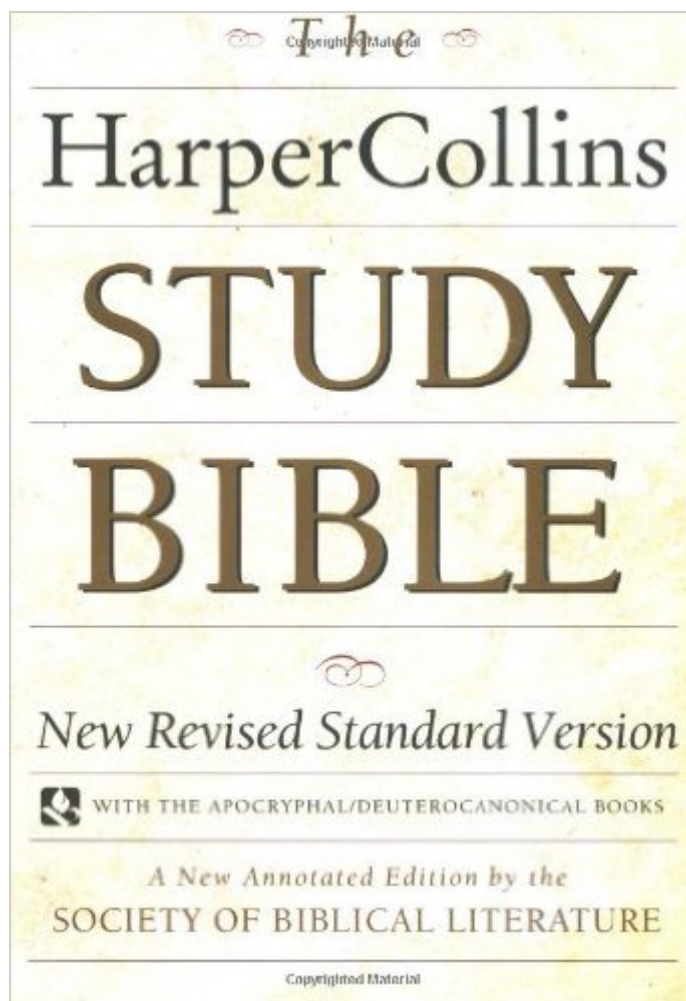


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Customer Reviews

As another reviewer has written, I have bought two copies of this particular Bible and, should the need ever again arise, I would buy this edition again for a number of reasons. First, as it is annotated by the Society of Biblical Literature (hereafter, SBL), every book, manuscript tradition and canon (more on this later) is contextualized in two ways: first and foremost in its original historical context (or at least its purported original historical context); second, its later Jewish and Christian canonical-theological tradition (up through about the end of the second century, when these canonical traditions began to really take concrete shape). This type of "historical criticism" (as it is sometimes called) has the benefit of noting parallels and breaks with other texts of the same era. So, one will read in the notes references to something such as the Gospel of Thomas, early

Christian writings and Rabbinic literature, Babylonian creation accounts, etc. The goal of this is not to erase theological understandings of the texts of the Bible, but to place the texts themselves in their original context and let them speak with their own voice as much as possible. In this way, then, the NRSV is a very Protestant Bible. In keeping with its Protestantism, not only is the Old Testament in this Bible the same as the traditional Protestant Old Testament (39 books), but following Luther and later Protestant editions of the Bible, the "Apocrypha" (an intentionally disparaging term when originally used, which means "hidden" or "esoteric") - the books in the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Old Testaments that were never included in the Jewish Bible and were then thrown out of the Protestant Old Testament during the Reformation - are included *between* the Old and New Testaments.

This review is not a reflection on the text of the Bible so much as the usefulness of this particular edition. The Bible holds the record for the book with the greatest variation of editions, versions, and separate publications. The Harper Collins Study Bible is one of the few that has remained an essential part of my collection and study. I was given a copy of the Harper Collins Study Bible many years ago as a gift. I had several versions, and my friend thought he was giving me one more (I like to examine the differences in translations to find deeper meanings in the texts, or misinterpretations based on faulty or incomplete translation). Alas, he was disappointed when I informed him that this was not a distinctively Harper Collins translation; it is in fact a study version of the New Revised Standard Version, one of the dominant translations at use in church and scholarship today. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) is an updating of the respected and established Revised Standard Version, which still has life as the preferred text of many senior scholars. The Harper Collins Study Bible was compiled under the direction of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) who, with the American Academy of Religion (AAR) is one of the most respected academic bodies in the field today. The AAR/SBL annual conferences are attended by thousands, including in the book vendor area a large contingent from Harper-Collins publishing. Wayne Meeks, a noted and respected scholar (primarily of New Testament and early Christian era studies) was the senior editor for this edition. Generously annotated throughout, practically every other verse has a footnote.

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