

Rhetorical Force as Emergent Discourse Guide (3/3/11)

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1. Looking back into biblical-Jewish traditions. Here the focus may particularly be on how a passage reconfigures or perhaps recontextualizes Jewish traditions in novel ways.
2. Looking back into other Mediterranean traditions. Here the commentary may observe how the passage interacts with, perhaps wrestles with, and/or maybe seeks to understand, explain or enact some aspect of broader Mediterranean culture.
3. Looking around at other developments in the canon, comparing, for example, how discourse may emerge in two different streams in the NT.
4. Looking around at the specific context of the book, e.g., considering how a writing like Paul's Letter to Philemon emerged among events like the separation of slave Onesimus separated from his owner, spent time with Paul, and now may return to the household of his owner Philemon or a more general context envisioned for the composition of the Gospel of Luke.
5. Looking around at the larger Mediterranean context. Perhaps this is the most common understanding of Rhetorical force, namely how this NT text may function as it emerges into the world around it.
6. Looking forward into later Christian developments, especially to see how a particular passage may have informed later Christian traditions.
7. Looking forward into other developments in the Mediterranean World, which may include the staying power of what came to be canonical documents—how they continued to speak convincingly in the Mediterranean world over the next few hundred years.