

REVIEW OF HANDBOOK FOR BIBLE STUDY

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Gugliotto, Lee J. *Handbook for Bible Study: A Guide to Understanding, Teaching, and Preaching the Word of God*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1995. 462 pp. \$39.95.

This book, written by an alumnus of the SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University, was awarded the Evangelical Christian Publishers' Association Gold Medallion for 1996.

Lee Gugliotto's large, hard-cover *Handbook for Bible Study* carries a very modest title and subtitle in view of its comprehensiveness. It not only presents a superabundance of handbook-type material, but also provides a vast number of working tools. Indeed, it is both an encyclopedic handbook and a practical manual for personal Bible study and public presentation of Scripture.

This volume was produced as a result of its author's keen interest in providing training for Christian laity, but the book can well serve also as a good refresher and resource for seminary-trained professionals. Gugliotto holds graduate degrees from the seminaries of several denominations; has taught seminary classes in biblical studies, church history, and theology; and has given many years of pastoral service in congregations of various denominations. He is currently the senior pastor of the Canadian Union College Seventh-day Adventist Church in College Heights, Alberta, Canada. Into the present volume he has put the very best of his extensive experience and ongoing biblical, theological, and historical research.

The publication's main text contains two major parts. The first is very modestly entitled "Survey" and contains six chapters treating the basics of Scripture analysis and presentation: "Contextual Analysis" (25-32), "Structural Analysis" (33-48), "Verbal Analysis" (49-71), "Cultural Analysis" (72-119), "Theological Analysis" (120-139), and "Homiletical Analysis" (140-169). Part two is entitled "A Closer Look." Its chapters 7-16 carry the following titles: "A Grammar for English Bible Study" (173-198), "Categories of [Greek and Hebrew] Verbs" (199-214), "Informed Sources" (215-260), "Typology" (261-290), "Be Logical" (291-305), "Jewish

Institutions and the Spiritual Condition of Israel in the Time of Jesus" (306-312), "Is the King James the Most Accurate Version of the New Testament?" (313-346), "How Did We Get the New Testament?" (347-351), "Where Did Matthew, Mark, and Luke Get Their Gospels?" (352-361), and "Biblical Data for the Four Gospels" (362-373).

The volume also contains two helpful appendices: "Exegesis Aids and the Book of Jude" (377-411), which presents a case study in the use of the six types of analysis discussed in part one; and "Reproducible Blank Exegesis Aids" (412-439), containing numerous worksheets. These are followed by an extensive "Selected Bibliography" (441-460) and a "Directory of Bible Study Software" (461-462). There are no indexes (which would have been useful, but massive). This lack is not serious, however, for the eight-page "Contents" table is very detailed (7-14).

Gugliotto's presentation throughout every chapter is logically sequenced, practical, and user-friendly. A quick overview of chapter 2, "Structural Analysis" (one of the shorter chapters), will serve as a sample: Gugliotto first provides a brief introduction to the general topic (33-34) and then describes the nature and function of the three basic parts of a written narrative (introduction, body, and conclusion), adding a broad summary statement of clues for ascertaining the overall syntactical structure (34-35). Next, in a subdivision entitled "Identifying the Type of Literature," he discusses five basic literary types found in the Bible: prose, poetry, narrative, wisdom, and apocalyptic (35-41). Then, after five short paragraphs on the importance of grammar (41), he concludes with a detailed "Strategy for Structural Analysis" (41-48).

The subsection on "Poetry" will be particularly helpful to persons unfamiliar with the nature of Hebrew poetry. Gugliotto first points out that poetic literature "makes up almost one third of the Old Testament and frequently appears in the New Testament, especially in the gospels." He indicates that the "dominant feature" of Hebrew poetry "is the way it arranges two (a couplet), three (a triad), and even four (a quatrain) lines in parallel" (36).

Then, under the headings of "Grammatic," "Semantic," and "Rhetorical," he lists and illustrates "synonymous parallelism," "antithetic parallelism," "climactic" structuring, "synthetic" parallelism, "chiasmic" presentation, "comparative" parallelism, "merismus," "paronomasia," and "ballast-variant" (36-40). A recognition of these types or formats is obviously important if we are to read biblical poetry correctly and with depth of understanding.

In the final subdivision of chapter 2, we find an excellent sample of the "how-to" sections of this volume. After a few general remarks about

procedure, Gugliotto presents five steps: "Scan the Text," "Prepare a Structural Draft," "Prepare a Paragraph Map," "Prepare a Structural Analysis," and "Convert Your Structural Analysis into a Structural Diagram." Under each of these steps, whose titles are highlighted by the use of bold italic type, there are multiple questions, procedural steps, and/or guidelines. These are easy to spot because they are placed within boxes, appear in enumeration form, or are set in italic typescript. Some subsections utilize two or all three of these devices. In this section of the chapter there are also six tables, charts, or diagrams (figures 12-17), plus some in-text diagramming.

A few observations concerning materials elsewhere in the book are now in order. Chapter 3, dealing with verbal analysis, is especially rich in its notation of reference tools that will be useful for Bible students in studying the Hebrew and Greek vocabulary that underlies renditions in English translations. For instance, concerning "word forms" some 12 books and 10 computer packages are mentioned (50-51) and concerning "etymology" approximately 50 titles are noted (65-69). The references are not simply listed, but are incorporated into the discussion, with notation as to the specific kind of help each gives. This same chapter also categorizes, describes, and illustrates a considerable number of the more common types of figures of speech encountered in the Bible (52-57).

In other chapters of this volume we find such items as Rabbi Hillel's rules of interpretation, the use of which is illustrated by Rabbinic and NT examples (125-128); comprehensive lists of extrabiblical source materials relating to the OT period, intertestamental times, the NT period, and a portion of the early-church epoch (215-260); and a table that sets forth chronologically in one column major events or developments in biblical history and in a parallel column certain important features of the contemporary secular history (90-93).

We should note, as well, that the chapter entitled "Is the King James the Most Accurate Version of the New Testament?" goes far beyond what that title implies. Not only does this chapter trace important aspects in the history of the English Bible, but it also describes processes of textual criticism with which Bible translators must be familiar. Moreover, it includes lists of *both* Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of Scripture. Among these lists are a "Catalogue of Texts and Witnesses" to the OT, containing some 200 items (333-337), and a table of the principal NT witnesses to the "Gospels," "Acts," "General (Catholic) Epistles," "Paul and Hebrews," and "Revelation," as represented (in order) in the papyri, uncials, minuscules ("if any"), versions, and church fathers (338-340).

This publication is remarkably free from typographical and other

errors—particularly so in view of its overwhelming amount of detail. However, a few items that should be corrected in a further edition may be noted: On the 7th line from the bottom of p. 338, "Atharasius" should be "Athanasius"; in lines 18 and 24 of col. 2 on p. 91, "Phonecean" should be "Phoenician"; and in the 3d line from the bottom of col. 2 on p. 90 and again in the 6th line from the top of col. 2 on p. 91, "Mittianite" should be "Mitannian," since the name of the Hurrian Empire was Mitanni. Although "Achamenian" and "Achaemenian" are both acceptable spellings for the Persian dynasty founded by Achaemenes, the latter form, which appears twice on p. 92, is preferable and should be substituted for the former in its four occurrences on p. 91. In fact, it is questionable that the Achaemenian dynasty should be referred to at all on p. 91, especially in its first three occurrences, inasmuch as that dynasty probably did not arise until at least two centuries after the disruption of Israel's United Monarchy, rather than being contemporary with that era in Israel's history and with the preceding Conquest and Judges periods. Also, for consistency it would be well to change the 930 date given on p. 91 for the beginning of Rehoboam's reign to 931, the date given on p. 92, or vice versa; or perhaps better still, simply indicate "931/30." (Let me reiterate that for the massive detail set forth in this *Handbook*, the flaws are surprisingly few, and as far as I can tell, they are of negligible import.)

In closing this review I must add a few remarks about the use of this *Handbook*. First, I would recommend a careful reading from beginning to end of each of the six chapters in Part 1, for they are basic. Although I have barely mentioned the chapters that treat cultural, theological, and homiletical analysis, they are, in my opinion, among the most vital in the volume. They contain materials which will enhance the reader's appreciation of the biblical text and the world in which it arose, provide safeguards against faulty interpretation, and give useful "know-how" on ways to communicate biblical truth effectively and competently in the world of today.

Second, the chapters in part two should, in contrast, be considered for the most part as a resource to be used as needed. The reader would be benefited, however, by glancing through each of these chapters to learn what they contain and by reading in entirety some chapters such as 10, which deals with typology; and 11, which lists and explains a large number of logical fallacies that too often occur in religious writing and preaching.

Third, the profusion of special helps which Gugliotto provides in tables, lists, charts, diagrams, etc., should be noted and then utilized to their fullest when needed. The main text contains 119 numbered "figures"

and Appendix A another 15, but in addition there are many further "special-help" items that are not numbered. Also, many of the chapters and Appendix A are profuse with biblical examples of the matters being discussed, often with supplementary lists of Bible passages that provide even further illustration. All such Scripture examples and references are vitally important, giving the reader a deepened understanding of and better "feel" for the essence of the Bible and its message of salvation.

Gugliotto's publication is a practical tool that should be owned and used by all persons interested in serious Bible study—especially persons who share Scripture with others, whether in the home, from the pulpit, or in the classroom. Indeed, I can envisage this *Handbook for Bible Study* being used as an effective textbook for pastoral training of the laity in the basic principles of biblical exegesis, interpretation, and communication. And it can also serve well as a textbook for seminarians.