



By

Mark McGee

The full title of the book is *Inductive Bible Study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology* (B&H Academic, 2016).

My first thought on seeing this title in the B&H Academic catalog was to ask “why?” Why do we need another book about how to study the Bible inductively?

I asked the question because of a book about inductive Bible Study I used in Bible college more than 40 years ago – *Methodical Bible Study: A New Approach to Hermeneutics* by Robert Traina (Asbury Theological Seminary, 1952). Though written 65 years ago, I couldn’t imagine the need for another book about how to study the Bible inductively. I have used the lessons learned in Dr. Traina’s book for more than four decades, so why something new?

While that may seem a strange way to begin a book review, I had to smile when I read the beginning of the Author’s Preface to their book on Inductive Bible Study. The authors asked the same question I did and gave a good reason to consider their new book.

“Why another book on inductive Bible study? Since the 1952 work *Methodical Bible Study* by Robert A. Traina, dozens of books, ranging from popular-level works to academic textbooks, have presented a methodical, inductive approach to the study of the Scriptures. Another book is needed for the following two reasons. First, as evangelical scholarship of the Bible continues to bring greater insight to the field of hermeneutics, there’s an ever-present need to incorporate those advances into a usable, applied guide for the study of the Bible. Second, as practitioners in teaching the new generation of students, we understand that there’s always room for improvement in developing an academically sound yet practically manageable presentation for learning how to do Bible study. This text assimilates a hermeneutically viable model into a step-by-step methodical approach to Bible study.”

Author’s Preface, p ix

The authors are Andreas J. Köstenberger and Richard Alan Fuhr. Dr. Köstenberger is senior professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC and director of acquisitions, B&H Academic. Dr. Fuhr is Associate Professor of Religion at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Step-by-Step Approach

I agree with the authors when they point out that hermeneutics is an art or skill –

“... hermeneutics provides the interpreter of Scripture with a methodical process that, with practice, may be applied to the biblical text and result in an accurate understanding of the Bible.” Chapter 2, p 20

I would add that developing a methodical approach to hermeneutics is “necessary” in coming to a proper knowledge, interpretation and application of Scripture. That is the goal of the inductive method of Bible study and is the procedure presented in this book.

The authors use an excellent guide for the inductive process that they call “Seven Sensible Principles for Thinking through Scripture Meaning.” All of the principles are vital to correctly interpreting Scripture.

“On the basis of the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture, following these principles will provide a sure hermeneutical foundation that will guide our thinking throughout the practice of inductive Bible study.” Chapter 2, p 21

In case you're wondering whether a “deductive” approach to Bible study might be preferred over an “inductive” approach, the authors do an excellent job explaining the differences and why inductive is superior for Bible study.

Hermeneutical Triad

The authors present what they call a hermeneutical triad: Observation, Interpretation and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology.

“Our approach is to present individual, specific steps for applied study through the primary steps of observation, interpretation, and application. Within this framework, there are specific and unique step of observation, interpretation, and application, all of which contribute to the development of biblical theology. Following the model of working upward from the triad base, each inductive step reflects an awareness of the Bible’s historical, literary, and theological traits.” Author’s Preface, p x

The authors do an excellent job in explaining each aspect of the “triad” and the importance of taking the time of doing each step of inductive Bible study correctly. Reminds me of 2 Timothy 2:15 –

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” NKJV

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” NIV

Learning how to study the Bible inductively was one of the best courses I took in Bible college. Getting it right makes all the difference in both your life and your ministry. I highly recommend *Inductive Bible Study* by Andreas Köstenberger and Richard Fuhr.

Publisher: About the Book

“Inductive Bible study is a practical, relevant, and time-tested approach to interpreting Scripture. This volume incorporates insights from contemporary evangelical hermeneutics into an approachable, step-by-step process moving from observation through interpretation and on to the application of God’s Word. Each step is viewed through the lenses of the hermeneutical triad, exploring the historical, literary, and theological elements that impact how one observes, interprets, and applies the Bible. Chapter by chapter, *Inductive Bible Study* explores a broad representation of biblical texts as it illustrates the steps of inductive methodology across the literary landscape of Scripture. Important features of the book include comparing translations, asking the right questions of the text, basic discourse analysis, considering various facets of context, the study of words and phrases, interpretive and thematic correlation, evaluating relevance and determining legitimacy in application, the role of the Holy Spirit in

appropriating Scripture, and doing theology as the outflow of inductive Bible study.”

Reviews & Endorsements

“This wonderful new volume by Fuhr and Köstenberger is a breath of fresh air. It turns our attention back to where it belongs, namely on God’s Word. It will be a great blessing to every believer eager to understand the Scriptures better.”

Michael J. Kruger, president and professor of New Testament, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC

“It is exciting to see this work that blends the inductive method with the historical disciplines. . . . Our deep thanks are due Köstenberger and Fuhr for this invaluable resource for quality Bible study.” Grant R. Osborne, professor emeritus, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

“Fuhr and Köstenberger’s new book will help a new generation of students discover the joy of studying the Bible for themselves. Here you will find a hermeneutically sound and accessible guide to studying the Bible inductively.”

Robert L. Plummer, professor of New Testament interpretation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,

Louisville, KY, and host of <http://www.DailyDoseOfGreek.com>

“I know of no other book that covers such a wide range of issues with such user-friendly expertise and wise simplicity. Read it to (re)kindle excitement about mining Scripture’s inexhaustible riches!” Robert W. Yarbrough, professor of New Testament, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO

Inductive Bible Study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology, B&H Academic, 2016, 384 pages

“Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.”

Copyright © 1990-2018 GraceLife Ministries