

## *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*

**Moisés Silva. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014. 5 vols: 3552 pp. \$249.00. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780310276197 (set).**

The *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (*NIDNTTE*) is Moisés Silva's update of the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (*NIDNTT*), edited by Colin Brown (1975–86). The *NIDNTT* was, in turn, a translation and expansion of *Theologisches Begriffslexicon zum Neuen Testament*, edited by H. Bietenhard, L. Coenen, and E. Beyreuther (1970–71). Silva thoroughly revises both the structure and the content in this edition. Silva asserts that his revision is extensive enough that “it seemed inappropriate to retain the names of the original authors after each article” (1:6).

Perhaps the most striking difference in the *NIDNTTE* is its structure. While the *NIDNTT* and its German equivalent were both arranged using an alphabetic listing of concepts (listing appropriate Greek terms under each), Silva has arranged this dictionary by Greek lexemes. The *NIDNTTE* still provides a conceptual “grouping” by providing a comprehensive “List of Concepts” and corresponding Greek terms at the beginning of each volume.

In the main content of the dictionary, each entry has been updated and given a consistent structure where the lexeme is discussed in the context of general Greek literature (GL), Jewish literature (JL), and the New Testament. The discussion of Jewish literature includes both Greek and Hebrew/Aramaic texts where relevant. Some entries are quite expansive, and nearly encyclopedic. See, for instance, articles on δικαιοσύνη (1:722–740), Ἱερουσαλήμ (2:521–27), πιστεύω (3:759–772), or υἱός (4:522–47). The articles on δικαιοσύνη, πιστεύω (cited above), and νόμος (3:403–20) demonstrate Silva's success in updating the entries to reflect modern scholarship. Both take into account issues such as the so-called “New Perspective on Paul.” Silva admits in his treatment of δικαιοσύνη that he presents “the traditional Protestant understanding of justification” (1:735), but then references the entry on νόμος for other perspectives. Updated (and often significantly pruned) bibliographies are included after each entry. References to other theological dictionaries are listed first, and other entries are listed chronologically. In a few cases Silva notes that literature on a certain term is vast. In at least one instance, Silva admits, “The modern lit. on this topic [δικαιοσύνη] is enormous and can prove overwhelming” (1:740). Thus, in this particular instance, he omits periodical literature and various biblical theologies and focuses on major monographs on the subject. Volume 5 is devoted to various indices covering citations of primary literature, a Hebrew/Aramaic word index, a Greek word index, and a conversion chart giving the Goodrick-Kohlenberger (G-K) equivalent of Strong's numbers.

The *NIDNTTE* aims to make up-to-date background information and lexical data available to students, pastors, scholars, and teachers. Many of the features mentioned above are meant to accommodate the range of language proficiency in its intended audience. In a seminary setting, most students and scholars would approach such a dictionary with at least some proficiency in Greek and likely look up a specific Greek word. Such an approach was laborious in the previous edition. Because the *NIDNTT* discussed Greek terms listed under *English* headwords, the user would first need to consult the index volume and look up the Greek word to find the appropriate English headword. Frustratingly, the Greek terms listed in *NIDNTT*'s index were transliterated and ordered according to the *English* alphabet! Words beginning with a “rough breathing mark” were listed under “H.” Thus, the word ἁμαρτία would be listed under *hamartia*, but ἀγαπάω under *agapaō*. No doubt the arrangement was intended to assist those without proficiency in Greek, but it was an inconvenience to the typical student or scholar. *NIDNTTE*'s change in structure certainly helps alleviate that frustration! The present edition lists main entries under Greek words in Greek alphabetical order using *Greek* letters (along with an English transliteration and G-K number). It should be noted, however, that not every Greek word in the New Testament is listed as a headword. Cognate terms are discussed together under a single lexeme. For Greek terms grouped with certain lexemes, cross references are given in the main body of the text. For instance, the entry on ἀνάστασις (1:288)

refers the user to ἀνίστημι (1:309–27). A user interested in looking up compound words is provided with less specific instructions. Under δια-, the note states “many **δια-** compounds are treated under the corresponding base form; e.g., διαγγέλλω → ἀγγέλλω” (1:691). In such a case, the user can put the index volume to use. For instance, διακρίνω in the Greek index (5:347) points to the headword, κρίνω. Those without proficiency in Greek can use G-K numbers listed next to each index entry to find the appropriate article in the main text. The older “Strong’s numbers” can be referenced using the appropriate index to find its equivalent G-K number.

As mentioned above, while the alphabetical listing of entries streamlines the user’s access to Greek words in the *NIDNTTE*, the *NIDNTT*’s grouping of terms under *concepts* has not been sacrificed. Each volume of the present edition includes a “List of Concepts.” Under each concept, appropriate Greek terms are listed. If the “concept” is discussed at length in a particular entry, it is marked with a dagger (†). An arrow (→) points to the appropriate headword if a particular Greek word is not listed alphabetically in the main text. Thus, the user who wants to research “love” in the New Testament can look at the list of concepts to find the main Greek terms associated, along with the G-K number, an English transliteration, and a brief gloss (e.g., †ἀγαπάω G26 [*agapaō*], to love, cherish, take pleasure in; ἄστοργος G845 [*astorgos*], without affection, unfeeling [Rom 1:31; 2 Tim 3:3]...; etc.). The † indicates that the main discussion of the concept, “love,” is found under ἀγαπάω (1:55). The same convention is used to group English “concepts” as headwords. For instance, the concept “doubt” points to “faith” and “firm.” Thus, διακρίνω is listed under the concept “faith.” While this convention may at first seem confusing, it aids the user by pointing out conceptual antonyms — in this case, associating “doubt” with its opposite, “faith.”

The listing of terms in the Greek index, main entries, and conceptual list in the *NIDNTTE* could be streamlined. Conventions used in other Zondervan publications can serve as examples. Willem VanGemeren’s *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (*NIDOTTE*) lists all Hebrew terms in the main text according to their G-K number. In all cases where a particular term is discussed under a different headword, the appropriate cross-reference is given. The “semantic field” of each Hebrew term is listed under appropriate entries (with cross-references) rather than in a separate list of concepts. This increases the usability (as well as the page count). *NIDOTTE* also discusses specific topics or groups of different Hebrew lexemes under entries in the separate “Topical Dictionary” (vol. 4). These integrated articles are referenced when appropriate along with other single-word articles.

Verlyn Verbrugge’s *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Abridged Edition* (formerly titled the *NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words*) provides a more streamlined layout as well. Although the articles are shorter in Verbrugge’s abridgment, some words seem to be more “accessible.” For instance, Verbrugge provides a separate main entry for διακρίνω. He summarizes its sense as to “make a distinction, judge, render a decision; doubt, waver,” and includes the noun, διάκρισις, and its antonym, ἀδιάκριτος in the discussion (138). Silva only mentions διακρίνω briefly under κρίνω, and devotes very little space to “doubt” as a possible sense (2:744–50). In the *NIDNTT* on which Silva’s edition is based, Burkhardt Gärtner provides διακρίνω with its own entry under “Distinguish, Doubt,” and gives considerable attention to “doubt” or “disbelief” as a definition (1:503–5). One wonders why these data disappeared in the revision and whether similar omissions might occur. The addition of references to original articles in the *NIDNTT* and perhaps even Verbrugge’s abridgment would enhance its usability. Citations to previous versions of the articles would also have been helpful for the sake of tracking the history of scholarship on each topic. In the case of διακρίνω, mentioned above, such references would have been helpful.

While there are certain quirks to the *NIDNTTE* that can impede its accessibility, on the whole, it is a great improvement to the *NIDNTT* and a worthy accomplishment by Moisés Silva. Readers (and librarians) would be wise to read the introduction thoroughly in order to take full advantage of its features. The *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* belongs on every theological library’s shelf. While Zondervan’s suggested price is somewhat hefty, it can be purchased at a more reasonable cost elsewhere. Librarians take heed. While Silva has updated Colin Brown’s work, he does not quite replace it. Do not deaccession *NIDNTT* yet, and keep Verbrugge’s abridged version! Students and scholars doing thorough research would be advised to consult all three.

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