

TNIV Reference Bible

Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007. Pp. xv + 1389. Bonded leather. \$34.99. ISBN 9780310938415.

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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

New Jersey

When I was a new believer I used an NIV *Couple's Devotional Bible* that a friend gave me way back when I was engaged to be married. I quickly noticed that the NIV was not the Bible of choice in the church I was attending and I also felt a bit funny about having this somewhat girly looking Bible so about 4 months after I was saved my mother bought me a burgundy bonded leather giant print KJV center-column reference Bible for Christmas. I loved this Bible; it was the perfect size, the perfect weight, was easy to read, and the cross-referencing was amazing. This thing came everywhere with me and after quite a bit of use it fell apart on me.

My next burgundy bonded leather Bible was a KJV/NIV/NLT/NASB *Parallel Bible*. This thing was simply too big and cumbersome to be used in any kind of regular everyday way. My sister then bought me a *Jack Van Impe Prophecy Bible* for Christmas one year and I used that Bible for a few years but always with complaints. It was a little bigger than my beloved burgundy KJV and it contained a commentary on the book of Revelation in the back of the Bible that I hardly ever referenced. There were no cross-references and the glossary of terms that appeared in the beginning of the Bible was superfluous (the terms were related to Bible prophecy). So one day I decided to replace my beloved burgundy KJV only to discover that it was no longer in production. I settled for a black bonded leather giant print KJV with center-column references but to my dismay this one was quite different than what I had expected. The referencing system was not as good and there were summary/introductions at the beginning of each book

(something I wasn't looking for). To make matters worse a number of pages fell out for seemingly no reason after very little use.

Since then I've gotten my hands on a number of study Bibles (NLT, ESV, Apologetics, Archeological, Reformation) but they're all too big for me to carry around and contain way more information than I need to have at hand in church or Bible study. I've also received some nice hardcover Bibles but those usually just get opened up on my desk and rarely carried anywhere with me. So it was with all of this in mind that I contacted Andrew Rogers at Zondervan and asked if he could recommend a good Bible for me. I told him that I was looking for something that was single column (seeing as how the only Bible I've ever read from cover to cover was single column), bonded leather, and had a reference system. Given these parameters he gladly recommended the TNIV Reference Bible (hereafter TNIVRB) and he added that he had been pushing this Bible since long before he worked for Zondervan.

So I purchased a copy, and before I get around to telling you *why* I love it, I'll just tell you *that* I love it! This is the first Bible since that trusty burgundy KJV that feels personal to me. The relationship between a person and their Bible is a special one. It's a source from which we draw inspiration, guidance, and quite simply the words of eternal life! So it's quite important to feel comfortable with the Bible that we're using. My other Bibles always gave me reasons to complain about them which honestly drew my attention away from the most important part of the Bible: its content! Not so with the TNIVRB.

As can be seen in the photo below the layout is really clean and attractive. There's no graphics to distract you or sidebars about this or that issue. There's simply the text, the topical ties beneath the text, and the cross-references in the side columns (and sometimes beneath the text depending on how many references there are) along with the occasional translation note that's standard in all TNIVs. It's really a straightforward meat & potatoes approach and I love it as much if not more than actual meat & potatoes!



The cross-references themselves are extremely helpful. They're comprehensive if not exhaustive and they lead to the most relevant passages connected with a given text. The editors describe their system saying:

The TNIV cross-reference system resembles a series of interlocking chains with many links. The head, or organizing, link in each concept chain is indicated by the letter "S" (short for "See"). The appearance of a head link in a list of references usually signals another list of references that will cover a slightly different aspect of the concept or word being studied. The various chains in the cross-reference system – which is virtually inexhaustible – continually intersect and diverge. (xi)

3:17 ^aGe 5:29; Nu 35:33; Ps 106:39; Isa 24:5; Jer 3:1; Ro 8:20-22 ^bGe 6:13; 8:21; Isa 54:9; ^cGe 29:32; 31:42; Ex 3:7; Ps 66:11; 127:2; Ecc 1:13; ^dGe 47:9; Job 5:7; 7:1; 14:1; Ecc 2:23; Jer 20:18
3:18 ^eJob 31:40; Isa 5:6; Heb 6:8
^fPs 104:14
3:19 ^gPs 104:23; ^hGe 14:18; Dt 8:3, 9; 23:4; Ru 1:6; 2:14; 2Th 3:10 ⁱS Ge 2:7; S Job 7:21; S Ps 146:4; 1Co 15:47; Heb 9:27

References are listed in their biblical order except when a reference occurs within the chapter itself. In that case the reference is indicated by "ver" before moving on to the other biblical references in their canonical order. OT passages quoted in the NT are marked by an asterisk.

The topical ties are nearly as helpful as the cross-reference system (but not quite). The beginning of the topical ties are marked with "B" encased in a black circle (pictured below) while the arrows "indicate where an additional reference to that topic can be found, either before or after that Scripture text. The end of a topical chain is indicated by a single arrow pointing left." (xi)

Topical Ties

3:22 Hints of the Trinity in the Old Testament. **Ⓟ** Ge 1:26 ↔ Ge 16:9-10.

4:1-2 The blessing of motherhood. → Ge 21:1-7.

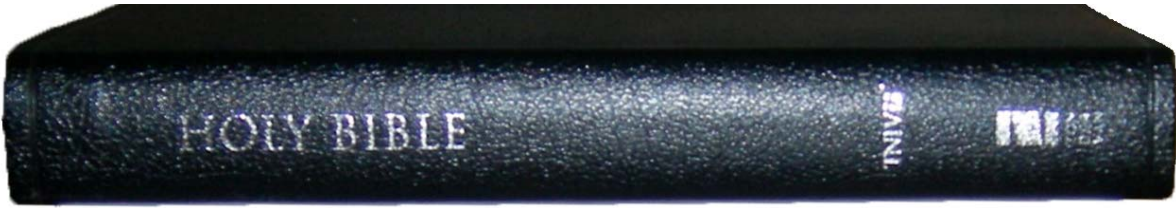
4:3-8 Murders committed for various reasons. → Ge 34:25-26.

4:5-8 Examples of human anger. → Ge 30:2.

4:6-7 Control of human anger. → Ps 37:8.

The back matter contains two appendices (I: Table of Weights and Measures & II: Revised Spelling of Proper Names) as well as a TNIV concordance, dictionary of TNIV terms, and maps. The concordance and dictionary were a pleasant surprise. I don't have a single complaint about this Bible as it has been able to capture the feel of my long lost burgundy bonded leather giant print KJV center-column reference Bible. In terms of size the TNIVRB is perfect: it's not too big and burdensome to carry nor is it too small and dainty like many thin-line Bibles on the market. The bonded leather is attractive and durable (I actually prefer it to genuine leather for its sturdiness) and the silver-gilded edges are a nice compliment to the black cover. I also like that the cover doesn't have any writing on it which maintains the overall clean look of this Bible. The

writing on the binding is understated and a pleasure to look at when the TNIVRB is simply sitting on the table waiting to be read.



If you're in the market for a good reference Bible then I recommend the TNIVRB without hesitation.