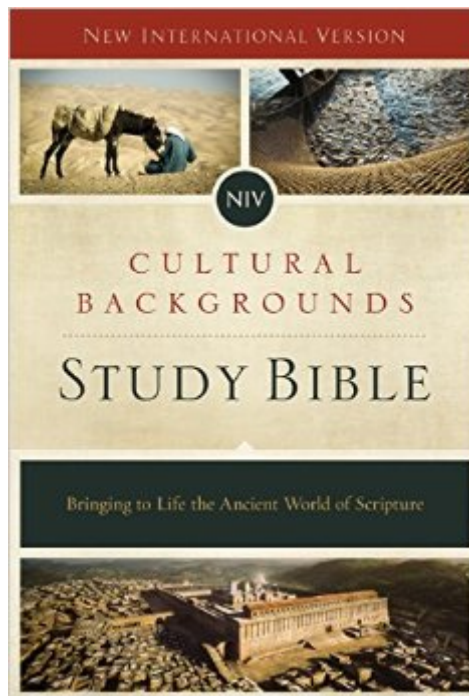


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NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, Hardcover, Red Letter Edition: Bringing To Life The Ancient World Of Scripture



Synopsis

“How I wish someone had put a book like this into my hands 50 years ago.” - N.T. Wright, Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, University of St. Andrews, Scotland

“I cannot recommend a study Bible any more than this one: Five stars!” - Scot McKnight, Julius R. Mantey Professor of New Testament, Northern Seminary

CONTEXT CHANGES EVERYTHING

You’ve heard many Bible stories hundreds of times, but how many behind-the-scenes details are you missing? Sometimes a little context is all you need to discover the rich meaning behind the stories of Scripture. That’s what the *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible* provides. Every page is packed with expert insight into the customs, culture, and literature of Bible times. These fascinating explanations will serve to clarify your study of the Scriptures, reinforcing your confidence and bringing difficult passages of Scripture into sharp focus. Discover new dimensions of insight to even the most familiar Bible passages as you take a behind-the-scenes tour into the ancient world. The Bible was originally written to an ancient people removed from us by thousands of years and thousands of miles. The Scriptures include subtle culturally based nuances, undertones, and references to ancient events, literature and customs that were intuitively understood by those who first heard the Scriptures read. For us to hear the Scriptures as they did, we need a window into their world. The *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*, with notes from Dr. John H. Walton (Wheaton College) in the Old Testament and Dr. Craig S. Keener (Asbury Theological Seminary) in the New Testament, brings to life the ancient world of Scripture for modern readers.

Features: The full text of the NIV Targeted book introductions explain the context in which each book of the Bible was written. Insightful and informative verse-by-verse study notes reveal new dimensions of insight to even the most familiar passages. Key Old Testament (Hebrew) and New Testament terms are explained and expanded upon in two helpful reference features. Over 300 in-depth articles on key contextual topics. 375 full-color photos, illustrations, and images from around the world. Dozens of charts, maps, and diagrams in vivid color. Words of Jesus in red. Additional study Bible tools: cross references, a concordance, indexes and other helps.

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Customer Reviews

General Editor, Old Testament John H. Walton (PhD, Hebrew Union College) is professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College Graduate School. He is the author or coauthor of several books, including Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament; Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context; Covenant: God's Purpose, God's Plan; The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament; and A Survey of the Old Testament.

General Editor, New Testament Craig S. Keener is professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary and holds a doctoral degree in New Testament Studies and the Origins of Christianity from Duke University. He is the author of several commentaries on books of the New Testament.

View larger "How I wish someone had put a book like this into my hands 50 years ago." N.T. Wright, Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, University of St. Andrews, Scotland. "Every line and every word in the Bible comes from a context -- historical, social, cultural, theological -- and speaks into those contexts -- sometimes against that culture, sometimes with that culture, and sometimes to expand that culture. In so doing the Bible models how we can speak from our culture and into our culture in very fresh and missional ways. The NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible not only acknowledges this but engages ordinary readers in seeing what it looks like. I cannot recommend a study Bible any more than this one: Five stars!" Scot McKnight, Julius R. Mantey Professor of New Testament, Northern Seminary.

I am an older reader and the print is just too light to be comfortably read. Content may be excellent, but why or why did you ruin it with the light print? I had planned on purchasing several copies, but after looking at the ink, there will be no extra purchases. I have told my friends about the light print

and they all agree that they will avoid the purchase. Sorry, but it ruined the whole thing for me...and my friends.

Content is excellent! I must warn though--the Notes are in a very light silver-gray font and hard to read. If they come out with a Kindle edition I am sure there will be no problem but this is the only drawback. Margins, illustrations and other texts, pictures, etc., are excellent. A resource I will use often in spite of this minor issue.

5 stars for content 2.5 stars for print quality I eagerly awaited the publication date for this study bible. I own both John Walton's *Creation* and Craig Keener's *Bible Background Commentaries* and found them both very helpful. A study bible with this kind of info tickled my fancy. I have grown to become particular on the print Bibles I purchase. As a graphic and web designer, I know how much print quality affects the ease of reading. So I did my research and found a sampler PDF by Zondervan of the print Bible. Everything seemed good (notes were dark enough because of being viewed on a monitor) but you never know how the final product will look. Factors like paper quality, ink quality etc. really determine the final outcome. On receiving the bible I have to admit I am very disappointed. Many things were okay but when I looked at the note sections of the bible I was not a happy camper. Zondervan used a thin-weight sans-serif font, very small (5 or 6pt ?) that is very difficult to read. Because of the thin weight of the font, the print color looks like a medium gray. In bright light the glare off the paper competes with it but without some sort of direct light it is very difficult to read. Also, the paper is thin enough that the occasional colored illustrations on the reverse side of the page bleed (ghost) through and make legibility even more difficult. The content of the notes and articles are top notch. No complaints there. But if you can't read the notes without squinting, what's the point? My hope is this study bible can be redone at some point to increase the legibility. Other things of note, I also wish the size of the NIV text was a tad larger. Bumping it up to 9.5 or 10pt font size would be ideal. Yes, I know that would increase the size of the book but as is, this study bible is on the large and heavy size already. You'll probably not be toting this around to church or the office. I could do without the red lettering myself. I know many people like it so I'll back off on that. Red lettering is often hard to read in large doses (try John 14-17) and sometimes turns to a dark pink. So what to do? For the note section, having the Kindle version may be better. Amazon often does a thing called MatchBook where if you buy the print version of a book you can get the Kindle version greatly reduced. No such luck here so many buyers will need to choose between the Kindle version or the hard-to-read print bible. I looked at the sample Kindle version and

can say I am not impressed. Kindle bibles have notoriously ugly text. The main culprit is the superscript verse numbers which are often not formatted correctly and thus increase the line spacing (leading) of the lines they are on. The text then becomes choppy and irregular with the mishmash of different line spacing. You'll get that here. The notes, however, are in different sections and layout perfectly fine. So you will be able to bump the text size to whatever is readable for you. Plop that besides you while reading your bible and you'll be good to go. In conclusion, I wish Bible publishers hired better print and layout designers for their bibles. This trend of small font sizes, thin bible paper and compact bible sizes doesn't make for very readable bibles these days. Update: sent back the print version study bible before my allotment time is up. On pages where there are predominantly notes, not the biblical text, I just plain can't read the mass of medium gray text without a magnifying glass. I have what I have suggested below (the comment section) and is working great.

The mantra of Bible interpreters the world over is context, context, context. You can twist the Bible into supporting virtually anything you want but when you read and interpret the Bible in its context then everything changes. Context changes everything is the slogan Zondervan Bibles has chosen to showcase their new Bible the NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture (2016). Containing the full text of the NIV version of the Bible, this study Bible is edited by world renown scholars John H. Walton (OT) and Craig S. Keener (NT). While this study Bible draws on the work of many scholars, Dr. Walton has drawn extensively on his own work in the Zondervan Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament and Dr. Keener has drawn on his work in The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament. While there are numerous good study Bibles out there in a number of good translations, the NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible stands apart from the rest for a number of reasons. Written with the purpose to increase your understanding of the cultural nuances behind the text of God's Word, the NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible has been developed with the goal of allowing readers to immerse themselves in the culture, the literature, the geography and the everyday life of the people to who the Bible was originally written. There are several features of the NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible which facilitate these stated goals and an example of each will be given from the book of Deuteronomy: 1. Introductions "The introductions to each book orient the reader to any relevant issues related to the broader cultural, literary, and geographical settings to the book. Most of Deuteronomy addresses the re-giving of the Mosaic Law. Similar to the OT, there are numerous collections of laws from neighboring cultures such as the Sumerian Laws of

Ur-Nammu and the Old Babylonian Laws of Eshnunna.² Sidebars “ Throughout each book there are full color pictures of cultural artifacts, geographical locations, and comparison or data charts which bring to light more detailed information about a key aspect of the text. In Deut. 27 there is a picture capturing Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal where the former mountain was a reminder of God’s covenantal blessing and the later God’s covenant curses.³ Study Notes “ The bulk of the information about the text comes from the study notes themselves. In keeping with the stated purpose for this study Bible, these notes expand on the cultural, literary, and geographical issues in the text. As such, they do not primarily intend to address theological or practical issues, though they are sometimes given a nod in passing. This should not be seen as a weakness. For instance, in the notes on Deut. 6:4 which says, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one,” they focus on the ancient near eastern (ANE) thought regarding deities and worship. Some of the notes say the following, “The claim that a deity is one or alone, as maybe Enlil and Baal, relates to the supremacy of that god’s rule. Another possibility is that this statement demands a unified view of Yahweh, in contrast to the views of the other Near Eastern peoples who would have many different shrines celebrating or emphasizing a different perspective or aspect of their gods.” (306) If you were to compare these notes of the same verse with those of the ESV Study Bible or even the NIV Zondervan Study Bible you will see a noticeable difference in the content of the discussion around the same topic.⁴ Articles “ In addition to the sidebars, there are a few hundred short articles tackling various important issues raised in the text. For instance, there is an article addressing on Deut. 34 and the death of Moses and the authorship of Deuteronomy. In it the issue is raised as to whether or not Moses penned the entire book of Deuteronomy himself or if he had the help of trained scribes. At the back of the study Bible there is both a canonical and alphabetical list of the articles for quick reference.⁵ Ancient Near Eastern Parallels “ This feature of the study Bible plays a major role in the formation of everything mentioned above. Much of the content of the notes draws on the parallels that the OT & NT text has to other cultures. Some will think the editors have gone too far with the comparisons. The intent is not to imply that the biblical text has simply copied ANE sources, historical accounts or cultural ways of life. Rather, the desire is to show the points of similarity and dissimilarity between the life lived by those who did not follow God and those who did. The point is to teach us about the text rather than imply that the biblical text is in some way inferior to the surrounding ANE cultures. In addition to the printed options for the NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible there is also an app for OliveTree where you can purchase either the study Bible itself or the notes. Both options work seamlessly in your app along side of your other books. You can also check out the OliveTree Bible

study app which enables you to get the most out of all the tools in your library including the NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible. The NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible is definitely a study Bible that you want to have on your shelf next to your other favorites. It truly has content that no other study Bible has and it adds to the readers understanding of the biblical text and the world surrounding it. It brings to life and clarity the world and point of the text in a way that no other study Bible does. I received this book for free from the Zondervan for this review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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