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BOOK REVIEW

J. D. Douglas, Merrill C. Tenney, and Moises Silva. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. 1584 pp. ISBN 0310229839.

The 2011 edition of the attractively bound, nearly four pound, and 1584-page-long *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (*ZIBD*) offers over 7200 updated entries, more maps than any other Bible dictionary, and over 500 full-color images, charts, and illustrations. Moises Silva, the editor of this revised publication, states that all the entries in the new edition have been thoroughly reviewed and updated to reflect the also recent (2009) update of the multi-volume *Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*. The updates to the *ZIBD* consist of a greater number of cross-references, numerous new entries, and small corrections in light of recent discoveries or scholarly work. The entries vary in length from a few sentences to several pages. For example, the entries under “Canonicity” or “Jerusalem” are up to nine pages long and offer several illustrations.

Following is an excerpt from the *ZIBD* under the entry of “ark of Noah,” which is representative of the shorter entries:

A vessel that God ordered NOAH to build for the purpose of preserving through the time of the FLOOD a remnant of the human race, together with two each of all animals (Gen. 6:14–16). God told Noah what to bring into it (6:18–21), and Noah obeyed (6:22–7:10). The ark floated during the flood (7:11–8:3), then came to rest “on the mountains of Ararat” (8:4). After Noah abandoned the ark (8:18–19), what happened to it is unknown, despite many traditions and expeditions. We do not even know on which peak of the mountains in the land of Ararat the ark grounded. The ark of Noah is referred to in Matt. 24:38 and Lk. 17:27 in a warning of coming judgment; in Heb. 11:7 its construction is an example of faith; and in 1 Pet. 3:20 “the days of Noah while the ark was being built” are held up as an

example of the long-suffering of God, followed by a disaster for the disobedient and salvation for the few who entered the ark.

Note that the reference to seven of all clean animals and birds (Gen 7:2–3) is not part of this entry.

Even in a Bible Dictionary, the theological leanings of the editor may be perceived. For example, the “hell” entry indicates a conviction regarding the eternal condition and place of the wicked; and the “Junia” entry reveals a slight complementarian leaning. These leanings, however, are barely perceivable as the *Dictionary* strives to focus on listing facts regarding each entry, in an effort to promote the widest readership possible.

I would offer two suggestions for improving the *ZIBD*. It would be useful, first, to include a Scripture index, and second, to include an illustration index. Though the illustrations are plentiful and attractive, they are at times incidental to the text. For example the sweeping image of the Hebron countryside is found under the “Kenite” entry, the Panias cave image at the site of ancient Caesarea Philippi is found under the “hell” entry. Furthermore the same image (though a different view) of a Sumerian silver lyre can be found under both the entry for “minerals” and the entry for “music and musical instruments.” On the other hand, the very attractive and interesting images along with their informative captions are likely to entice the reader to “browse” the Dictionary and not just use it as a look-up reference.

These suggestions notwithstanding, the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary* makes a valuable addition to one’s Bible resource library. Due to its combination of conciseness and depth, the *ZIBD* promises to be a useful resource to lay Bible teachers, serious Bible students, and pastors alike.

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