

A Story Approach to Understanding Scripture **written by Matt Krick**

The Bible is a story. The Scriptures are the written and living account of God's big story that he has given us. When we view one isolated text in Scripture it should be viewed in light of the whole larger narrative going on before and after it. We should read the Bible as getting glimpses of little stories that are part of the larger story. An approach to doing this that we have found to be helpful is to apply four worldview questions to the characters in the stories found in Scripture.

The four worldview questions are:

1. Who am I?
2. Where am I?
3. What is wrong?
4. What is the remedy?

It must be recognized that these questions can never be fully answered on behalf of the characters because we do not fully know them. There are certain things we can be sure of, however, and other things that are implied. These questions must also sometimes be answered more than once from each character's perspective as the answers may change as the story progresses. The questions should always be answered by all the characters in the story, regardless of whether the character is "good" or "evil." Doing so will give us a much fuller understanding of the story and what is going on.

This exercise works for all genres found in Scripture. It may seem easier to apply this method to Old Testament narratives or to the gospel stories. However it works very well when applied to sections of Scripture such as the Psalms or the epistles. There is always a story going on in a psalm or an epistle. You may need to do some extra study to find historical and cultural background and content to fill in some holes, but the worldview questions apply. Ask the questions as if you were the Psalmist, the Psalmist's enemy, or other characters in the psalm. With the epistles, ask the worldview questions as if you were the writer of the epistle or as if you were the one being addressed through the letter or other characters that may be found in the epistle.

After answering the worldview questions on behalf of all the characters involved, proceed to apply it more particularly to yourself, your life situation and your community. Some questions to consider are the following:

1. What is revealed about God in this story?
 2. What character do you relate to the most in the story?
 3. In what ways do you relate to each of the different characters found in the story, whether protagonists or antagonists?
 4. What might God be speaking to you through this story? What do you think God might be trying to affirm in you about who you are as His child through this story?
 5. What areas of life may God be calling you to move forward in?
 6. What sin areas may there be in your life that God is using this story to cause you to confess?
 7. How do you think this story might cause you to more fully experience the healing, freedom and life Jesus came to offer us?
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The four worldview questions were developed by Richard Middleton and Brian Walsh and presented in their two co-authored books-**Transforming Vision** and **Truth is Stranger Than It Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age**. Another source to consider when interpreting Scripture is N.T. Wright's **The New Testament and the People of God**: Especially chapter three on Literature, Story, and Worldviews, pg. 47-80. Also, N.T. Wright's **How Can the Bible be Authoritative** can be accessed by visiting www.mhbcmi.org and selecting **Learn** and then **Articles**.