



Teaching the Bible Classically with Dr. Fred Putnam

Lecture 4: Narrative (II)

Outline:

Studying Biblical Stories

- **Genesis 37, The story of Joseph**
 - When we read a story, we need to look back to find out what happened before.
 - Knowing where they came from and their ancestors history helps understand their story.
 - Joseph is Abraham's great grandson.
 - Abraham has 318 men who can fight. His whole entourage had to be the size of a small village. They have flocks and herds to support these people.
 - Abraham is moving to Canaan with an enormous company.
 - When Abraham went to Egypt, he increased his wealth.
 - Isaac inherited everything. Jacob, by bargaining for Esau's birthright, got two thirds of Isaac's wealth.
 - Jacob's first three sons by Leah (Reuben, Simeon, and Levi) had all disqualified themselves from being his principle heir.
 - Jacob's vast wealth would be divided among the 12 sons, but there would 13 allotments and Joseph would get two of them.
 - Dreams were taken very seriously in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Archeologists have found dream interpretation texts.
 - These dream interpretation texts didn't always agree.
 - Everyone in the ancient near east knew that if you woke up remembering a dream it was because your god was revealing your future to you.
 - Joseph was asking, "What is God saying?" and "What is this message?" when he asks his brothers about his dreams.
 - This extra biblical information comes from some curiosity and looking things up.
 - Joseph is not showing off to his brothers.
 - Joseph's brother's plot to kill him.
- **Genesis 37 and 38**
 - Joseph's brothers kill a goat and dip Joseph's coat in its blood and send it to their father to see if he recognizes it.



- The stories of Judah and Joseph are linked by the brothers asking if he recognizes the coat.
- **How do we offer extra-biblical information to our students without just lecturing?**
 - Offer extra-biblical information in the form of a question.
- **Parallel texts**
 - Genesis – Kings is a complete story.
 - 1-2 Chronicles also starts with Creation.
 - These are telling the same sequence of events, but they don't identify the same events.
 - Joshua – 2 Kings is written against the background of the Sinaitic covenant.
 - 1-2 Chronicles are written against the background of the Davidic covenant. These are concerned almost entirely with the southern kingdom.
 - Read two versions of a story and raise the question that there are different reasons for writing a story. This helps the students see the Bible as an anthology of books written by different authors at different times with different purposes. This is not a bad thing.

Assignments/Projects

- Videos of ballets/dances.
- Students write songs and sing them.
- Bible fan-fiction. Write a story as though it were something that happened to one of the characters in a Bible story.
- Write a series of letters, journey, or diary.
- Sculptures and models with an artistic statement.
- Students do best what they are interested in doing.
- Giving them freedom to do these things, they do much better work. They also remember things.

Terms

- Iron Age Israel – Old Testament Israel
- Second Temple Judaism – The first temple was Solomon's temple, the second temple was built by the returnees from Babylon
- Intertestamental Period – 400 BC – year 1 AD
- Israelites – up until the exile
- Jews – starting with the exile in 586 BC.
- Israel – Northern Kingdom, Samaria is capitol
- Judah – Southern Kingdom, Jerusalem is capitol