

Series Preparation Worksheet

_____ | Kirk E. Miller

Author & Audience

Author: What do we know about the author and his relationship to the audience? What was his location and circumstances when writing (provenance)? How do these things inform and aid our understanding of the book?

...

Date: When was this book written, and what bearing might this timing have on our understanding of the book?

...

Audience: What do we know about the original, intended recipient of the book (e.g., their context and situation, place in redemptive history, etc.) that shapes and helps us better understand the message of this book?

...

Occasion: Why was this book written? What need, circumstance, or situation is the author seeking to address?

...

Argument

Top & Tail: What do the opening and closing portions of the book indicate about the overall burden or message of the book (consider the relationship between the two in terms of parallels, contrasts, or development)?

...

Macro-Structure: How does the organization of the book convey its message? What are its various parts? How might you outline it?

...

Genre: What is the literary genre of the book, and how does this shape how its message gets communicated?

...

Tone: What is the overall tone of the book and how does its tone inform its message?

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Context: If distinguishable from the audiences', how do the historical-cultural context and redemptive-historical placement of those things within the book inform and illuminate its material and message?¹

...

Repetition: What are any potentially significant repeated themes or concepts, words or phrases used throughout the book that might help convey its message?

¹ For instance, in the case of a New Testament epistle, since the letter addresses the very circumstances of the original audience, the context of the audience and the context of the epistle's internal material are one and the same. But in the case of a narrative, two contexts are involved: the context of the narrative itself and the context of the audience receiving the narrative once composed. We have dealt with the latter under "Audience" above. Here we are seeking to address the former, if applicable.

...

Literary Dependence: Does this book have any literary relationship with or dependence on other canonical material?² If so, how will this impact how you go about interpreting this book?

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Summary: Based on these features of the book, how would you summarize its overarching argument? What is the author's controlling message of which he intends to persuade his audience?

...

Aim³

Aim: How does the author intend this argument to function in the lives of his audience? What is the desired effect, or intended response, it is meant to have in them? What is God seeking to get done through this book?

...

Conclusion

Melodic Line: How might you best synthesize this material to capture and convey the message of this book?

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Presentation

Title: What will you title this sermon series to communicate its "melodic line" most effectively and discernably?

...

Graphic: What might a graphic, meant to represent this series, look like?

...

Preaching Units: How will you divide the book into passages meant for preaching?

...

² E.g., the synoptic gospel's literary dependency on one another, Colossians and Ephesians having notable overlap in content, and 2 Peter and Jude utilizing much of the same material.

³
$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Author and Audience} \\ + \text{Argument} \\ \hline = \text{Aim} \end{array}$$