



into the Melting Pot

the question is more important than the answer

Sunday 11 March 2018

How To Read Bible Stories – The Easter Story

Notes from the Discussion on Sunday 17 September (MPot 28)

Narrative Analysis or Literary Criticism is reading the Bible passage as literature (just as you would critically analyse Shakespeare). So you would look for

- Settings – When & Where
- Characters – Who, What and Traits
- Plot - Events
- How The Story Is Told
- Themes

'How to read' suggests, wrongly, that there is a 'correct' way – we bring our own ideas and contexts to our understanding. 'Interpret', which must be recognised as subjective, has a better meaning, recognising there is not one pure Christian understanding.

The 'Bible' will depend on the translation and denominational collection, which seriously impact on the interpretation before you even start to read.

'Stories' – the Bible consists of many styles and genres of writings: poetry, songs, erotic literature, history, myth, letters, discourses or sermons, gospel and apocalyptic literature, the latter two examples of particularly common styles of their time.

A better title: **How To Interpret Biblical Texts.**

It is important to 'forget' any preconditions or prior knowledge of the reading and treat this as if it was the first time you have read the text and met the characters. This was initially quite hard to do!

We started to analyse the text with regard to the headings. Here is a copy of the annotated text as far as we managed in the time:

Key

Settings

Characters

Plot

Story

Themes

Of Note

Genesis 2:4b–3:24, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Another Account of the Creation

4 In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, 5 when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; 6 but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— 7 then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, [b] and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. 8 And the Lord God planted a garden in