

# Hearing God’s Voice in the Pages of Scripture

## Session #3: The Literature the Bible Contains

*How can we pay best attention to the literary features of the Bible in order to hear the trustworthy voice of God?*

### I. The Significance of Infallibility

‘The Bible, as originally given, is the inspired and **infallible Word of God**. It is the supreme authority in all matters of belief and behaviour.’ (UCCF Doctrinal Basis)

### II. The Importance of Genre: Opening Reflections

#### 1. An exercise

‘The clock on the mantelpiece said ten thirty, but someone had suggested recently that the clock was wrong. As the figure of the dead woman lay on the bed in the front room, a no less silent figure glided rapidly from the house. The only sounds to be heard were the ticking of that clock and the loud wailing of an infant.’

- ❖ Who is the dead woman?
- ❖ How did she die?
- ❖ Who is the silent figure?
- ❖ Why is the infant crying?
- ❖ What is the significance of the time?

#### 2. An analogy

#### 3. An example

### III. The Importance of Genre: Further Thoughts

1. Interpretation: the biblical genres and biblical hermeneutics
2. Coordination: the biblical genres and biblical theology
3. Formation: the biblical genres and biblical discipleship

## Further Reading

### One book to buy and read:

Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 4th edn (Zondervan, 2014).

Now in its fourth edition, this is a great ‘how to’ book which concentrates on defining the principles appropriate to interpreting and applying the different types of literature in the Bible. This is a must read for any who want to explore this area in more detail.

### Other books for taking things further:

Leland Ryken, *A Complete Handbook of Literary Forms in the Bible* (Crossway, 2014).

Leland Ryken, *Literary Introductions to the Books of the Bible* (Crossway, 2015).

### One book for going deeper:

Matthew Mullins, *Enjoying the Bible: Literary Approaches to Loving the Scriptures* (Baker Academic, 2021).

Especially helpful for those who want to get to grips with the poetic parts of Scripture. Mullins essentially argues that ‘if reading the Bible does not enact pleasure in you, then you may not have understood what you have read’.

### For preachers (and others) on the biblical genres:

Several books approach the biblical genres from the perspective of the preaching task, but remain helpful even for those who are not preachers.

Jeffrey D. Arthurs, *Preaching With Variety: How to Re-create the Dynamics of Biblical Genres* (Kregel, 2007).

Terry G. Carter, J. Scott Duvall, and J. Daniel Hays, *Preaching God’s Word: A Hands-On Approach to Preparing, Developing, and Delivering the Sermon*, 2nd edn (Zondervan, 2018).

J.R. Grenville Kent, Paul J. Kissling, and Laurence A. Turner (eds.), *‘He Began With Moses...’ Preaching the Old Testament Today* (IVP, 2010).

Mark Meynell, *What Angels Long to Read: Reading and Preaching the New Testament* (Langham Preaching Resources, 2017).

Ian Paul and David Wenham (eds.), *‘We Proclaim the Word of Life’: Preaching the New Testament Today* (IVP, 2013).

Christopher J.H. Wright, *Sweeter Than Honey: Preaching the Old Testament* (Langham Preaching Resources, 2015).

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