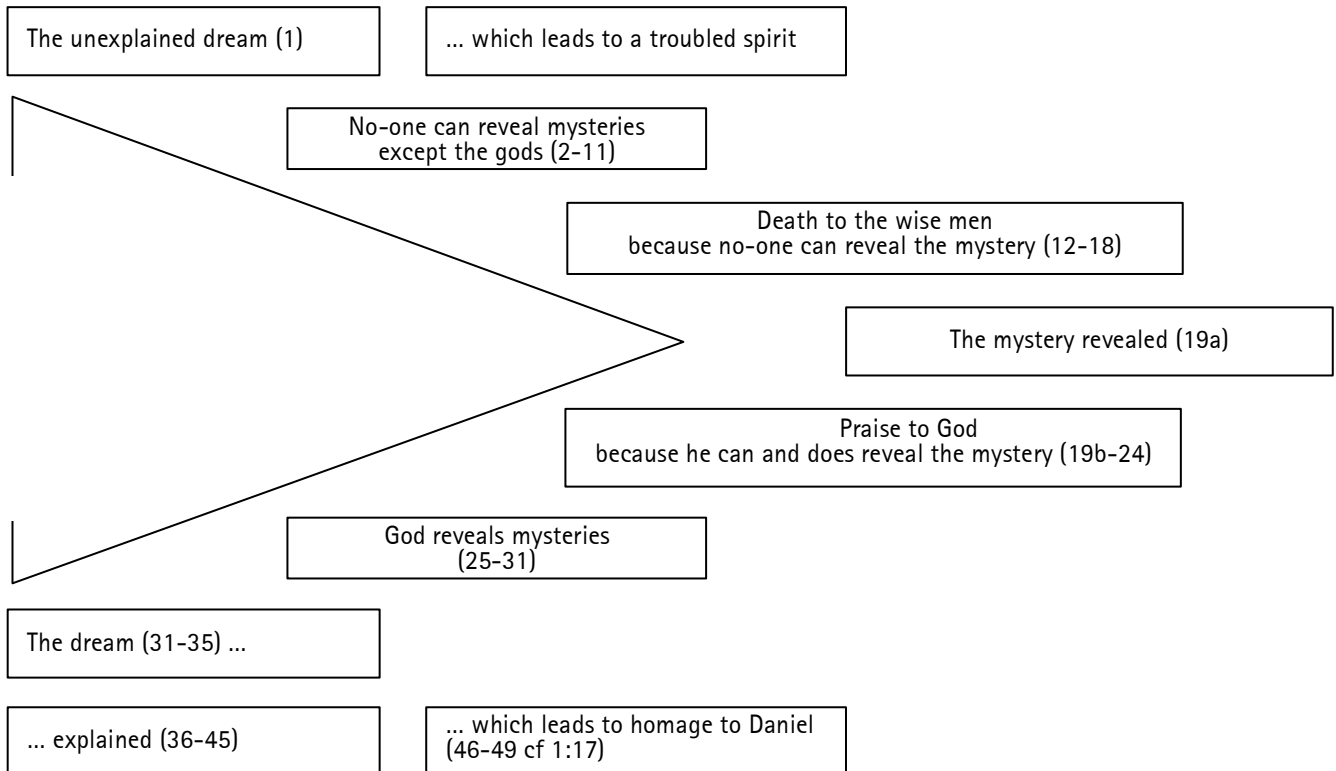
Seven Basic Plots:

- overcoming the monster
- rags to riches
- the quest
- voyage and return
- comedy
- tragedy
- rebirth

- give attention to details

Daniel 2:1-49

is a good example of 'up the mountain and back down the other side to get to the café' (!)



There is a clear (?) chiasm.

And the focus of the chiasm is 'that God reveals'.

But the purpose of the chapter is 'the café' at the end ... which is, 'what God reveals'.

- 1 The God who reveals ...
- 2 ... that kingdoms come and go
- 3 ... that He will set up His forever-Kingdom

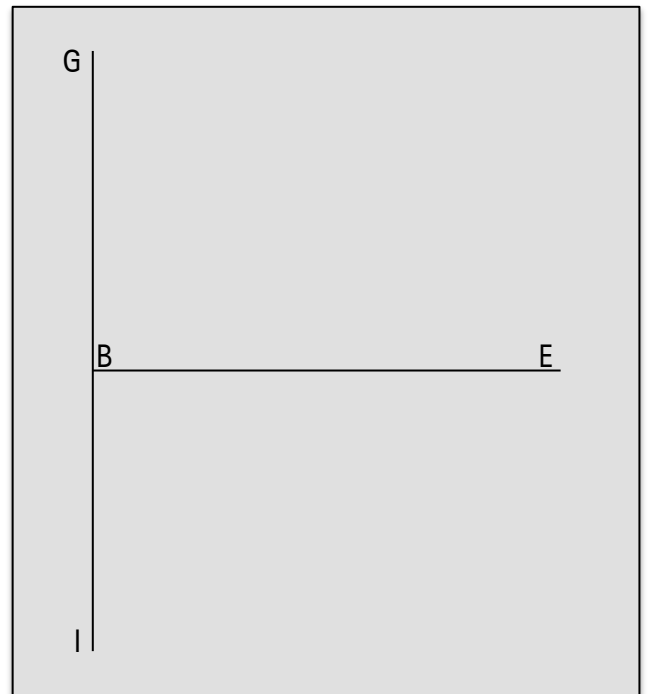
STORYGRAPH: thinking about the shape of stories

G.I. axis = good fortune, ill fortune

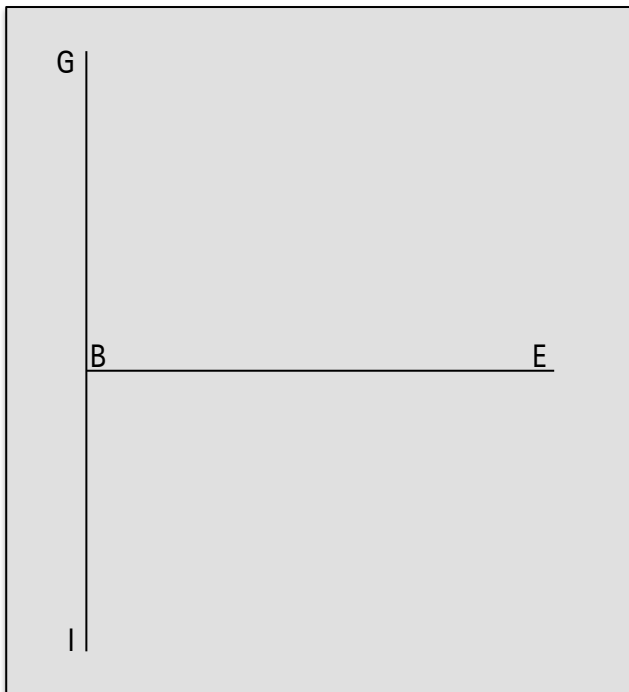
B.E. axis = beginning and end

- 1 man in a hole
- 2 boy meets girl
- 3 from bad to worse
- 4
- 5

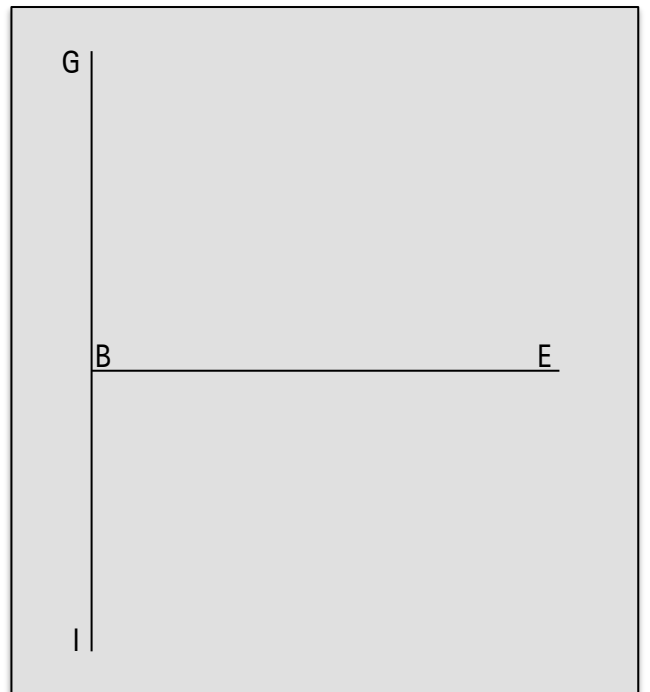
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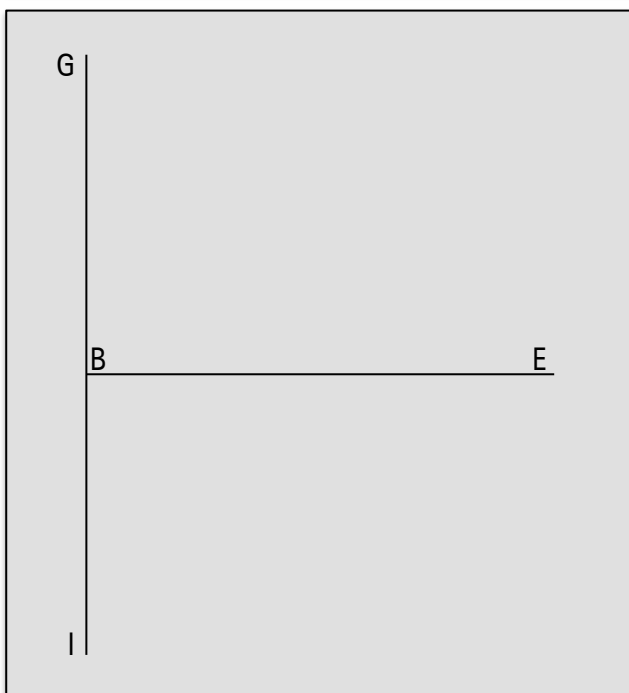
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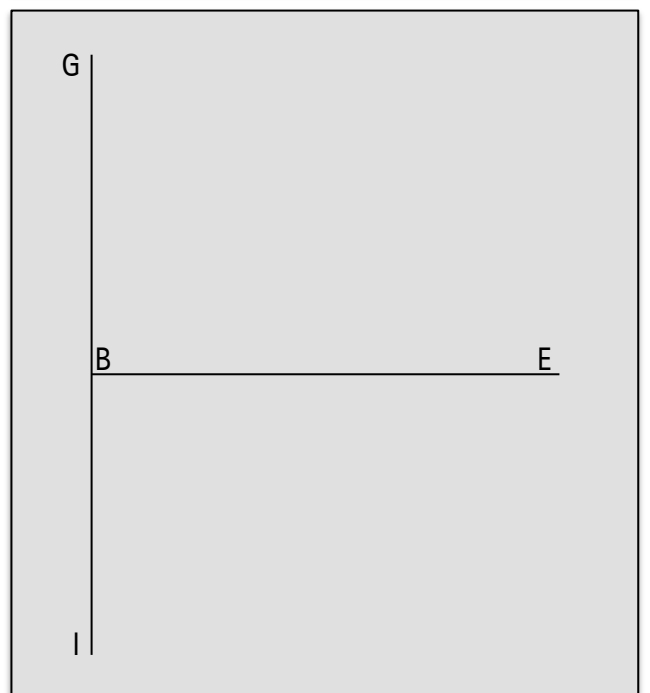
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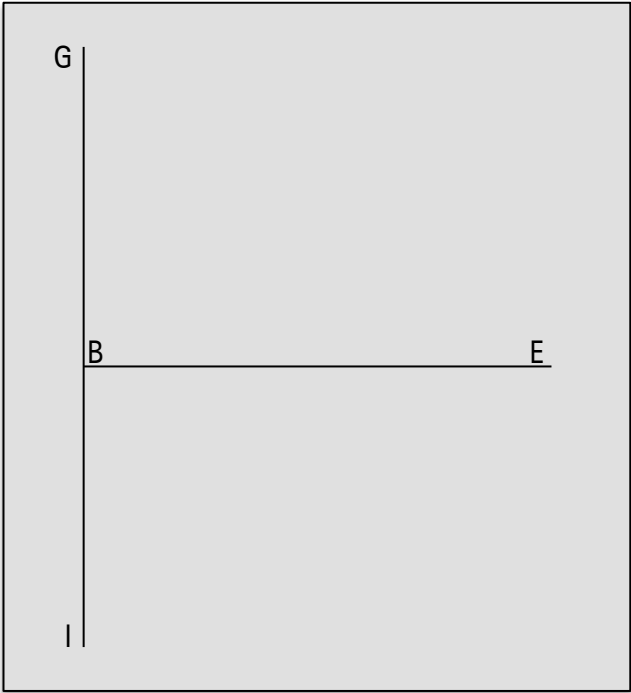
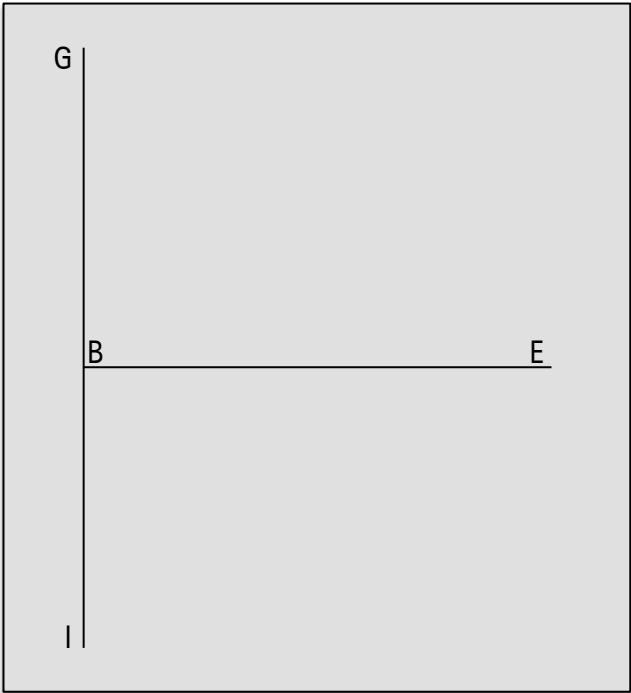
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Daniel 7:1-28



How to preach OT Narrative

1. WHAT IS THE BOOK'S MELODIC LINE?
2. WHAT IS THE BOOK'S PURPOSE?
3. STORIES HAVE A SHAPE
4. STORIES ARE STORIES

'Something' happens. What is the 'something' that happens?

When you turn the story into a sermon, use the story's turning points to identify the sermon's teaching points: don't lose the story in the sermon. Stories are stories, so tell them as stories!

Seven Basic Plots:

- overcoming the monster
- rags to riches
- the quest
- voyage and return
- comedy
- tragedy
- rebirth

Daniel 3:1-30

