Dictionary of BIBLICAL IMAGERY

An encyclopedic exploration of the images, symbols, motifs, metaphors, figures of speech and literary patterns of the Bible

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Preface

This *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* was conceived as a reference book that would assist readers, students and communicators of the Bible in exploring the fascinating and varied world of the imagery, metaphors and archetypes of the Bible. It appeared that conventional Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias provided little help in this area. For those whose Bible's were pencilmarked with crossreferences to images, motifs and other literary features, the lack of such a reference work seemed like a crime—or a publisher's opportunity!

From there the vision of the *Dictionary* grew to include articles on character types, plot motifs, type scenes, rhetorical devices, literary genres and the individual books of the Bible. In the end, some articles have sprawled across broad subject areas (such as "Animals" or "Legal Images") and others are tightly focused (such as "Harp" or "Mustard Seed"). Many articles are innovative and clearly distinguish this work from other Bible dictionaries (such as "Well, Meeting at the" or "Cheat the Oracle"). And even where articles entitled "Wall" or "Tower" arouse a rightbrained reader's distaste for archaeological description and detail, the emphasis is decidedly on the evocative dimensions of these subjects.

Despite approximately 850 articles, this *Dictionary* is not comprehensive. This acknowledgment is a testimony to the vast and varied sea of biblical imagery, and to the limited time and energy of both editors and publisher. It is always a challenge to create a reference work in a field where no

predecessor has established a "canon" of entries. It can also be a delightful adventure as the editors repeatedly encounter new vistas and angles of vision along the way—and try to help others see them too. But after seven years of planning and labor—and a work much longer than originally projected—the time has come to cease and desist and publish. We console ourselves in the generous thought that future revisers can learn from our efforts and build on this foundation. We also believe that our readers, as they work with this *Dictionary*, will see that they can launch out on their own and explore other facets of biblical imagery.

From the first, the editors sought to bring together the talents and perspectives of both literary and biblical scholars in a complementary marriage of expertise. But it quickly became apparent that in order to produce a satisfying volume, the claims of individual authorship would need to be subsumed under the editorial vision. So the decision was made in favor of a policy that would allow a free editorial hand in shaping, rewriting and augmenting the articles. Experience in creating reference works of this type has shown that as the work progresses, the editors themselves gain an ever deeper and broader view of the subject. Lateral connections and new insights flourish as articles and pages compound. A policy was created to allow this editorial vision to be fed back into the work. Thus the articles are unsigned (a list of contributors may be found at the beginning of the book). Although some articles appear much as they were originally authored, the vast majority of them have been worked over by several editorial hands, and they are frequently lengthier than the originals. As a result, this *Dictionary* has become a highly collaborative effort in which individual claims to authorship (not least those of the individual editors) have been set aside in the interest of what we trust will be a valuable contribution to understanding and enjoying the Bible. We offer our sincere thanks and

appreciation to the approximately 150 contributors who have labored to make this work a reality. But we also accept full responsibility for any deficiencies in the final product.

The primary audience for this *Dictionary* is not scholars but laypeople. We have tried to create a readable and interesting work, one that will not only serve as an indispensable reference tool that augments conventional Bible dictionaries but will also open up new avenues of reading and appreciating the Bible. This book, we hope, will unfold new perspectives for all students of the Bible, new approaches for communicators of the Bible—including those in the fine arts—and heartwarming insights for devotional readers of the Bible. If readers capture some measure of the joy we have experienced even in the midst of our reading the proofs of this emerging book, we will have achieved our goal.

The Editors

How to Use this Dictionary

Abbreviations

Comprehensive tables of abbreviations for general matters as well as for scholarly and biblical literature may found on pages ixx.

Authorship of Articles

The articles are unsigned (see preface), but a full list of contributors may be found on pages xixii, in alphabetical order of their last name.

Bibliographies

A bibliography has been appended to some articles. The bibliographies include works cited in the articles and other significant related works. Bibliographical entries are listed in alphabetical order by the author's last name, and where an author has more than one work cited, they are listed alphabetically by title. Abbreviations used in the bibliographies appear in the tables of abbreviations.

Cross-references

The *Dictionary* has been extensively crossreferenced in order to aid readers in making the most of material appearing throughout the volume. Five types of crossreferencing will be found:

1. Oneline entries appearing in alphabetical order throughout the *Dictionary* direct readers to articles where a topic is discussed:

Enameled Imagery. See Hard, Harden, Hardness; Jewels and Precious Stones; Permanence.

2. In the printed version of this dictionary, an asterisk adjacent to a single word in the body of an article indicates that an article by that title appears in the *dictionary*. However, in this electronic version the asterisk has been replaced by a hypertext link (i.e., the word is underlined and highlighted in red)

3. A crossreference appearing within parentheses in the body of an article also directs the reader to an article by that title. For example, (*see* Lightning) directs the reader to an article entitled Lightning. Such crossreferences are most frequently used either to direct the readers attention to an article of related interest.

4. Crossreferences have been appended to the end of articles, immediately preceding the bibliography, to direct readers to articles significantly related to the subject:

***See also* Banquet; Blessing, Blessedness; Fill, Fullness; Harvest; Land Flowing with Milk and Honey; Paradise; Storehouse.**

Indexes

A *Scripture Index* is provided to assist readers in gaining access to information related to various biblical texts.

The *Subject Index* is intended to assist readers in finding relevant information on topics that have not been assigned a separate article or are taken up in more than one place.

Transliteration

Hebrew and Greek words have been transliterated according to a system set out in the front matter. Greek verbs appear in their lexical form (rather than infinitive) in order to assist those with little or no knowledge of the language in using other reference works.

Abbreviations

General Abbreviations

cf.

compare

v. or vv.

verse or verses

chap(s).

chapter(s)

vol.

volume

DSS

Dead Sea Scrolls

e.g.

for example

Translations of the Bible

ed.

edition; editor(s); edited by

JB

Jerusalem Bible

esp.

especially

KJV

King James Version (Authorized Version)

Gk

Greek

Heb

Hebrew

NASB

New American Standard Bible

i.e.

that is

NEB

New English Bible

LXX

Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament)

NIV

New International Version

NLB

New Living Bible

mg.

margin

NRSV

New Revised Standard Version

n.d.

no date

RSV

Revised Standard Version

n.s.

new series

NT

New Testament

Apocrypha and Septuagint

OT

Old Testament

4 Ezra

4 Ezra

par.

parallel passage in another/other

1—4 Macc

1—4 Maccabees

Gospel(s)

Sir

Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus)

repr.

reprint

Wis

Wisdom of Solomon

rev.

revis

Books of the Bible

Old Testament

Ezra

Dan

Mal

Phil

Gen

Neh

Hos

Col

Ex

Esther

Joel

New Testament

1—2 Thess

Lev

Job

Amos

Mt

1—2 Tim

Num