

Work

General Editor, Hindson, Edward. (2017). *The King James Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. xxxvi, 2328 pp. \$44.99. ISBN 9780718079154

Reviewer

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Edward Hindson, author of this study Bible's *Foreword* (pp. v-vi), termed the Bible "the most amazing book ever written." Indeed, the Bible is the bestselling book of all time and the King James Version has been around over 400 years. The King James (KJ) Study Bible was initially commissioned by Dr. Jerry Falwell at Liberty University and first published by Thomas Nelson in 1988, selling more than two million copies. It featured notes, doctrinal keys, maps and commentary.

Building on the previous edition's success, key features of this new edition of the KJ Study Bible are full-color illustrations, updated notes on critical issues and archaeological discoveries, color maps, center-column references, and special interest articles. The Bible is nicely bound and the print easy to read.

In addition to Dr. Hindson as general editor, there are twelve contributing editors, each of whom Hindson describes as "a born-again believer with a deep personal commitment to Christ and belief in the inerrancy of Scripture" (pp.vi). The result is a study Bible that is scholarly, relevant, and provides study that is useful and spiritually enriching.

But this reviewer posed the question: Why should anyone purchase this Bible? There are scores of other study Bibles, and, given this is the King James version with its sometimes challenging language, other Bibles are available which use a more modern English language translation and would be easier to

read and understand. In search of an answer, the reviewer decided to use the Bible in his personal study of the Gospel of Luke.

The *Gospel according to Luke* opens with a short, introductory article discussing authorship, date written and distinctive features. An outline of Luke's chapters follows. Each book of the Old and New Testament opens with a similar introductory article, with some including additional notes on content, purpose, outlook, and relationship to other books or biblical characters.

Thumbing through the pages of Luke, one notes several study features: personality profiles (e.g., John the Baptist, Tiberius Caesar, Mary Magdalene); notes on archaeological sites (e.g., Bethsaida, Jericho); doctrinal footnotes (e.g., virgin birth, humanity of Christ). Center column references contain Biblical cross references, text synonyms, explanatory and language notes for unusual King James words and phrases. The King James Version is replete with terms not common in today's usage or vernacular. For instance, Luke 12:39 uses the phrase, "goodman of the house" (pp. 1619). The explanatory note renders this as "master" of the house. In Luke 13:24, Jesus commands, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate" (pp. 1621). The explanatory note renders this as "narrow" gate. Such notes take care of the bewilderment the reader may feel when encountering obscure terms and usage.

Scripture text is accompanied by bottom of the page commentary and study notes explaining the meaning and context of scripture passages and providing "see" references to other scriptures for further clarification and understanding. As much as possible, commentary notes are kept on the same page with the verses they apply, keeping the reader from having to thumb through pages to follow note text.

A scan of other Old and New Testament books reveal many of the same study features found in Luke's Gospel as mentioned above. In addition, the KJ Study Bible contains over 50 maps, both in-text and at the end of the Bible, redrawn in full color, with explanatory notes and highlights of important Biblical events. The KJ Study Bible is replete with hundreds of full color photographs and works of art that provide further insight and illustration into the lives, life and lands of the Bible.

The KJ Study Bible includes several special interest articles and study helps, aids to the deeper study of scripture. These include articles on how to study the Bible and introductions to the Old and New Testaments. Enumerations, such as, the *Parables of Christ* and the *Miracles of Christ*, help the reader to navigate, locate and compare these in the Gospel accounts. Topical indexes, such as, *Christ and the gospels* or *Paul and his letters* allow for quickly and easily locating topics and teachings in scripture. Also, there is an index to annotations and general concordance with original language word studies. One nice feature of the word studies is the referencing of Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic terms to New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance, New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words and Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. This allows the reader to do further study of original language words.

We return to our question: Why should anyone purchase this Bible? If you enjoy the King James translation and language, this would certainly be an excellent study Bible for you. While it doesn't replace a full commentary, concordance, Bible dictionary, or Bible atlas, it certainly provides enough study help for the lay person desiring a deeper level of understanding of what is being read. The Bible

student or minister would also benefit from the study resources and notes as a starting point for deeper study.

If you desire a Bible with updated, modern language, then this might not be for you. However, with the assistance of the study notes and commentary, this reviewer found the KJ Study Bible to be very readable and enjoyable. Using the KJ Study Bible in conjunction with other Bible translations as a means of comparison and in-depth study would be a profitable study.

In the *Foreword* (pp. v-vi), Dr. Hindson, while highlighting some of the features of the KJ Study Bible, noted the over-arching purpose behind the work of creating and publishing this study Bible: that “men and women would come to faith in Jesus Christ the Savior as they read and study the Word of God for themselves” (pp. v). This echoes what was written in John 20:31: “But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” A noble purpose; may it be so!