

Synthetic Bible Study – Part 5

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I. Procedural steps (continued).

A. Ransacking the book.

1. Repeated readings
2. Meditation.
3. Asking questions.

B. Analyzing and cataloguing the structure of a book.

1. Involves relations and interrelations.

C. Discover the central theme.

1. What is the big idea?

2. Three questions:

a. What is uppermost in the author's mind?

- 1) The law of principality.
- 2) Reduce the book to its irreducible statement.

b. How is the author seeking to develop that which is upper most in his mind?

- 1) Polemic - argumentative. (Galatians)
- 2) Interrogative - question focused. (Malachi)
- 3) Logical format - like a lawyer. (Romans)
- 4) Topical format - everything arranged by topic. (Matthew)

c. Does any one verse/passage/chapter state the idea more succinctly than others?

1) Verse example: Mark 10:45 is the key verse of the book.

- a) Mark is the gospel of the disciple.
- b) Mark 3:14 shows the key principle of this.

i. Demonstrates a focus on your prayer life.

ii. Demonstrates a ministry of affirmation.

2) Passage example: James 2:14-26.

a) Two cycles of thought having to do with faith without works being dad.

3) Chapter example: Acts 2.

3. Distinguish the subordinate item and formulate the textual outline.

4. Clues to finding the author's purpose.

a. Stated purpose of the author. (John 20:31, Acts 1:8, Jude 3)

b. Repeated phrases.

1) "unto the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1)

2) "after these things were through." (Matthew)

3) "this is the account." (Genesis)

4) "now concerning." (1 Corinthians)

5) These may be accidental, but we do not know that.

c. By division.

1) Chronological. (Exodus)

2) Geographical. (Acts)

3) Historical. (Samuels, Kings, Chronicles)

4) Literary. (John)

d. Abrupt changes.

1) In person. (Jude)

2) Subject. (Romans)

3) Form. (Habakkuk 3)

4) Experiential.

e. Relate the book to other areas of Scripture.

1) Examples.

- a) Ephesians? Go to Colossians.
- b) Revelation? Go to Matthew or Daniel.
- c) Kings? Go to Chronicles.
- d) Luke? God to Judges.
- e) Minor prophets? Go to the history books.
- f) Acts? Go to the epistles.

f. Synthesize the book in its appropriate place in Biblical history

g. Articulate the contribution of the book as a whole. (2 Timothy 3:16)

- 1) Contribution historically.
- 2) Contribution geographically.
- 3) Contribution prophetically.
- 4) Contribution theologically.
- 5) Contribution practically.

a) For example, Ecclesiastes is constantly bumping your head - vanity, vanity, vanity.

b) More college students are coming to Christ after having tried everything else.

5. Break down the paragraphs.

- a. Summarize the contents of the paragraphs.
- b. Bring them into relationship with each other.

6. Secret of the approach.

- a. You are always working on one book in the Old or New Testament.
- b. The speaker usually spends about a month on each book.
- c. The book is usually different from what he is teaching at the time.

Application questions:

1. Summarize the primary elements in discovering an author's purpose in your own words.

2. Why do you think determining the structure of a book is so central to understanding the author's purpose? Which structural element was most striking to you?

3. Do you have a plan to study the entire Bible? If not, what reasons do you have? What can you do to make Bible study a priority in your life?
