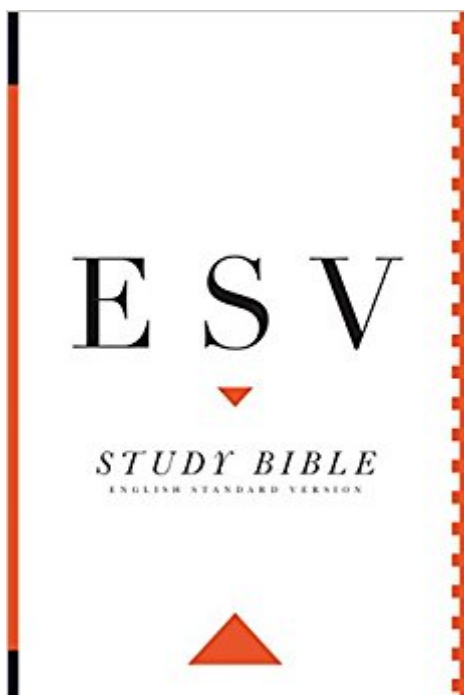


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# ESV Study Bible, Personal Size



## Synopsis

The ESV Study Bible, Personal Size compresses nearly all the features of the award-winning ESV Study Bible into a smaller size for easier carrying. This Personal Size edition retains all of the originalâ€™s 20,000 study notes, 240 full-color maps and illustrations, charts, timelines, and introductionsâ€”more than 2 million words of Bible text, insightful explanation, teaching, and reference material. To conserve space, some of the extensive articles have been removed from this more compact edition and moved online for free access. Enjoy the comprehensive resources of the internationally best-selling ESV Study Bible, now in a convenient and portable smaller size!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

**Book Description** The ESV Study Bible was created to help people understand the Bible in a deeper way--to understand the timeless truth of God's Word as a powerful, compelling, life-changing reality. To accomplish this, the ESV Study Bible combines the best and most recent evangelical Christian scholarship with the highly regarded ESV Bible text. The result is the most comprehensive study Bible ever published--with 2,752 pages of extensive, accessible Bible resources. Sample the ESV Study Bible Click on the images below to read the introductions to the books of the Bible as they appear in the ESV Study Bible [pdf]: And click on these images to see samples of the detailed and authoritative historical illustrations included in the ESV Study Bible: Golgotha Herod's Temple Temple Complex Temple Mount --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Retaining the majesty of language with the clarity of thought, the English Standard Version is a grand accomplishment."Dr. Ravi Zacharias,Author and Speaker"The ESV is the text I have been waiting for my entire life. I appreciate greatly both its fluency of language and its lucidity of expression, thanks to the brilliant work of the translation team. We owe them a very great debt."Rev. Randal Macaulay,Christian Heritage, The Round Church, Cambridge"After preaching out of the same version for over 10 years, I switched to the ESV Bible. I find it both accurate and easily readable, which is a rare combination."Francis Chan,Author of Crazy Love"I thank God for the ESV. It combines up-to-date accuracy in the text and absolute faithfulness to the words of Scripture with a literary skill and beauty in the translation which, in my judgment, is unsurpassed."Eric J. Alexander,Retired Pastor, St. George's-Tron Parish Church, Scotland"At last a translation that majors on accuracy, combined with a modern, fluent style. I am confident that in time the ESV will become the standard translation for the English-speaking world."The Rt. Rev. Wallace Benn,Bishop of Lewes, England --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The ESV Study Bible (ESVSB) now has a sturdy new "competitor" in the NIV Zondervan Study Bible (NIVZSB). How do they stack up against each other?In this review I will note similarities between the two, describe some differences, and survey their approach to 10 controversial topics/texts. (For a much fuller version of this review, covering more topics/texts, visit my website by searching for "Dwight Gingrich" and "NIV Zondervan Study Bible.")SIMILARITIES:Both are massive works, first (NIVZSB) and second (ESVSB) in length among major evangelical study Bibles.Both stand firmly within the conservative evangelical tradition. Both are scholarly works with general editors bearing PhDs from the University of Cambridge—Wayne Grudem for the ESVSB and D. A. Carson for the NIVZSB. My incomplete manual comparison of the contributors to the two study Bibles revealed at least 9 people who contributed to both.Both affirm traditional authorship for contested books such as the Pentateuch (Moses with minor editorial shaping), Isaiah (Isaiah), Matthew (the apostle Matthew), the Pastoral Epistles (Paul), and 2 Peter (the apostle Peter).There are even typographical similarities: both volumes print the sacred text in a single column on each page, with cross references along the outside margins, and with commentary in double columns beneath.Indeed, these two study Bibles are similar enough that the main factor that should influence your choice between the two is your preference in translations.DIFFERENCES:It appears to me that the ESVSB is somewhat stronger than the NIVZSB in these areas: Charts, maps, illustrations, historical information, and general apologetic or bibliological articles. The ESVSB, for example, has separate

articles devoted to archeological topics, biblical languages, biblical doctrine, biblical ethics, and the perspectives that various denominations, religions, and cults bring to Scripture. A comparison of the introductions to Exodus shows that the one in the ESVSB is slightly longer (six pages to the NIVZSB's five), with more attention given to the historical reliability of the book and to its literary features. Similarly, the NIVZSB introduction for Galatians is three pages long, while the ESVSB's covers four pages, providing a little more historical data, a superior map, and more space devoted to charts rather than photographs. The differences, I stress, are differences of degree. The similarities here outweigh the differences, but I give the ESVSB the blue ribbon for visual helps and breadth of topics addressed in articles. The NIVZSB is stronger in at least one way: its emphasis on biblical theology. This makes sense, given the editors of the two volumes: Wayne Grudem's most significant authorial effort is his massive and massively popular *Systematic Theology*, while D. A. Carson is better known for both his commentaries and his editorial work in books such as the *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* and the series *New Studies in Biblical Theology*. The NIVZSB's focus on biblical theology is most evident in the twenty-eight articles found before the concordance. Most articles are two or three pages long; together they cover sixty-six pages. Since these articles are the most unique part of this new study Bible, I will list them here, with their authors:

The Story of the Bible: How the Good News About Jesus Is Central – Timothy Keller  
The Bible and Theology – D. A. Carson  
Biblical-Theological Overview of the Bible – D. A. Carson  
The Glory of God – James M. Hamilton Jr.  
Creation – Henri A. G. Blocher  
Sin – Kevin DeYoung  
Covenant – Paul R. Williamson  
Law – T. D. Alexander  
Temple – T. D. Alexander  
Priest – Dana M. Harris  
Sacrifice – Jay A. Sklar  
Exile and Exodus – Thomas Richard Wood  
The Kingdom of God – T. D. Alexander  
Sonship – D. A. Carson  
The City of God – T. D. Alexander  
Prophets and Prophecy – Sam Storms  
Death and Resurrection – Philip S. Johnston  
People of God – Moisés Silva  
Wisdom – Daniel J. Estes  
Holiness – Andrew David Naselli  
Justice – Brian S. Rosner  
Wrath – Christopher W. Morgan  
Love and Grace – Graham A. Cole  
The Gospel – Greg D. Gilbert  
Worship – David G. Peterson  
Mission – Andreas J. Köstenberger  
Shalom – Timothy Keller  
Consummation – Douglas J. Moo

While I disagree with minor points in some of these articles, I find myself agreeing with a much higher percentage of what is said here than with what is said in most systematic theologies. That is the benefit of staying closer to the language of Scripture itself. Most of these articles are very useful and some (such as Keller's opening one) are even moving. I have a niggling question about the place of such essays in a study Bible (how many

readers will really find and benefit from this content in their specific moments of exegetical need?), but reading them can certainly make one a better reader of Scripture.

### CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS/TEXTS:

On the central matters of the gospel, both study Bibles are solid. They promote the core gospel message well, along with the necessary human response to God's grace. And, though both are generally Calvinistic throughout, they do not emphasize this interpretive lens in a way that overshadows the biblical message itself. Well done.

But how do they handle more controversial passages—texts which theologically conservative Christians sometimes disagree about? And how does the NIVZSB compare to the ESVSB in its handling of these texts?

#### Creation:

These study Bibles hold similar positions here: (1) On "days": The ESVSB presents five readings that faithful interpreters offer regarding the days of creation but refrains from assessing them. The NIVZSB says the mention of "days" emphasizes the logical development of God's creation more than it pinpoints the chronological development (p. 20). (2) On "kinds": Both suggest this is a general term that (so they imply) leaves the door open for theistic evolution. (3) Both affirm that Adam and Eve were historical persons.

#### Divorce and Remarriage:

Both study Bibles underscore at Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 19:1-12 that Jesus is reaffirming God's original intention that marriage be permanent and lifelong (NIVZSB, p. 1970). They teach that both divorce and remarriage are possible but never ideal (NIVZSB, p. 1969) in cases where one marriage partner engages in sexual immorality (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). It seems that the NIVZSB may interpret sexual immorality slightly more broadly, saying that the Greek term *porneia* [is] the broadest term for sexual sin. It refers to sexual relations with any other person besides one's monogamous heterosexual spouse (p. 1939). The ESVSB, rather than speaking of sexual relations, specifies sexual intercourse, possibly a narrower term. On the other hand, the NIVZSB takes a more rigid stance than the ESVSB on 1 Corinthians 7:10-16: "There are only two options for a divorced woman: (1) remain unmarried or (2) reconcile with her husband." It acknowledges regarding verse 15 ("the brother or sister is not bound in such circumstances") that "it is often suggested that this allows a deserted Christian spouse to remarry" but states that "this interpretation is not plausible." Homosexuality: Both study Bibles state clearly that homosexual relations are sinful. An NIVZSB comment on Romans 1:26-27 succinctly states that "in making humans [sic!] beings male and female, God manifests his intention for human sexual relations" (p. 2293).

#### Gender Roles:

It will surprise some readers to learn that the NIVZSB takes nearly the same stance on gender roles as the ESVSB does. In all the gender texts I survey,

the NIVZSB and ESVSB adopt nearly the same position—“gender role difference in marriage and church are timeless principles, men are called to authoritative and loving leadership in home and church while women are called to submit, and women may not be overseers but may perhaps be (non-teaching) deacons. The NIVZSB does apparently leave the door open for women to teach men in non-authoritative positions in the church, but otherwise the differences between the study Bibles are differences of tone more than position, with the ESVSB giving a more rigorous defense of the position shared by both.

**Nonresistance and Relationship to Government:** On Matthew 5:38-48 the NIVZSB says that “Jesus is prohibiting retaliation for wrongs experienced.” It explains that a slap on the cheek is “a common Jewish insult by a superior to a subordinate, not an aggressor’s blow.” (p. 1939). This brief interpretation leaves the door open for Christians to use deadly force in other circumstances, though the NIVZSB does not explicitly state this. The ESVSB presents this position much more clearly: “Jesus is not prohibiting the use of force by governments, police, or soldiers when combating evil. One should not return an insulting slap, which would lead to escalating violence. In the case of a more serious assault, Jesus’ words should not be taken to prohibit self-defense, for often a failure to resist a violent attack leads to even more serious abuse.” This difference is also evident in places like Romans 12-13, where the NIVZSB gently questions whether governments have the right to administer capital punishment, while the ESVSB suggests one way believers can “overcome evil with good” is through military or police force.

**Spiritual Gifts:** I haven’t found any clear statement where the NIVZSB strongly affirms whether or not the “miraculous” spiritual gifts continue to this day. This is remarkable, given that Sam Storms, a strong continuationist, was chosen to author an essay on “Prophets and Prophecy.” In this article he only vaguely hints at his own position by some present-tense references to prophecy. The ESVSB adopts a similar stance: “Bible-believing Christians disagree as to whether the gift of tongues ceased after the apostolic age of the early church, or whether tongues is a spiritual gift that should continue to be practiced today.” Clearly, both Bibles are aiming to avoid a fight over this volatile topic.

**Foreknowledge, Predestination, Election:** At Romans 8:29-30 the NIVZSB gives two possible explanations for God’s foreknowledge: “Perhaps God knew ahead of time God’s foreknowledge: God foreknew who would believe in him and so predestined them. But God’s foreknowledge probably has the biblical sense of God enter into relationship with God’s foreknowledge: God chose to initiate a relationship with people before the creation of the world and on that basis God predestined them.” (p. 2307). The ESVSB only presents the second option, and emphasizes that “predestined” means

Ã¢ÂpredeterminedÃ¢Â and that GodÃ¢Âs calling is Ã¢Âeffective,Ã¢Â not merely an invitation. At Romans 9 comments are similar. At Ephesians 1 both are strongly Calvinistic. At 1 Timothy 2:4, the ESVSB has a lengthy note that describes both Arminian and Calvinist interpretations without taking sides (surprise!), ending thus: Ã¢ÂHowever one understands the extent of the atonement, this passage clearly teaches the free and universal offer of salvation to every single human being; Ã¢ÂdesiresÃ¢Â shows that this offer is a bona fide expression of GodÃ¢Âs good will.Ã¢Â On this Timothy verse the NIVZSB suggests that Ã¢Âwhat God Ã¢ÂwantsÃ¢Â may be hindered by lack of human faith.Ã¢Â This last statement opens the door to non-Calvinistic interpretations (but does not demand them). The NIVZSB and the ESVSB are both similarly Calvinistic regarding GodÃ¢Âs choice and offer of salvation, but with occasional surprising flexibility.

Eternal Security: At Hebrews 6:4-6 the NIVZSB notes the Ã¢Âgreat difficulties for interpretation,Ã¢Â describes several common interpretations, and finally concludes that Ã¢Âthose who do not hold on to faith in Christ show that their experience was superficial rather than genuineÃ¢Â (p. 2503). The ESVSB directs us to a note at Hebrews 3:14, which says Ã¢ÂScripture is clearÃ¢Â that true believers cannot lose their salvation.Ã¢Â At Hebrews 7:25 the NIVZSB argues that the fact that Jesus Ã¢Âalways lives to intercede forÃ¢Â believers Ã¢Âprecludes their turning backÃ¢Â (p. 2507). But such statements are relatively rare in the NIVZSB. At 1 John 2:19 the NIVZSB makes no clear theological deductions, while the ESVSB states that Ã¢Âthis implies that those who are truly saved will never abandon Christ.Ã¢Â The ESVSB makes similar statements at John 6:40, John 10:28, 2 Peter 1:10, and Jude 1:2Ã¢Âall places where the NIVZSB makes no clear assertions about whether believers can ever lose their salvation.

Sabbath and LordÃ¢Âs Day: These study Bibles take a similar stance on this topic. At Exodus 20:8-11 the ESVSB makes no Christian application, while the NIVZSB mentions that the Sabbath Ã¢Âanticipates the experience of rest through faith in ChristÃ¢Â (p. 155). At Colossians 2:16-17 the ESVSB says Ã¢Âit is debated whether the Sabbaths in question included the regular seventh-day rest of the fourth commandment, or were only the special Sabbaths of the Jewish festal calendar.Ã¢Â At Galatians 4:10 the ESVSB notes that some Ã¢Âbelieve that the weekly Sabbath command is not temporary but goes back to GodÃ¢Âs pattern in creation.Ã¢Â The NIVZSB whispers (with dramatically different tone than Paul!) that Ã¢Âtreating certain times as more sacred than othersÃ¢Â is not an essential feature of Christian faithÃ¢Â (p. 2390). Thus, unlike the ESVSB, the NIVZSB apparently never suggests the Sabbath command may still apply. However, it seems a little more open to seeing Sunday worship as being normative (see description of the practice of the early church at 1 Cor.

16:2 and Rev. 1:10). Israel and the Church: Both are inconsistent on this topic. The NIVZSB's "Exile and Exodus" article presents one perspective strongly: "As the only perfectly obedient Israelite... a faithful remnant of one Jesus (not the unbelieving nation) is the sole heir of all of the covenantal promises made to Abraham, Israel, and David... Life everlasting, a land flowing with milk and honey, a posterity as numerous as the stars, a perpetual reign over all creation, and uninhibited access to the Father's presence all belong exclusively to him" (p. 2661). Both agree that at 1 Peter 1:1 Peter "implicitly claims that the church of Jesus Christ is the new Israel, made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ" (NIVZSB, p. 2539; ESVSB says "explicitly"). However, both Bibles (perhaps especially the ESVSB) also suggest multiple times that seeing a future role for an ethnic Israel is a legitimate interpretative approach.

**CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS:** My general sense is that the NIVZSB is slightly more careful than the ESVSB to avoid offending its readers or, to state things more positively, that it is aiming to please a slightly larger readership. On the one hand it is equally careful to adhere to the basic evangelical commitments (things such as traditional authorship and the historical reliability of Scripture), while also feeling equally free to adopt recent approaches to synthesizing the Bible and science (no firm stance on the days of Genesis or the question of evolution). On the other hand, it seems slower to affirm some of the more fundamentalist ideas of evangelicalism (things such as capital punishment or a special plan for the future of ethnic Israel), it feels slightly more cautious as it affirms some points of evangelical doctrinal dispute (inability of true believers to fall from the faith, distinct gender roles in the church), and it is sometimes slower to pick sides at all regarding what the text means for today (the Christian and the military). But such differences are comparatively minor when set within the widely diverse translations and study Bibles currently on the market. Both the NIVZSB and the ESVSB are solidly conservative evangelical and among the very best in their class. I am very happy to recommend both for your judicious use.-----The ESVSB is still about as good as a study Bible gets. I give both 4-1/2 out of 5 stars.

I love this study Bible. It's very helpful in understanding what is going on in the part of the bible you are reading. The ESV is an awesome translation. It is very accurate and easy to read. I highly recommend this to anyone wanting to study and learn more about the bible.

I really love how this bible was written. The study materials, maps, charts, commentary, and concordance are wonderful! I love how each book has an introduction, it is very helpful. The size of the writing is good and I can see it easily. My only complaints are that the bible I recieved has some



scratches, bends, tears, and a page that wasn't cut properly so it's bigger than the rest. My cover was also dirty so I ordered a case for it.

I have no complaints with the content of this book. I love the ESV and I love the study notes, but each new update on this Kindle version has been worse and worse. Perhaps it works differently on an actual Kindle, but on a Kindle app it is horrible. Things it used to do, but no longer does: Formerly - when in one of the study notes, I could use the back button to return to the referring verse even if I had followed a trail through the notes. Now the back button exits out of the book to my library. There is no way to back up. (This change happened some time ago) Formerly - The name of the book (as in Luke or Genesis) were active links with each new chapter that would take me back to the table of contents for that particular book. Now - I have to use the app menu to find the table of contents for the whole Bible and work my way back to the particular book of the Bible I was looking for. There is no easy way to flip back and forth (This is a very recent change) Formerly - if I went to one of the study notes the verse I came from was highlighted at the beginning of the note so I could easily click on it to go back to the verse. Now - there is no highlight and no way out of the note except to go to the main menu and work my way through the table of contents back to the verse. I used to love this edition and used it in church and at Bible studies during which I could often navigate around faster than many could flip through their print Bibles. Now, I can't begin to keep up and will no longer use it.

First, I love the ESV. Second, I love the ESV study Bible. But this specific layout of the "Personal Size" just didn't cut it for me. It's just too much packed into a small space. The full size ESV Study Bible is indeed heavy so I understand the desire for this. But I'd rather have the extra heft than the cluttered look of the Personal Size. I ended up getting normal sized plain ESV Bible (non-study version) and then I keep the full size study version at home for deeper Bible study. I ended up giving this to a new believer who didn't have a Bible.

I just received the indexed study bible, and the indexed pages are completely off except for Genesis and the Concordance. It is missing the tab for Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. So when you go to Numbers where you should see this tab, you see the tab for Judges, Ruth, and Samuel instead. I've attached a photo showing this. That means all subsequent tabs are incorrect until you get to the Concordance. I am shocked by the lack of QC and am returning this right away.

Kindle Fire edition needs work - it's very hard to navigate back and forth from the study notes to text. If this worked better I'd rate it higher. I found the book version to be a little bulky so I was hoping that the Kindle Fire version would provide all the tools - but it's too hard to use.

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