*Reading the Bible as Literature* is written by Jeanie C. Crain. This book is full of information about how to take reading the Bible to the next step. The book has seven chapters and starts off with a preface. The author challenges readers throughout the book to take it a step further and explore on their own as well. The evaluation of this book will consider how well the chapters each achieved their goals, the possibilities suggested by the book, and how well the book overall is presented to the reader.

This book includes tools that are used in most literature classes. Some of the major literature points that the author focuses on are style, tone, image, metaphor, genres, character and themes. The purpose of this book is to help people open their minds to different interpretations and approaches to the Bible. This being said, that includes looking at the Bible as a piece of literature as well. Many times the Bible gets interpreted in different religious views and people don’t often look at it as a piece of literature.

The audience for this book includes students studying religion or literature. It also includes anyone interested in furthering their beliefs and knowledge about religion and the Bible. The audience for this book needs to be dedicated to looking into the Bible and verses in the Bible to see what the author is talking about. The majority of the audience needs to already have a background in the Bible in order to be able to understand what the author is talking about throughout the chapters.

This book was written in order to help readers better understand how to read the Bible as a piece of literature. The author explains in detail different points as to how the Bible can be interpreted. The author mainly focuses on how scholars can look at the Bible as a piece of literature. This includes looking at the Bible through theme, character and etc. The author also includes information about critics of each chapter and how that can be looked at in relation to the study of reading the Bible as literature. Each chapter starts off with a section named Preliminary Considerations. This section will provide the reader with some information that is essential to start the chapter. Each chapter also ends with a section of Close Reading and Questions for Reflection. Both of these sections are provided so that the reader has an opportunity to expand their knowledge of the chapter with questions and exercises provided by the author.

The book starts off with a Preface chapter. During this part of the book, the author prepares the reader for what is to come throughout the book. The author provides the reader with information about some things that should be known already about the Bible as literature. The bible is similar to all literature with one example being that “the Bible embodies and enacts universal or shared human experience rather than stating or telling about it, inviting readers to enter into an relive a story or poem” (pg. vi). The author also explains how the chapters will be organized.

Chapter one is named Reading the Bible as Literature: A Way of Understanding. Literary is explained as “a special use of language that intensifies and transforms it from ordinary use” (pg. 1). The chapter provides reasons as to why it is important and necessary to study the Bible as literature. Approaches to reading the Bible as literature have varied over the years. Criticism is discussed because it is important to understand the tradition and criticism of a subject before starting to study it. Narrative criticism “insists on close reading and looks at the particular way a story is told in relation to complex literary structures such as plot, characterizations, and closure” (pg. 17). The chapter ends with a little history lesson about the people and stories of the Bible. This wraps up Chapter 1 of *Reading the Bible as Literature.*

The second chapter of this book is named Style, Tone, and Rhetorical Strategy: A Way of Using Language. The first main point of this chapter discusses a few different rhetorical devices that are seen throughout the Bible. The author provides examples in order to help to get the readers minds thinking about the devices. Similes and metaphors are two major devices that the author focuses on in this chapter. On example of this device is like “this [bread] is my body” (Matt. 26.26). This is taking two absolutely different things and comparing them. A few other rhetorical devices discussed are personification, metonymy, synecdoche, anthropomorphism and zoomorphism. An oxymoron is a combination of two Greek words that mean “sharp” and “dull.” In other words, this is when you take two contrasting words or ideas together to make a special effect on them. The chapter goes on to talk about irony, rhetorical question, amplification and euphemism. The chapter wraps up by talking about repition, recursion, inclusion and chiasm.   
 Chapter three of *Reading the Bible as Literature* is Image, Metaphor, Symbol, and Archetype: A Way of Meaning. A main focus of this chapter is comparing the Bible as being read literally versus metaphorically. Both of these bring completely different meanings and therefore by the author focusing on the metaphorical sense, it brings up discussion topics. One major symbol that is focused on in this chapter is light, darkness and fire. Light shows up throughout the Bible almost 200 times. Water is seen over 600 times. The five metaphors of divine-human relationships are of king and subject, of judge and litigant, of husband and wife, of father and child and of master and servant. The chapter wraps up by talking about archetypal encounters of the divine and human. The chapter focuses on Mount Horeb/Sinai and the Mount of the Skull.

The fourth chapter is called Major Genres: A Way of Seeing. This chapter focuses on genres that are found throughout the Bible. The chapter starts off talking about genre criticism. “The argument can be made that genre will be affected by the one making the grouping and that types cannot be clearly distinguished one from another, since they may overlap and become mixed” (pg. 68). There are five parts that make up a store, exposition, complication, crisis, falling action and resolution. The chapter goes on to talk about genres and how they are grouped together. This chapter wraps up with a section on drama and poetry. Some terms defined in this section include aphorisms, theophany and monologues.

Chapter 5 of this book is called Sub-Genres: A Way of Clarifying and Mapping. In the preliminary considerations of this chapter, the author focuses on some criticism that genre sometimes receives. “Recognizing the diverse types of literature in the Bible helps readers make sense of a collection of texts they would otherwise find hard to read, difficult to understand, confusing, esoteric and ancient” (pg. 93). The next part focuses on familiar sub-genres. Song is a main focus of this section. The definitions of words like cognates, apostrophe and stanza are given. Allegory is a continuation of a metaphor. Parable and prayer wrap this section up by giving definitions and examples of both throughout the Bible.

The sixth chapter of *Reading the Bible as Literature* is called Character: A Way of Identifying. Right after the preliminary considerations, the author dives into talking about characters from the Bible. The first section in this part is talking about King Saul and the Witch of Endor. The chapter discusses the differences and ways to identify round and flat characters. The chapter continues by talking about King Solomon and two women prostitutes. King Josiah and Huldah are discussed next. The chapter wraps up with talking about how characters are developed through symbolic actions and through requests. Characters are also developed through impact, description and structure.

Chapter seven is called Themes and Motifs: A Way of Unifying. This chapter is one of the most difficult. The author warns readers of this at the beginning of the chapter. The most important definition in the start of this chapter is theme which is “an organizing idea (abstraction), holds together a work and can be embedded in images, actions, and emotions; it is the main emotional analytic, and perceptive core of a text” (pg. 130). The chapter starts off by talking about the Decalogue, which is the name given to the Ten Commandments. The Shema is the next discussed. The chapter talks about inclusive and exclusive monotheism. One section discusses the relationship with human beings. The topic of God as a character is discussed. The heroic quest that is seen many times throughout the Bible and literature is the last topic touched on in this chapter.

The book overall provides readers and scholars with vital information on how to read the Bible as literature. The book has achieved its goal and exceeded it. The goal of the book is to provide information to the reader about how to really dig deep into the literature aspect of the Bible. The readers may be wanting to further their faith and knowledge about the Bible. The book does a wonderful job at providing examples and explanations so that the reader can do just that. The author also includes information about criticism and different types of approaches to use. The criticism that the author provides helps the reader to see the point of view that others might have about the topic. The different approaches give the reader a broad spectrum and an open mind to start the book.

Each chapter started off with preliminary considerations. This was a section that provided vital information and definitions that the reader needed in order to understand the chapter to their fullest ability. Each chapter ends with exercises and questions that the reader can use to further their knowledge and what they have learned in the current chapter. In every chapter, the author also puts some writing in italics. This writing is a great way for the author to make a connection to the reader. This connection is beneficial to the reader because it makes the reader feel like they can relate to the author and be more involved in the book.

There are many possibilities that are suggested by the book. The main possibility for the readers is found at the end of each chapter. If the reader wants to further their knowledge on the topic of the chapter they can use the questions and exercises at the end of each chapter. These are a great tool for group discussion or assignments for students to really take what they learned and apply it. Another possibility is found just by reading the book. The way that the book is written gives the student the opportunity to take notes and follow along.

There was not anything left out of the book. There were a few organizational points that made it harder to focus on the writing. In chapter 5, the section about songs was confusing. It was hard to follow the songs with the way that they were presented in the chapter. It would have been more beneficial for the author to put the songs separate from the text in order to make it a little bit easier to read and follow. Also, some sections were a bit longer and at times it was a bit overwhelming to be reading information that takes so much mental effort and concentration that were so long.

There has been no personal experience with the subject other than literature. The literature classes taken in the past have been beneficial for the purpose of this class because it helps to understand the concepts a little bit before reading about how they apply to the Bible. Due to the lack of personal experience, it is hard to compare this book to others on the subject.

Due to the lack of experience in this subject and lack of reading other books on this subject matter, all of the points seemed convincing. It helped that the author always provided great explanation and examples. It also helped that at the beginning of each chapter there was always terms defined that would be needed in the rest of the chapter.

In conclusion, the purpose of this book is accomplished in order to target the audience through the writing style and organization of each chapter. The purpose of this book is to provide readers with a better understanding of how to read the Bible as literature. The audience includes a wide range of people who are dedicated to the study of the Bible and how it can be studied as literature. The book covers topics including rhetorical devices, character and genres. The book achieves the goals by providing opportunities for each reader and explaining every topic thoroughly. There is nothing major that should be criticized about the book as a whole and is a great reading material for the targeted audience