

## DICTIONARIES

Dictionaries come in many varieties. In the field of Biblical research, it is necessary to utilize specialized dictionaries as well as a standard English dictionary. Below are some of the dictionaries that are profitable for the study of God's Word.

### *THE EXHAUSTIVE DICTIONARY OF BIBLE NAMES*

Every name in the Bible has a meaning. God frequently communicates important information about a person or a place by the name given and even changes a name at times to bring special attention to a particular truth. A valuable reference for checking the meanings of Bible names is *The Exhaustive Dictionary of Bible Names*. This book is a compilation, from many sources, of definitions for the names of persons and places in the Bible.

This dictionary is arranged alphabetically. An equal sign (=) is used to separate the name being defined from the definition. When a name has several or sometimes even seemingly contradictory definitions, the most generally accepted definition is given first, and the least accepted definition is given last. Where old or outdated language was used in the original source material, newer definitions of the words are supplied in brackets [ ] or parentheses ( ) within the definition and immediately following the word being defined. When the exact meaning of the word was uncertain, the closest definition is given, followed by a question mark in parentheses (?).

For example, in Genesis 10:25 the Bible says, "And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided...." Looking up Peleg in *The Exhaustive Dictionary of Bible Names* on page 200, we find that his name means "division. A channel (as a cleft, dividing)."

Another example is the name Moses. The record in Exodus, chapter 2, tells how Moses was found by Pharaoh's daughter in an ark of bulrushes by the edge of the river. Moses' name is found in this dictionary on page 184. The meaning of this name is "taken out of the water; saved out of the water; saved from the water; drawn out; drawn forth. A son."

Every name has a meaning, and God has a purpose for everything He says in His Word. This is an exciting area in which to study God's Word and see what additional understanding can be gained from the meanings of names.

### *NEW BIBLE DICTIONARY*

The *New Bible Dictionary* is a reference work dealing with the people and places of the Bible as well as major doctrinal concepts of Christianity. It provides important background information in the fields of history, geography, archaeology, and the customs of Bible times. Its use will enrich the Biblical student's understanding of many people and places referred to in the Scripture.

First, read the section "How to Use This Dictionary." It will help you understand how the book is set up and how you can utilize it most efficiently. Articles are arranged in alphabetic order and are easily found under the heading at the top of each page. Where the topic required does not appear as an

article, reference should be made to the index. An asterisk before a word indicates that further relevant information will be found in an article under that title. To assist those wishing to study subjects in greater detail, bibliographies appear at the end of most of the longer articles. These usually provide references to the recent general works on the subject and may include references to detailed studies or books which take a position different from that of the contributor. Many articles also include maps.

An example of how this book can be useful comes up in reading the Book of Acts. For instance, Acts 17:17 describes some of Paul's actions.

Acts 17:17:

Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews [Judeans], and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

What is a synagogue? What is the market? The Bible dictionary has the answers. Look up "synagogue." The article about it starts on page 1142. It discusses the significance, origin, and general description as well as the purpose and practices of the synagogue. "Market" is found on page 732.

As useful as the Bible dictionary is, you need to be aware that some of the information is accurate and some of it is not. Use the understanding of God's Word that you developed from The Way of Abundance and Power series to evaluate what you read. This will enable you to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). Looking up people, places, and concepts mentioned in the Bible with this in mind will enhance your overall understanding of the Scriptures.

## AN ENGLISH DICTIONARY

Begin by reading the introduction to your dictionary to understand how to utilize it most effectively. An English dictionary describes and defines the English language. It will include the slang as well as standard vocabulary words. Synonym lists and usage notes, which are designed to help you find the right word and use it correctly in writing and speech, are usually included. Along with basic definitions, you will often find notes on how the word was used in earlier times as well as what older words it was derived from. Main entries are usually in large boldfaced type and are listed alphabetically by letter. Turn to the letter in the alphabet that your word begins with and follow along until you find your word and its definition.

"Prevail" is a concept common in the ministry and found in the Word of God (see Acts 19:20). But what does it mean? One dictionary gives the following definition: "to gain ascendancy through strength or superiority: triumph; to be or become effective or effectual." This gives additional richness to the mental image we carry of "prevail." Any word whose meaning you want to develop a greater appreciation of can be looked up in an English dictionary.

Another use for a dictionary is to look up archaic words that occur in the Bible. Some of the words that were in common usage in 1611 have either gone out of use or have changed in meaning. Luke 17:9 includes the phrase "I trow not." What does that mean? The dictionary defines "trow" as an archaic word that means "think." Another example is in Thessalonians:

I Thessalonians 4:15:

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

“Prevent” in its current usage means to stop. Archaic definitions of the word are “to act ahead of” or “to arrive before.” So the meaning of this verse is that “we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord...[will not go ahead of, or precede] them which are asleep.”

Do not hesitate to look up words or concepts that you do not understand or that you want a better understanding of in an English dictionary. Your efforts will provide great returns.