

## One of My Old Friends Is New Again



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QuickVerse recently released their 2009 version of their popular Bible Study software. I have a special place in my heart for QV since it was my first ever Bible Study program for the PC. This was back in the old days when it loaded on a number of 5.25 inch disks. If you did a search for “grace”, you had to swap them out in order to search the whole Bible. I upgraded

quickly with each new version until at about version 5 things started to go horribly wrong. I was so disappointed with that version that I gave up on QV. So, I

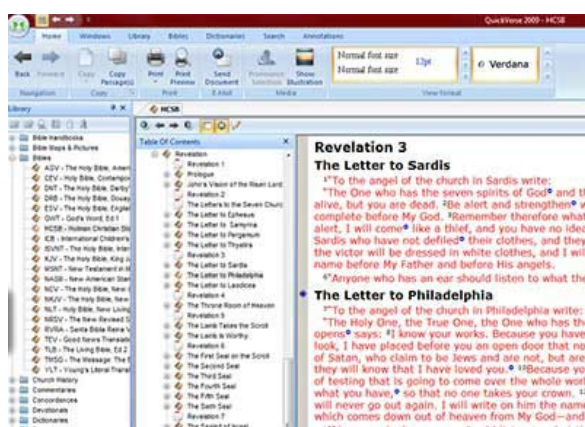
was really hoping that 2009 would be a great edition. There are things to like in the latest version, but not all is perfect.

### Installation

Installation is pretty simple. I had one window pop up in Vista that said something like this program didn't install properly. That is not necessarily the fault of QV as that happens with a number of programs on Vista. I just told Vista that everything seemed to go fine. I also installed it to my laptop so I could finish this article on the road. But it required me to go through registration again giving only two options – register now or later. Clicking later gets you through to the program, but the next time you open it you will have to click it again. I finally just registered again; that was the only way to get rid of this nag screen. There should be a button saying, “I've already registered.”

### First Run

Upon first run you will be asked to register and then choose your default books, like Bibles, Topical books, Dictionaries, etc. I picked mine. The biggest difference I noticed right away was the familiar tree view that you



had with most recent versions of QV. But the old toolbar and menus are replaced by an Office 2007 style ribbon bar. I really like the new Ribbon from Microsoft Office 2007 and was glad that QV decided to use it until I actually used the one in QV.

The first thing I did was click on all the different ribbon bar tabs across the top of the main window. The Home

tab has buttons for changing the font, moving back and forward in your stream of studied passages, copying and printing. I gave the copying features a try. Standard copy format worked fine. You can change the preferences for how the output looks in the Preferences dialogue which

you find by clicking the QV icon on the top left corner.

The enhanced copy by default gives you information about the work you are copying and then the passage. What you will discover is that QV is still using a version of the old STEP files. I was surprised by that. But here it is: "Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright © 2006, QV. All rights reserved." That came from the info on a passage from Luke in the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

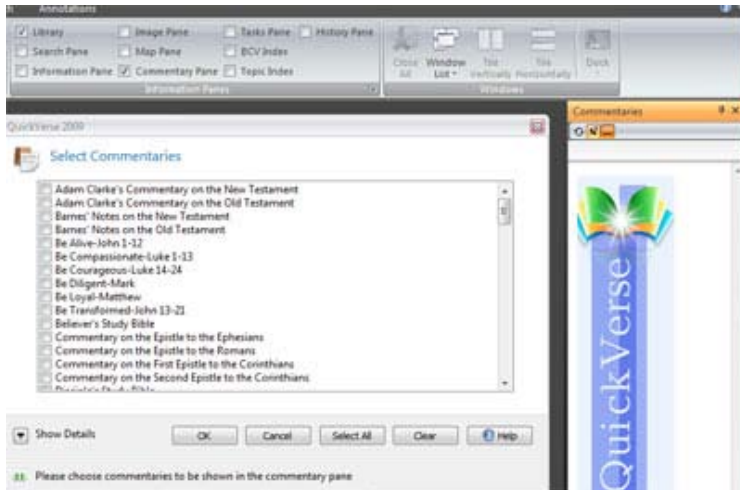


The Window tab gives you the option to change the layout of the program. It has many options and what they do is not obvious. But they are titled with things like "Bible Reading" and "Commentary Reading" so you can guess what they are for. Each helps you do the function they are titled to do. "Topic Reading" layout puts a topics pane on the right side above a tasks pane. "Bible Reading" puts a Bible navigation pane on the right but little else so you can focus on reading your Bible. It seems like overkill to have a whole tab with these huge buttons for this purpose. But I am one who does not set up complicated layouts when I use Bible Study software. If you use various study views for different tasks, you can organize things the way you want them, save them and quickly return to the various views.

There is also a list of windows you can have open in each view with check boxes for library, search pane, image pane, map pane, and commentary pane to name a few. There are buttons for various organizations of panes, like tiling, listing and closing. Finally the "Dock" button lets you dock and undock panes to make them click into place or float freely in the QV window.

## Using QuickVerse

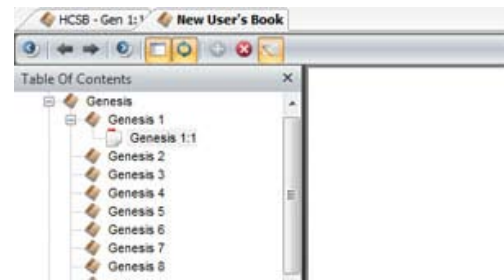
One of the main things I do with Bible software besides original language study is consult commentaries. QV has a "Commentary Pane" that you can open and list



all of your favorites. Click on the small button with the "..." on it and you are given a list of all your commentaries. Pick the ones you want available in this pane and hit okay. The commentaries you selected will be available as tabs in that window. The default size of this window is far too small to be of use, so you may want to resize it like I did. But once you do, open a Bible and it will synchronize verse by verse with your Bible. If you put a lot of commentaries in the list, you will have a so many tiny tabs that it could become difficult find your commentary of choice. This is where a study view might help. Save one with certain commentaries and another with others. I wish there was a drop down box as well as the tabs to simplify navigating all the available commentaries.

When you click the library tab you will see buttons for basic library management like displaying the explorer style list of books you have, searching the library, creating a new user book, unlocking books and downloading new books. Then you will also see the import section which allows you to import books and notes from previous versions of QV. QV also has many study workbooks which you can open from the Library Tab. Then finally there is a Global Sync Settings button for determining how you sync various books when they are open together.

One of the most interesting features in QV is something I have been critical of other publishers for not including – a method of creating your own books for free. Click on "New User Book" and a box opens giving you the option of creating one of three kinds of books. "Word Organization" creates a topical book, something like your own Nave's Topical Index.



You can create a sermon illustration database this way. Or you can choose "Verse Organization" if you want something like a verse by verse commentary or to add your sermons to QV based on the passages you have preached. Finally, there is a "Date Organized" book for things like a journal or maybe a daily devotional. Give your book a name and click create and you have your own book. Once you've created the book it will add it to the library under "User Books" and you can now add content by opening it, clicking on the plus button on the books toolbar and enter the verse or topic you want to add to. Then click on the edit button which is the button furthest to the right. Start typing or do a

full copy and paste if you are adding a sermon from a Word file or something else. When you type bible references they are automatically recognized and turned into a hyperlink. This is another thing that other software programs don't do. QV does this feature well. One improvement would be to make the original creation window a little more advanced. The fact that it is there at all is a big plus for QV.

The Library tab is also where you would download and install new books. Download them and then click the unlock button. You will have to call QV to get an unlock code to make them available in the library. I wish you could simply buy books via the program by entering a credit card number. This would not be that hard to do.

The Bibles tab is where you set up and access Daily Bible readings as well as change the look and feel of your Bibles. The Bible Reading configuration manager gives you a drop down box with pre-configured reading plans. Select from the dozens of options. Or you can create a new plan by clicking the New Plan button at the bottom. Give it a title and follow one of the original plans that come pre-installed. Then you can edit it to make changes to your liking.

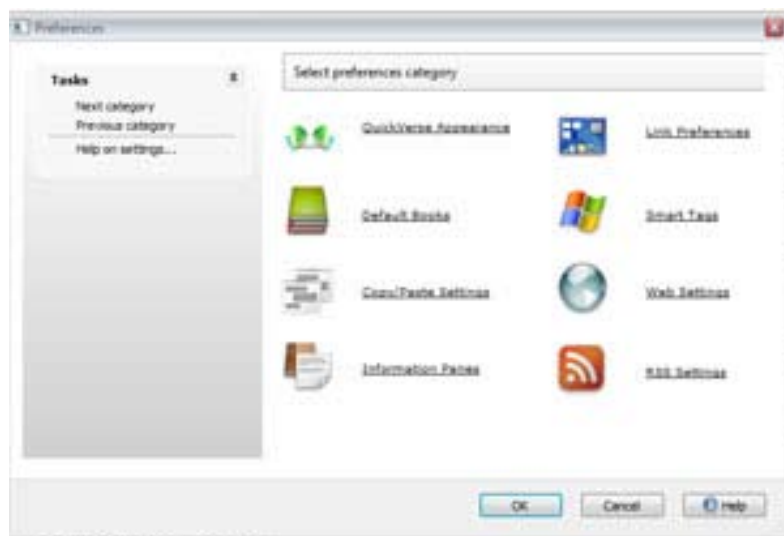
The other primary purpose of the Bibles tab is to change the way the Bibles are displayed. You can select paragraph, verse per line, or with dividers which puts a thin line between each verse. It seems like they could have put these functions on the Library

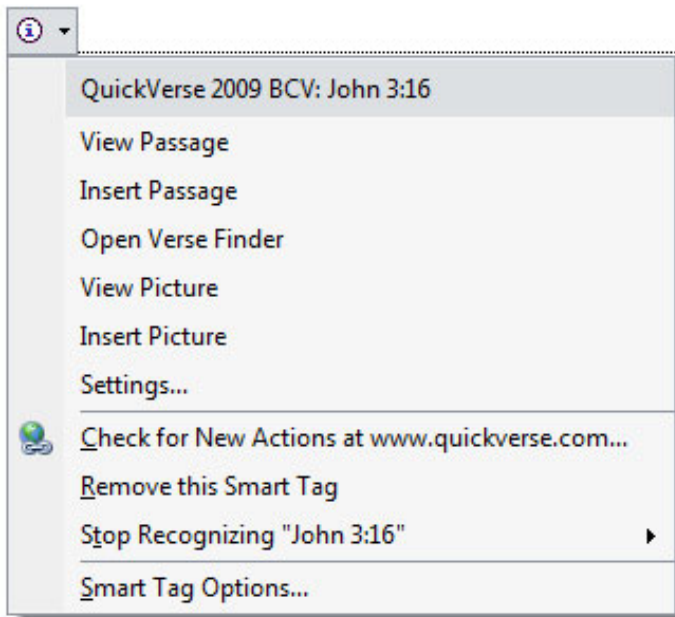


tab, saving a great deal of space.

On the Dictionaries tab there is a button for “quick define” with a drop down arrow on it. Clicking it opens the dictionary window, as long as you have a word highlighted. The drop down arrow opens a menu with the word “configure” on it. I assumed this would let me pick which dictionary would be my source for quick definitions or at least display the Default Books tab. Instead only the general preferences dialogue box was displayed. When you click the button and the highlighted word is not in the dictionary, QV tells you it is not available and gives instructions for how to change the default dictionary. I chose “heavens” from Genesis 1 and clicked the button. QV could not find a definition. The word “heavens” was not in my default dictionary, but a simpler form like “heaven” is. QV should not only search for the word but also common forms heaven, heavens, and heavenly. A button to open the default dictionary would also have been helpful. Other buttons on the Dictionary tab give links to online definition sources, like Wikipedia, Encyclopedia.com, etc. To customize what links are shown here, go to preferences and choose Web Settings. There you can add or remove links.

When you go into preferences you will see the ways to change how QV works. Here you can change the look of the program, the default books, and others including copy and paste options. The choices for enhanced copy are problematic. When I unchecked the option to “remove verse marks” the verse numbers and





all translation notes were added so that it looked something like this:

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning<sup>f</sup> God created the heavens and the earth<sup>f</sup>. <sup>2</sup>Now the earth was<sup>f</sup> formless and empty,<sup>f</sup> darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.<sup>f</sup> <sup>3</sup>Then God said, “Let there be light,”<sup>f</sup> and there was light. <sup>4</sup>God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light “day,” and He called the darkness “night.” Evening came, and then morning: the first day.

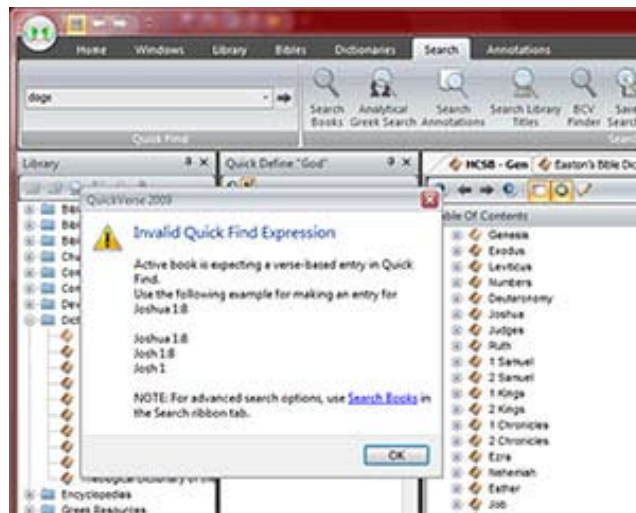
Notice the verse numbers and the hyperlinked notes after the words “beginning”, “earth”, etc. But when you recheck that item it removes not only the hyperlinked notes as I would expect, but also the verse numbers. I think they should be handled separately. What if I want to have the superscript numbers at the beginning of each verse, but I don’t want the translation notes?

Also you can include the verse reference, like Genesis 1:1-5, but only at the beginning of the verse. Why can’t I put it at the end as I normally do and as most people seem to do, at least in the reading I do? If you have “include citation” checked and “attribute above text” unchecked, then you will get no citation whatsoever when pasted into other programs. In

the enhanced book paste option you get a lot of options for ways to cite the book, but none of them are in scholarly formats like Turabian. That is a glaring omission if you plan to do scholarly work. Most people doing such work will likely want pick another program. QV is primarily for people who have simpler needs.

One of the preferences is “Smart Tags”. These are a handy feature in Microsoft Office programs that allow you to insert content into or change content of documents based on what you have typed. Other Bible Study programs add smart tags to Office and are useful. So if you type John 3:16, it will turn into a smart tag with a little drop down box at the beginning of the word John. And if you type “QV:” you can search a bible, dictionary or topical book. At first I could not get them to work. I went to <http://www.quickverse.com/shopfiles/Faq.asp?ID=41221&hdn=#1> and followed the directions in the QV FAQ about enabling the QV smart tags in Word and all worked. It does take a couple of seconds for the typed words to turn into a smart tag though.

Besides reading the Bible and doing research in commentaries and dictionaries, searching is probably the thing people do most in Bible Study software. And for some it is the most important thing they do. The QV Search tab on the ribbon buttons for many kinds of searches including books, doing Greek searches, and even on the Internet using Google, Yahoo or MS Live. The first part of the ribbon however has a “quick find” section with a place to enter text. Since it is on the Search tab I assumed I could enter words and search for them in the current book. Wrong! I typed “sanctify” and got this dialogue box error message. It says this box is only for entering verse refer-



ences. Why is it on the search tab? I don’t need to search when I know what reference I want to go to. This should be on the Home Tab or maybe the Library or Bibles tab, or better, every single tab. And why can’t I just quickly enter a search into it?

From the Search tab you can search books, Analytical Greek, Annotations, Book Titles, as well as accessing the BCV and saved searches. BCV stands for “book, chapter, verse” finder.

You can enter your references via the dialogue with buttons first for the book, then for the chapter, and finally the verse. It’s a handy way to enter references, especially if you use a tablet pc like I do. But why is it here and not on the other tabs like the quick find box? Neither of them have anything to do with searching.

And when I clicked the “analytical Greek search” button, it gave me an error saying I didn’t have the right book installed – a Greek language tools. Then why is the button even there? Shouldn’t the software be smart enough to at the least grey it out or better yet only show it if the right books are installed? It made me wonder what other functions did not work if you have a lesser package than the Deluxe version I was reviewing.

The last tab is the “annotations” tab. Here is where you can make notes and mark up books. When you click on the “show annotations” button, it opens up an editor below the book you have active. A new Edit table shows up on the ribbon. But when you close the notes window, instead of returning the Annotations tab, the program returns to the Home tab. I guess they are assuming you will only close it when you are finished adding notes.

I tried to add a quick note to a word, but unlike the older versions of QV, this is not supported. You have to add notes to books, chapters or verses in bibles. This is not obvious in the program. A user could highlight a word and add a long complicated note only later to realize it didn’t get attached the word, but whatever was highlighted in the Table of Context pane. I did this and closed the notes window. When I tried to find my note again, it seemed lost. I had to read the help system to find that my annotation would be listed in the “annotations library” which is a list of all the notes you’ve added. Such a list

is helpful, but having some visual clue in the verse as to where my note is would be nice too. Some programs add an icon on the verse, chapter or book.

In QV, whatever is highlighted in the Table of Contents window of your bible is where the note will go. When a book, chapter, or verse in the Bible has a note, there will be a red bookmark added to the icon of that book, chapter or verse in the Table of Context (TOC) window. When you move from verse to verse or chapter to chapter or book to book, the notes are automatically saved. That way you don’t lose anything. And if the notes window remains open, then when you highlight the location in the TOC your note appears. If you put a note on the book of Genesis, on chapter 1 and a third note on verse 4, then clicking on the book name in the TOC will show the book note. Clicking chapter 1 shows the chapter note and clicking on verse 4 shows the verse note. I could get used to this. And being able to list all my notes by clicking the annotations library is handy. It just takes some getting used to the interface and is maybe a little more complicated than I’d like. Why not add buttons to the editor window that let you navigate this way? And if you have the notes window and the table of contents closed, while reading your bible, you won’t know if there is a note. If notes are attached to verses in one translation, they don’t seem to be available in the other translations. So if you added note the KJV they won’t show up if you are reading the NIV.

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This is a terrible omission as I often switch between translations but my notes are seldom translation specific. When they are, I can label them as such in the note. This alone makes the notes feature unusable for me.

Like Microsoft Office 2007, the QV icon above the ribbon is like a “file” menu in traditional programs. There you can find various tools including the preferences box. Also help is in the same place as it is MS Office, the upper right hand corner. I recommend you spend a little time in the help file getting the details on the user interface. Also, make sure you spend some time at the QV learning center at:

<http://tinyurl.com/5sbqaf>.

Getting around in QV may feel or seem a little complicated with the new interface. A friend in this regard is the right click. You can do many of the things available on the ribbon from there, like adding notes, searching, highlighting or having words pronounced. If you can't say some words or names, then let QV do it for you. Unfortunately, I was going to give the example of Maher-shalal-hash-baz from Isaiah 8. But that word does not have a pronunciation. In fact it is quite limited as simple words aren't there. I am assuming that this will work with most original language works, but my review copy did not have any so I cannot confirm that it works with most Greek or Hebrew words. Many names and places are included.

Like Office 2007, QV allows you to right click on any button in the ribbon that you use regularly and “Add to Quick Access Toolbar.” That way you can have the Quick Finder box there on the toolbar above the ribbon any time you want. You can also place it below the ribbon if you prefer by right clicking it. A good way to get all your favorite features that are not on the Home ribbon tab accessible regardless of where they

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are in the ribbon is to put them on the toolbar. Find it in the tab and use the right click method above or simply right click the toolbar and choose “Customize Quick Access Toolbar.”

One unique feature is the ability to e-mail content from within QV. If you are reading a bible verse and you think it is meaningful to you and you'd like to suggest it to your preacher or a friend, then highlight it, right click it, and choose “send document.” It will open Microsoft Outlook and send it. What if you don't have Outlook?

I'm not sure as the videos on the QV web site specifically says, "The send feature works with Microsoft Outlook 2000 or later." But it doesn't say it "only" works with Outlook. I made another email program my default and it still opened Outlook to send the verse.

### Conclusions

QuickVerse 2009 is a mixed bag. If you are already a QuickVerse user and like the Microsoft Office 2007 ribbon interface, then I would say definitely upgrade. It will be worth it. If you have never purchased a Bible Study program and want some more advanced features that the free ones don't give you, you can get QV inexpensively. The available library is limited compared with other programs. But if you are using another program that satisfies your needs, there is nothing here that compels me to recommend that you switch. The book creation feature is very good, but not perfect. The ribbon is a great way to work in a program but takes some getting used to due to interesting decisions about where to put features. I wish that you could change the location of certain buttons; I'd move the quick find feature to the home or to every ribbon but the MS Office style ribbon does allow adding any button to the Quick Access bar. If you add too many, then you might as well just have a single toolbar as in previous versions. Not having a generic input box where I can type both verse references and search words and phrases is a huge oversight that must be fixed in a future upgrade. Other software vendors make this same mistake.

QuickVerse 2009 comes in packages ranging from the QuickVerse Essentials 2009 for \$29.99 up to the Platinum package that has most of what you might want that is available from the company. It costs \$799.99. I reviewed the Deluxe package which is \$99.99 and would be a good place to start. To see the difference in the packages go here: <http://tinyurl.com/qvcompare>.

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