

## Session 2: What about Genre?



### Four accounts of WW1, four different types of literature

#### Narrative, or 'Witnessing words.'

'<sup>1</sup>Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup>just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, <sup>3</sup>I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup>so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.'

Luke 1:1-4

'There are irresolvable ambiguities in the portraits of biblical characters such as Moses, Saul, or David that prohibit simple understandings of their stories. Is David raised up by God to be Israel's king, or does he emerge as an epic hero? Is he the man who does the right thing and the man with God's blessing, or is he the man with an eye to the main chance and who always manages to fall on his feet?'

John Goldingay, *Models for Interpretation of Scripture*

#### Instruction or 'Authoritative words'

'Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy...'

Exodus 20:8

'When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof; otherwise you might have blood-guilt on your house, if anyone should fall from it.'

Deuteronomy 22:8

#### *Some tips for reading commands...*

- Is it just for a specific time and place?
- Where does it fit in the whole biblical story?
- Number 20 of the 39 Articles: 'it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another.'
- How do they apply to you?

**Prophecy or 'Inspired words.'**

'When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

"He took up our infirmities  
and bore our diseases."

Matthew 8:16,17

**Experiential and revelatory materials.**

"...words for my inmost thoughts, songs for my joy, utterances for my hidden griefs, and pleadings for my shame and my feebleness."

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

**Questions for Group Discussions**

1. Do you agree with the idea that different types of books need to be approached in different ways?
2. Can you think of a time when learning about the background to a particular passage helped you to understand it in new way?