

However, you do not expect to find a travelogue of "must see" places to visit in Saigon or Baghdad. That kind of thing would be totally inappropriate!

When you make interpretational judgments about different types of literature, you are making decisions about the genre of the work. The word genre is used in a wide range of studies of literature and fine arts to refer to categories of artistic endeavors that share the same form, content, or artistic technique. For example, in music, most people can distinguish jazz from pop music. Composers and performers of these musical genres know that there are certain rules that govern their work. Sometimes they deviate from these rules in order to create interest or excitement, but when they go too far, they find themselves working in a different genre or possibly even creating a new genre. The same is true for literature. When you decide, "Oh, this is a romance novel," or "That's science fiction," or "These are biographies," you are determining the genre of a work. Sometimes you encounter a piece of literature that isn't quite like a history or a romance novel or some other

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sense of the world) or eyewitness accounts of the life of Jesus.¹⁴ However, research into the gospel writers and their original audiences adds nuance and that nuance, in turn, informs and informs us of the gospel and, instead, the gospel is not the final word.

As you can imagine, these differences in expectations about literary genre will produce dramatically different results in terms of interpretation. If you are reading the gospels primarily to collect historical facts about the life of Jesus, you will be disappointed. Some consider the more substantial and edifying message of the gospel—what it means for your life and death. You might also be looking