

the old scofield study bible

The Old Scofield Study Bible has played a significant role in the history of biblical scholarship and evangelical Christianity since its first publication in the early 20th century. Known for its unique features and doctrinal stance, this Bible has been a favorite among many Christians for decades. In this article, we will explore the history, features, and impact of the Old Scofield Study Bible, examining why it continues to be relevant to believers today.

History of the Old Scofield Study Bible

Origins and Early Publication

The Old Scofield Study Bible was first published in 1909 by Oxford University Press, with Dr. Cyrus Ingerson Scofield as the key figure behind its creation. Scofield was a prominent theologian and preacher who sought to provide a comprehensive study tool for Christians, particularly those from a dispensationalist perspective. Dispensationalism is a theological framework that divides history into distinct periods or "dispensations," each with its own way of God interacting with humanity.

Key milestones in its early history include:

1. First Edition (1909): The original publication featured the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible, along with Scofield's extensive notes that provided explanations, interpretations, and theological insights.
2. Revisions and Updates: The Old Scofield Study Bible saw several revisions, with significant updates in 1917 and 1967. These revisions aimed to clarify certain notes, adapt to modern scholarship, and address the evolving needs of readers.
3. Popularity Surge: The Bible gained immense popularity among evangelical Christians in the early to mid-20th century, becoming a staple in many churches, seminaries, and personal study.

Key Features

The Old Scofield Study Bible is notable for its extensive features, which include:

- Study Notes: Scofield's notes are interspersed throughout the text, providing readers with insights into doctrinal matters, historical context, and practical applications. These notes are known for their clarity and accessibility.
- Cross-References: The Bible includes a comprehensive system of cross-references that allows readers to easily find related verses and themes throughout Scripture.
- Maps and Charts: The Old Scofield Study Bible is equipped with maps and charts that help visualize biblical events, geographical locations, and timelines, enhancing the reader's understanding of the

narrative.

- Topical Index: A topical index allows readers to find specific subjects or themes quickly, making it a useful tool for study and sermon preparation.

- Translation: The inclusion of the KJV has attracted a following that appreciates its poetic language and historical significance, while also appealing to those who prefer a more traditional biblical text.

Theological Perspectives

Dispensationalism

One of the defining characteristics of the Old Scofield Study Bible is its strong dispensationalist theology. Scofield believed that understanding God's plan for humanity required recognizing the different dispensations, such as:

1. The Age of Innocence: From creation to the Fall.
2. The Age of Conscience: From the Fall to the Flood.
3. The Age of Human Government: From the Flood to the Tower of Babel.
4. The Age of Promise: From Abraham to Moses.
5. The Age of Law: From Moses to Christ.
6. The Age of Grace: The current church age.
7. The Age of the Kingdom: The future millennial reign of Christ.

This framework influenced many believers' understanding of biblical prophecy and eschatology, particularly regarding the Second Coming of Christ.

Pre-Tribulation Rapture

Scofield was also a proponent of the pre-tribulation rapture, which is the belief that Christians will be taken up to heaven before a period of great tribulation on earth. This doctrine has shaped the eschatological views of many evangelical Christians and has been popularized through various books and films.

Impact on Evangelical Christianity

Influence on Pastors and Leaders

The Old Scofield Study Bible has significantly impacted pastors, theologians, and church leaders. Its notes and theological framework have been used for sermon preparation, teaching, and personal study. Many prominent evangelical leaders, including those in the fundamentalist and charismatic

movements, have endorsed its teachings.

- Seminary Curriculum: Many seminaries have incorporated the Old Scofield Study Bible into their curriculum, training future pastors and leaders in its theological perspectives.
- Preaching and Teaching: The Bible's notes have served as a valuable resource for countless sermons and Bible studies, providing a foundation for many evangelical teachings.

Controversy and Criticism

Despite its popularity, the Old Scofield Study Bible has faced criticism from various quarters, including:

1. Theological Disputes: Some theologians argue that dispensationalism oversimplifies biblical theology and neglects the unity of Scripture. Critics contend that Scofield's interpretation of certain passages can lead to misunderstandings of God's overall plan.
2. KJV Preference: Critics have also pointed out that the KJV may not always be the most accurate translation, leading some to prefer more modern translations that reflect current scholarship.
3. Cultural Relevance: As society evolves, some argue that the Old Scofield Study Bible may not fully address contemporary issues faced by today's believers, leading to calls for updated study resources that reflect modern sensibilities.

The Old Scofield Study Bible Today

Current Editions and Popularity

Today, the Old Scofield Study Bible remains in print and continues to be popular among evangelical Christians. Various editions are available, including hardcover, leather-bound, and electronic formats. The ongoing interest in this Bible can be attributed to several factors:

- Legacy: The Old Scofield Study Bible has a rich legacy that many believers appreciate, connecting them to the historical roots of evangelicalism.
- Study Resources: Its extensive study resources continue to be valuable for individuals and groups seeking a deeper understanding of Scripture.
- Community: Many churches still promote the Old Scofield Study Bible as a trusted resource for study and teaching.

Modern Alternatives

While the Old Scofield Study Bible remains a classic, there are numerous modern alternatives that also cater to the needs of contemporary Christians. Many of these Bibles offer similar study features but with updated translations, notes from various theological perspectives, and contemporary language. Some examples include:

- The ESV Study Bible: Known for its thorough scholarship and modern translation.
- The NIV Study Bible: Offers accessible language and extensive notes for a wide audience.
- The NLT Study Bible: Focuses on readability while maintaining fidelity to the original texts.

Conclusion

In summary, the Old Scofield Study Bible has left an indelible mark on evangelical Christianity through its unique blend of theological insights, study features, and historical significance. While it has faced criticism, its enduring popularity speaks to its importance as a resource for many believers. For those seeking to understand the Scriptures within a dispensational framework, the Old Scofield Study Bible remains a trusted companion in their spiritual journey, bridging the gap between historical theology and contemporary faith practices. As the landscape of biblical scholarship continues to evolve, the Old Scofield Study Bible retains its place as a significant resource in the hearts and minds of many Christians around the world.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Old Scofield Study Bible?

The Old Scofield Study Bible is a widely used study Bible that features the King James Version (KJV) text along with commentary and notes by Dr. C.I. Scofield, first published in 1909. It is known for its dispensationalist theology.

Why is the Old Scofield Study Bible considered important in evangelical circles?

It is considered important because it helped popularize dispensationalism and the pre-tribulation rapture doctrine among evangelicals, influencing countless pastors and laypeople in their theological understanding.

How does the Old Scofield Study Bible differ from modern study Bibles?

The Old Scofield Study Bible typically emphasizes a dispensational framework and KJV text, while modern study Bibles may include various translations, updated scholarship, and diverse theological perspectives.

What are some of the key features of the Old Scofield Study Bible?

Key features include extensive footnotes, cross-references, a systematic outline of the Bible, and charts that explain biblical doctrines and timelines.

Is the Old Scofield Study Bible still relevant today?

Yes, many believers and scholars still find it relevant, particularly those who adhere to dispensational theology, though some may prefer more contemporary translations and interpretations.

What criticisms have been made of the Old Scofield Study Bible?

Critics argue that its dispensationalist views can lead to a misunderstanding of biblical texts and that its KJV-only stance may ignore advancements in biblical scholarship and translation.

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