

Review of BibleWorks 8: an introduction for SATS students

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BibleWorks 8: Software for Biblical Exegesis and Research. 2008. Norfolk, VA: BibleWorks. US\$349.00 (DVD version) and US\$354.00 (CD version).

1. Introduction

The South African Theological Seminary (SATS) has students who come from a variety of backgrounds. They are studying for different purposes and ministries. Some students study for personal enrichment, others to become pastors. Some are already pastors, who want to equip themselves to be more effective in the ministry. Several of our students have recently completed training to serve as Bible translators, while others are experienced translators who need a postgraduate degree with a focus on Bible translation or biblical languages. With these students in mind, I will introduce BibleWorks 8 (BW8). I have been using BibleWorks (BW) since its infancy. I have used it for Bible study and sermon preparation, for exegesis leading to Bible translation, and for research culminating in both popular and academic publications.

I taught biblical languages for more than nine years at several theological institutions in the Caribbean before I relocated to South Africa in 2007. When I studied the languages in college and seminary, the emphasis was on memorizing paradigms and other forms. When I started to teach, I followed the same model that I learned in seminary—until I bought BW. Using the programme, I analyzed the entire Hebrew Bible to see how frequently particular verbal patterns appear in the Old Testament. It discovered that two patterns, the Qal and the Hifil, account for more than 80 percent of all the Old Testament verbs. Some patterns, such as the Hophal and Pual, account for less than one percent. Yet when I studied the languages in seminary, my teachers placed equal emphasis on all the verb forms. I did a similar research for New Testament Greek. The research with BW changed my way of teaching the languages completely. I started to focus on the most important forms and

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spend more time translating them in class. That was my introduction to BW. BW has undergone many improvements since then.

In this review, I will first introduce some of the contents of BW8. I will give a brief overview of the various resources that are available in BW8. In the next section, I will give a brief overview of some of the ways in which students can use BW8. I will focus first on students who work only from the English language, and then turn my attention to those who work with the biblical languages.

2. What is BibleWorks?

2.1. Bible translations

According to its makers, 'BibleWorks is one of the most powerful and easiest-to-use Bible concordance and morphological analysis programs available.' The programme is a computer-based exegetical tool that focuses on the biblical text. BW8 comes with more than 190 Bibles in nearly 40 languages. Besides major modern translations in English, the programme has modern Bibles in others languages that are spoken by SATS students, such as Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Dutch, French, Afrikaans, and many more. Most of the translations are the latest in these languages.

2.2. Original language texts

The most important texts however are those in the original languages of Scripture. The standard package of BW8 comes with original language texts such as the fourth edition of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, Rahlfs's *Septuagint*, the twenty-seventh edition of the Nestle-Aland, fourth edition of the UBS *Greek New Testament*. Other Greek texts include *Robinson and Pierpont*, *Scrivener*, *Stephanus*, *Westcott and Hort*, *Tischendorf*, and *Von Soden*.

Students doing advanced studies in the languages or in textual criticism will also be able to work with the original texts of the *Peshitta*, *Vulgata*, *Targumim*, *Josephus*, *Philo*, *Apostolic Fathers*, and *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha in Greek*. Most of the original language texts come with morphologically analyzed versions, with makes it possible to conduct advanced searches on lemmas and/or specific forms.

2.3. Original language resources

The programme comes with resources for beginning and advance students of the scriptures in their original languages. It has beginner's grammars and paradigm charts with audio files in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. There are flash cards that can be imported, exported, or printed. Users can record their own pronunciations or import pronunciations to be associated with each card. Beginner's lexicons include Holladay's *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* and Friberg's *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*.

Advanced students are well served with major old and recent grammars such as Joüon-Muraoka's *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, Gesenius's *Hebrew Grammar*, Waltke and O'Connor's *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Robertson's *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Burton's *Moods and Tenses of New Testament Greek*, and Conybeare and Stock's *Grammar of the Septuagint*.

Additional resources that are standard in BW8 include, among others, *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon* (abridged and unabridged), *Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek lexicon*, Gingrich and Danker's *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Louw and Nida's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, and Moulton and Milligan's *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*.

Besides these resources that are available in the standard package, there are a few modules that can be unlocked, such as *Beginning Biblical Hebrew* (Futato), *Dead Sea Scrolls English Translation Bundle: Biblical and Sectarian Texts*, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Balz and Schneider), *Grammar of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic* (Stevenson), *Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Blass, Debrunner, and Funk), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, third edition (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, volumes 1 and 2 (Lust, Eynikel, Hauspie, and Chamberlain), *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm), *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, second edition (Metzger), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abridged edition (Kittel, Friedrich, and Bromiley). Students should decide on whether to unlock these modules based on their needs.

2.4. Reference works in English

There are a few reference works available in English in the standard package, such as *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, *Early Church Fathers*, *the Babylonian Talmud*, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, *Fausset Bible Dictionary*, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (1915) and *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament*.

3. How to use BibleWorks?

After the installation, students should familiarize themselves with the *study guides* under the Help section of BW8. These guides are both a help and an introductory training tool, with training videos. I will refer to them for further study as I introduce the programme.² I will discuss the use of BW8 at two levels. The first will be a basic level for students without the Biblical languages, and the second an advance level for students with the languages, focusing only on Hebrew and Greek.

3.1. Basic level

Students who are using BW8 without the knowledge of the biblical languages should start with the study guide *Using BibleWorks and Only English Bibles*. Students working with languages other than English should be able to use most of these tools as well. In this section, I will recommend a few things that can be done with BW8.

3.1.1. Choose and compare translations

If you want to study a passage from Scripture, it is recommended that you use several translations. BW8 comes with a collection of old and new English translations. It might be helpful to choose three translations. Since SATS uses the NIV in its courses, it will be a good point of departure. For study purposes, students might select the ESV, NASB, and my personal favourite NET, besides the NIV. A good help in reading the passage for comprehension will be the NLT.

² See the study guide *Getting Started*, which will help you to prepare BW8 for use. The rest of the introduction assumes that you've worked through this study guide.

BW8 has a few tools to help you *Viewing the Text*. You can automatically compare different translations, using the *Text Comparison Settings*.³ This tool allows you to see where the translations differ from each other.

I compared John 1:18 in ESV, KJV, NASB, NET, and NIV. BW8 highlights differences in these translations, which is helpful in identifying issues that need further study. I will use one phrase to illustrate the differences in the translations: 'the only God' (ESV), 'the only begotten God' (NASB), 'the only one, himself God' (NET), and 'God the One and Only' (NIV). The KJV reads 'the only begotten Son'. The NLT reads 'the one and only Son is himself God'. The notes that the translators give to explain their translation choices are helpful. The NET provides a detailed explanation of the problems that translators face in this verse, and why they translated the verse as they did. These notes help one understand why the KJV has the word 'Son' where almost all modern translations prefer 'God'. I found similar differences in other language Bibles, such as Dutch, Afrikaans, German, and French.

3.1.2. Study parallel passages

BW8 allows the user to view, compare, and study parallel passages of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and places where the New Testament quotes from the Old Testament.⁴ It has a number of synopsis files that can be edited. Old Testament parallels include the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. The New Testament has a comparison of Jude and 2 Peter. Users can also create their own files, such as parallel passages in Ephesians and Colossians or the Lord's Supper in the Gospels and 1 Corinthians.

3.1.3. Topical and word studies

BW8 has various sources with pre-made topical studies, such as the *Treasure of Scripture Knowledge*, *Stephan's Biographical Bible*, *Nave's Topical Bible*, *Thompson New Chain-Reference Bible* and *New Topical Textbook*.⁵ These resources are a good starting point for a topical message. You can do your own topical study with the *Find Related Verses* and *Find Related Phrases* features. These features search related verses and phrases in random order. I took John 1:18 as a point of departure and selected a phrase of four words. I came across the following phrases: 'who is in the', 'no one has seen', 'God

³ See the study guide *Comparing Bible Versions*. This guide helps you to compare the original language texts, but also different English translations.

⁴ See the study guide *Displaying Multiple Passages for Comparison*.

⁵ See the study guide *Preparing a Topical Study*.

who is in'. Some of these phrases that I found were not related to the verse under study, such as Ezra 1:3, 'He is the *God who is in Jerusalem*'.

Word studies can take different forms. The *Word List Manager* can generate a list of all words that appear in, for example, Jonah. You can select a specific word that appears often in Jonah and conduct a simple search. One such word in Jonah is 'great'.⁶ The book speaks about the 'great city' (1:2; 3:2-3; 4:11), 'great wind' (1:4), 'great storm' (1:4, 12), 'great fish' (1:17), and 'great deep' (2:5). The Hebrew text has a few more references, which a student can pick up by doing a search based on Strong's numbers.⁷

Instead of doing a search using the *Word List Manager*, you can make use of the *Key Word in Context* (KWIC) function.⁸ If we type the word 'great' in the KWIC function, all the appearances of the word in Jonah will appear with the indicated number of words before and after each. For this search, I selected three words before and three words after 'great'.

| | |
|----------|---|
| Jon 1:2 | to Nineveh the great city and cry |
| Jon 1:4 | Lord hurled a great wind on the |
| Jon 1:4 | there was a great storm on the |
| Jon 1:12 | of me this great storm has come |
| Jon 1:17 | Lord appointed a great fish to swallow |
| Jon 2:5 | of death the great deep engulfed me |
| Jon 3:2 | to Nineveh the great city and proclaim |
| Jon 3:3 | was an exceedingly great city a three |
| Jon 4:11 | on Nineveh the great city in which |

KWIC presents the search results as they would normally appear in a printed concordance. BW8 has the ability to conduct searches on several texts simultaneously. When I selected the phrase 'God who is in' from John 1:18, I found references to that word in all English Bible translations and other resources such as the English translation of *Philo* and the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.⁹

⁶ See the section "Topical Studies in a Particular Book" in the study guide *Preparing a Topical Study*.

⁷ See the section "Searching Greek and Hebrew Words Using Strong's Numbers" in the study guides *Using BibleWorks and Only English Bibles* and *Using Strong's Numbers in BibleWorks*.

⁸ See the study guide *Using BibleWorks as a Concordance*.

⁹ See the study guide *Searching More than One Version at a Time*. This study guide also explains how to *Search Multiple Versions in Different Languages*.

When a word is selected for study, English only readers can make use of Strong's numbers to access Hebrew and Greek lexicons.¹⁰ The NASB and the KJV are coded to Strong's numbers and should be selected for word studies. Some translations in other languages also come with Strong's numbers, such as the French *Louis Segond*, the German *Lutherbibel*, and the Dutch *Statenvertaling*.

3.1.4. Maps and notes

When you come across a place name in your English Bible, you can easily locate that place on a map by right clicking and choosing *Lookup in BibleWorks Maps*.¹¹ The maps are pre-made and editable. You can also create notes as you study a text.¹² The notes can be insights that you have gathered by studying the various resources in BW, or they may come from other resources, using ERMIE.¹³

3.1.5. Studying biblical languages

You should consider studying the biblical languages (if you have not yet done so). SATS has courses in Hebrew and Greek based on interactive CDs. BW8 comes with basic grammars for Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, with audio for the verbal paradigms in all three languages.¹⁴ A tool like BW8 helps you to make progress as you study the languages. It has been my experience that many students do not use the languages after graduating from seminary. Very often, the primary reason is that they lack the resources they need to use the languages effectively. With BW8, you will not have that problem. It will be helpful to connect the learning of the languages to a tool like BW8, which the graduate can continue to use in ministry after graduation.

3.2 Advanced level

BW8 will be underutilized if it is not used for its original language tools. The strength of this programme lies in the things that can be done with Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, even with only basic knowledge of these languages. All

¹⁰ See the study guide *Using Strong's Numbers in BibleWorks*.

¹¹ See the study guide *Using the BibleWorks Map Module*.

¹² See the study guide *Creating Chapter and Verse Notes*.

¹³ See the study guide *Opening Your Own Files and Websites Using Ermie*. The preloaded link to Ermie resources requires a good internet connection.

¹⁴ Users have also created grammars for other languages including a *New Latin Grammar* by Charles E. Bennett and *An Introductory Coptic Grammar* (Sahidic Dialect) by J. Martin Plumley.

the things discussed in the previous sections can be done in the original languages, and much more. In John 1:18, NA27, which is the Greek text followed by most modern English translations, reads θεός, whereas the Byzantine text, which is followed by the KJV, reads ὁ ... υἱός. The *Text Comparison* tool allows you to see the differences immediately. You can do a text-critical study, with the help of Metzger's *Textual Commentary* (requires an unlock fee). Since John 1:18 is in the Gospels, Wieland Wilker's *Textual Commentary on the Gospels* should be consulted. This commentary is a user-created resource that is available as free download. It contains an excellent discussion of the textual problems in John 1:18.

The *Resource Summary* tab in the *Analysis Window* displays all lexicon, grammar, and other reference work entries relevant to the verse under investigation. Wallace, for example, discussed the inconsistency of the Jehovah's Witnesses' *New World Translation*. He argues:

It is interesting that the *New World Translation* renders θεός as 'a god' on the simplistic grounds that it lacks the article. This is surely an insufficient basis. Following the 'anarthrous = indefinite' principle would mean that ... θεόν should be 'a god' (1:18).

In other words, one cannot translate the first part of John 1:18 as, 'No one has ever seen a god'.¹⁵

The word μονογενής has traditionally been translated, based on the etymology of the word, as 'only begotten' (e.g. KJV). The Gingrich lexicon suggests 'only' and for John 1:18, and for other verses in John, 'only' or 'unique'. This use of the word is confirmed by Moulton and Milligan's *Vocabulary*.¹⁶ According to them, μονογενής

is literally 'one of a kind,' 'only,' 'unique' (*unicus*), not 'only-begotten.' ... It is similarly used in the NT of 'only' sons and daughters (Lk 7:12, 8:42, 9:38), and is so applied in a special sense to Christ in John 1:14, 18, 3:16, 18, 1 John 4:9, where the emphasis is on the thought that, as the 'only' Son of God, He has no equal and is able fully to reveal the Father.

¹⁵ The NWT argues that the indefinite word θεός in John 1:1c should be translated as "a god". Their translation reads "the Word was a god." Wallace argues convincingly against that translation on grammatical grounds.

¹⁶ See the study guides *Changing the Default Analysis Tab Lexicon* and *Finding a Definition for a Greek or Hebrew Word*.

BW8 also comes with Leedy's *New Testament Diagrams*, which explains the relationship between the words in the text. It is also possible for users to create your own diagrams. These resources allow for an in depth grammatical and lexical analysis of the text.¹⁷

There are numerous search options for the biblical languages. The *Cross Version Search* option allows for a search of a word in all the resources available. A search of *μονογενής* reveals not only seven appearances in the LXX and four in the NT, but one each in the Greek texts of *Josephus* and the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.¹⁸

The *Graphical Search Engine* can perform complex searches that cannot be done on the *Command Line*.¹⁹ BW8 users uploaded a few examples of work done with this 'workhorse' on the user-created modules site.²⁰ Some of these examples include 'Aorist tense finite verbs immediately preceded by a present tense participle with no intervening punctuation' and 'the present tense participle, not immediately preceded by an article of the same case, gender, person and number'.

4. Conclusion: to purchase or not to purchase?

My simple conclusion is that BW8 is a great tool for students of the Bible. What about other books? Theological students need other reference works. BW has no intention of adding theological books to its collection. There are some user-created modules, such as commentaries by Calvin or Keil and Delitsch. However, BW has no intention of adding other books to its programme. Other software programmes aim to provide a large library of books.

I have no intention of comparing BW8 with other theological software. It a good academic practice to judge a product based on its claims and the purpose for which it was produced. BW makes the following claim:

BibleWorks 8 is the premier original languages Bible software program for Biblical exegesis and research ... BibleWorks is a tightly integrated collection of Bible software tools designed specifically for scholarly analysis of the Bible text.

¹⁷ See the study guide *Finding the Mention of a Verse in a Reference Work*.

¹⁸ See the study guide *Searching More than One Version at a Time*. The study guide also explains how to *Search Multiple Versions in Different Languages*.

¹⁹ See chapter 31 under the *Help Files* for a detailed discussion of this feature.

²⁰ See the website http://bibleworks.oldinthenew.org/?page_id=214 (19 March 2010)

BW aims to be a programme that focuses on the biblical text, and especially the original languages. Those who are looking for such a tool will not be disappointed. BW8 comes with most of the best tools currently available for in-depth study of the original languages of the Bible. The base package comes with many of the best Hebrew and Greek grammars available. To purchase the hard copies of these resources would cost much more than the US\$350 price tag for BW8. Advanced users may want to consider purchasing two additional resources to add to the standard collection: HALOT and BDAG, at an additional cost of US\$212. My recommendation would be: ‘If you do not have BW8, sell all you have, and buy BW8—even if you have to skip a few meals!’ If your goal is to do in-depth study of the Word of God in its original languages, you will not be disappointed. As a Bible-based Seminary, we cannot emphasize the study of the Word of God enough. And with BW8 you are left at the mercy of the Word, alone with the text.