

## USING BIBLE DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Dictionaries and encyclopedias offer organized access to much information about the Bible and related topics. The Luther Seminary Library has an extensive collection of these handy reference tools. Many, both single volume and multi-volume, are located in the reference collection in the Reading Room. Some titles are duplicated in the circulating collection where they may be checked out for an extended time.

<p>What are the advantages of going first to a Bible dictionary or encyclopedia?</p>	<p>Bible dictionaries/encyclopedias:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a concise overview or background on a topic</li> <li>• Usually are written by an authority in the field</li> <li>• Are introductory in nature, presenting generally agreed upon information</li> <li>• Frequently include references to important secondary literature on the topic</li> </ul>
<p>What should I consider when choosing a Bible dictionary/encyclopedia?</p>	<p>There are some standard things to look for when evaluating any reference book:</p> <p><b>AUTHORITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Who is responsible for the creation of the work?</li> <li>➤ Are the articles signed and the contributors identified?</li> <li>➤ Is the publisher reputable?</li> </ul> <p><b>CURRENCY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Is the information up-to-date, based on current critical perspectives, archaeological data, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>INDEX</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Is there an index where larger concepts can be broken down and smaller details located?</li> </ul> <p><b>OUTLINE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Are longer entries outlined so that their contents can be seen at a glance?</li> <li>➤ Is it possible to go directly to a certain part of a long article?</li> </ul> <p><b>REFERENCES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do the entries contain bibliographies leading to more information?</li> </ul> <p><b>SUPPORTING MATERIAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Does the work have an appendix or a place where helpful supplementary material (e.g. maps, glossaries, CD-ROMs, tables, charts, graphs, etc. are arranged?</li> </ul>

<p>How do I find a Bible dictionary/encyclopedia in this library?</p>	<p>Dictionaries of the Bible can be found in MARTIN, the catalog of Luther Seminary library, under one of the subject headings:</p> <p><b>BIBLE—DICTIONARIES</b> Example: <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>. 1992. 6 vols. (BS440.A54 Ref. &amp; circulating &amp; CD-ROM)</p> <p><b>BIBLE. N.T. (or O.T.)—DICTIONARIES</b> Ex.: <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>. Abridged in one volume. 1985. (PA881.T46. Ref. &amp; circulating)</p> <p><b>BIBLE. N.T. GOSPELS—DICTIONARIES</b> Ex.: <i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i>. 1992. (BS2555.2.D53 Ref.)</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>BROWSE the shelves in the reference room or the circulating stacks.</p> <p>e.g. BS440 — The call number area for dictionaries and encyclopedias of the whole Bible</p>
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