

It's All About Him!

Seeing God on Every Page

INTENT

What did God intend for the original audience to know? The Bible's authors didn't write with a 21st century world-view.

TITLE/MEANING: Note the title's meaning if known.

AUTHOR: Some of the Bible's authors are unknown.

Is there any important information we need to know about the author that helps us understand the message?

DATE/PERIOD OF HISTORY:

The date of some books is uncertain. Usually a period of history can be determined that helps us understand the audience's needs and literary genre, such as if the message is narrative (a story of an actual event) or prophetic (speaking of future events to come.)

AUDIENCE: Who was the author's original audience? All four gospels write about the life of Christ, but they wrote to four different audiences. Their audience determined what stories and view points they shared. Matthew wrote to the Jews, Mark wrote to the Romans, Luke wrote to the Greeks, and John wrote to everyone. The audience focuses the message.

BIBLICAL LITERARY GENRES: What type of literature is the author using? The type influences the interpretation. The author may use different types within the same book. The following list gives the major types of genres in the Bible, but there are many sub-types. Don't get overwhelmed. The point is to understand that we shouldn't read every part of the Bible the same or else we're likely to misinterpret a passage. Circle the genre(s) used and/or write in additional ones not listed:

Historical/Narrative/Story – Poetry/Psalms – Wisdom – Letters/Epistles – Prophecy – Apocalyptic

1. Historical/Narrative/Story: A record of actual events (Genesis, the Gospels)
2. Poetic/Psalms: Uses poetic devices (such as parallelism and symbolism) to emphasize the message (Psalms)
3. Wisdom: Makes generally true statements to live by but are not to be considered promises (Proverbs)
4. Letters/Epistles: Written to a specific audience usually to address a specific need or problem (Titus)
5. Prophecy: Messages (oracles) from God's prophets that are either
Forthtelling—messages "telling forth" the word of God, describing the current state of affairs (Deut. 18:15-18)
Foretelling—messages about future events, judgments, and/or blessings (Isaiah 53)
6. Apocalyptic: Visions or Messages given by God to reveal a glimpse into the invisible spiritual world (Dan. 7-12; Rev.)

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE/CONTEXT:

Context determines the meaning of a word, phrase, or message.

When determining the author's intent of a whole book, consider the context of the book within the context of the whole Bible? Consider when the book was written. Was it before or after Israel's exile? Before or after the cross? Etc.

When determining the author's intent of a chapter within the book, consider what was happening before and after the chapter you're studying.

Each author was inspired to write according to the need of the original audience. What problems or needs did the audience face that the author addressed?

What had just happened in the lives of the audience or was about to happen?

What was going on in the world that may have led to their need for this message?

CHRIST CONNECTION: It's All About Him!

In what ways does the message point to Christ?