

BibleWorks Version 8



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BibleWorks 8 is a powerful and complex piece of software. It is not a comprehensive Christian library like some other programs. But what it tries to do, it does very well. So what does it try to do? From their own web site <http://www.bibleworks.com>, BibleWorks (BW) is an “...original languages Bible software program for Biblical exegesis and research.” And like previous versions, the new Version 8 continues this powerful tradition.

I want to make it clear from the outset that I am a BW user and have been since my seminary days. The first time I saw a friend in Hebrew class “cheating” as the professor asked us questions about our vocabulary, I was hooked. Unfortunately this ruined me for being motivated to learn Hebrew as well as I should have. Fortunately BW can help people like me as it comes with a number of Hebrew and Greek grammar’s as part of the base package. More are available to add on. You might find your text book either in the included list or on the web site if you are taking a Hebrew or even Greek class. And if you were a great student, BW will help you use all that you learned. By the way, my friend wasn’t really cheating; I just accused him of it and the professor agreed he was smart to use it and even suggested we use similar tools.

When I first installed this new version of BW and fired it up I was a little disappointed that the program requires what they call “activation.” Due to software piracy many providers are going this way. What this does is the opposite of what it is intended to do. The pirates work to crack the programs while honest users suffer the consequences. Fortunately, BW activation is not that difficult to do and they do allow you to install it on multiple machines so long as you own them and



only one person will be using the program at a time. So no sharing with your friends, which probably shouldn’t need to be said, but it does.

After activating or choosing a trial period, you will be met with a registration screen and then a getting started screen. There are a few videos that help introduce you to the BW interface. In Version 8 things are not very different from Version 7. But if you have never used the program it is a good idea to watch all of them. BW can be complicated and intimidating to first time users. There are so many buttons and boxes. But like a 747 jumbo jet is more complicated than an old biplane,

“Getting Started” Videos

Click the links below:

[The Search Window](#)

Searching for words and displaying verses

[The Browse Window](#)

Reading the text and comparing Bible versions

[The Analysis Window](#)

Consulting lexicons and grammatical parsing

[The BibleWorks Editor](#)

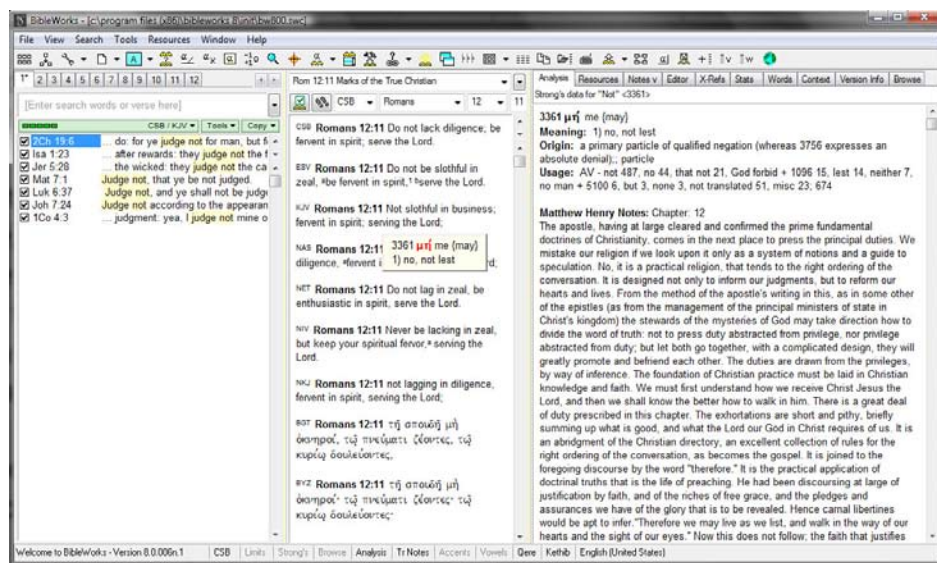
Creating user notes

► [BibleWorks Study Guides](#)

two-seater, it is also much more powerful. Similarly, BW does original language study and Bible text searching and research like a 747 flies passengers. Powerfully!

Another thing I like about BW is the more advanced help. I have mentioned this in a previous article with regards to Version 7. BW 8 continues this. From the Getting Started screen or from the Help Menu, click on BibleWorks Study Guides. There are too many links here to explain them all. If you buy the program, do yourself a favor and spend a good amount of time each day for the first few weeks and work through these helps. The BW Study Guides are like having a course in basic exegesis and Bible study. While teaching you to use BW, they will also teach you to conduct a good study of both English and original language resources.

After working through the helps in the getting started guide, you will see a devotional screen. My first thought was how simple it was. No, that is not a compliment. I wanted to say ugly, but looking at it again it is not so much ugly as it is plain. For some that will be good.



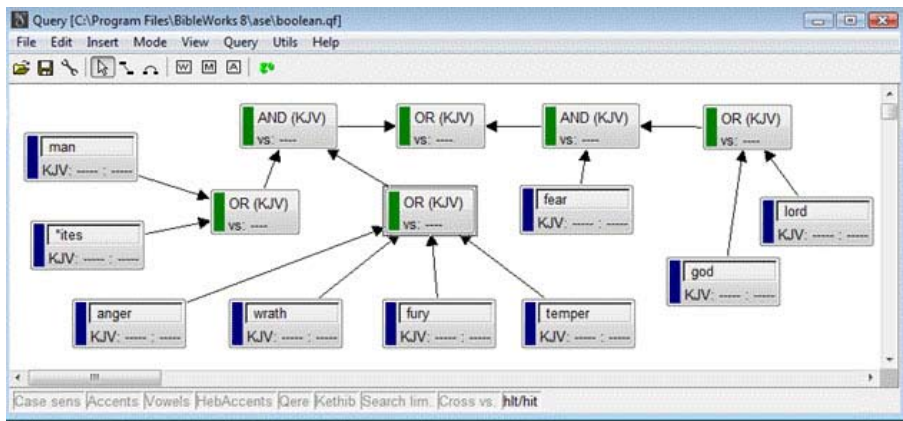
The devotions open to today's date. The content is "Bagster's Daily Light" which is two bible readings for each day; one is for morning and the other for evening. You have a calendar that takes you to the different dated entries. The version button selects which Bible version to use including Greek, Hebrew or Latin. As the Help system says, you can use it not only as a daily devotion but as a way to keep yourself sharp in your original language study which can be helpful to advanced Greek and Hebrew students.

After closing the Daily Light, you finally find yourself at the main window of BW 8. It is split into three basic parts including the Search Window on the left, the Browse Window in the middle, and the Analysis Window on the right. You can change this layout slightly by going to the View Menu and selecting Stack Analysis/Browse Window. A Button Bar and Menu Bar are located above the three windows. The Buttons are customizable; so after you have used BW for awhile you can make it look the way you want putting the most used functions right there. Like most software, hover over a button to learn its function.

In BW, you usually start by searching or entering text references. BW has a unique method of doing searches. Simple searches by entering text by itself will not work in BW. You have to enter extra characters to tell it what kind of search you are doing. For example a simple search for the word grace if entered by itself, will produce an error window telling you how to properly do the search. You have to enter a period before it telling BW you want to do an "and" search. Unfortunately, you are doing an AND each time you search for just a single word. If you want to search for Grace and Love, then you type ".grace love" without the quotes. This is a little hard to get used to at first. But you will get the

hang of it. Similarly, if you want to do a PHRASE search you use an apostrophe. You would type 'in the beginning' again without the quotes. And for an OR search you use the forward slash. Type "/grace love" without quotes.

I'm not sure why BW doesn't allow you to do a simple search without the period, apostrophe or forward slash. It would be easier if you could just enter the text or quotation marks around phrases like almost every other program and like the one done in Google. But while BW is complicated, it is also very



powerful. An example of this is the Graphical Search Engine. If you are a visual kind of person or want to do very complicated searches, then GSE is for you. I do not have the space to explain it here, but suffice it to say that it does some pretty interesting things using boxes and lines connecting search words and phrases. As you can see from the picture, this gets quite complicated. This example of a GSE is from the help files and is also included on installation. You can open this search. What it does is help you to find two different kinds of verses in one search. The first kind of verse will have the words “man” or “*ites”, and “anger”, “wrath”, “temper”, or “fury”. The asterisk next to “ites” means that any word that ends in “ites”, like Hittites or Amorites, will be found so long as it also has the other words. But thanks to the power of the GSE it will not only find those verses, but this search will also find verses that include the words “fear” and “Lord” or “God”. This is just one example; there are many more. The GSE will let you save searches and then later open them. BW has a number of these installed. Go to SEARCH and then click GRAPHICAL SEARCH ENGINE and then once in the GSE click FILE and then OPEN. So if you wanted to find the verses that had a certain Greek word, like “agape”, and then also had the word “love” in the

KJV, then the GSE will help you do this.

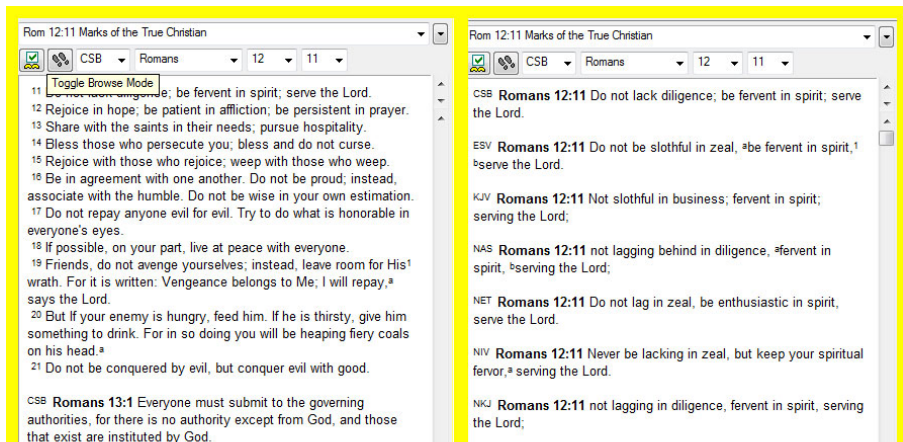
In middle of the BW window you find the Browse Window where you can read or browse the Bible. It has its own mini button bar that lets you select texts to study and how they are displayed. You can display verses in multiple versions or a single version showing the passage context. You choose between the two modes by clicking the Toggle Browse Mode Button,

which is the pair of feet on the mini button bar. If you are in the mode that displays multiple versions and want to add other versions, you can either type the three letter shortcut in the Search Window or go to the View Menu. Select Choose Display Version(s). In that menu you can also customize other aspects of the user interface.

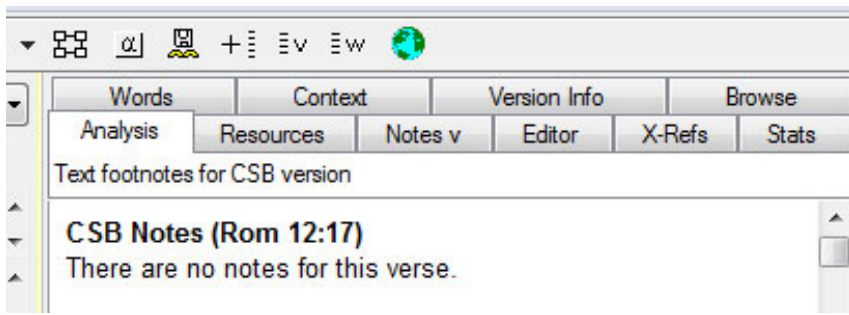
Like many programs, BW 8 uses the right click extensively. In the Browse Window, you can right click on the various parts of the displayed text to do things like search the Bible, look up words in lexicons and dictionaries, copy text, etc. There are a huge number of things you can do directly from the right click menu. Also, without even clicking anything a popup window will display information depending on what you are hovering over with the mouse. For example in the KJV and NASB (NASB’s three letter identifier is either NAS for the original or NAU for the updated 1995 version) you will see entries from corresponding Strong’s entries. If it is Hebrew or Greek, then you will get a simple morphology with the translation. A morphology is a comprehensive explanation of the Greek or Hebrew word’s definition and grammatical information like tense, etc.

As you move your mouse over the words in the Browse Window, you will also notice that the third window is changing. This is the Analysis Window and it changes based upon what your mouse cursor is hovering over. For example, if you have the cursor over any part of John 3:16 in the Holman Christian Standard Bible (CSB), then it will give you the translation notes for that verse. If you move down to the KJV then you get not only the Strong’s entry for that word, but also the Matthew Henry Commentary entry for that verse. Right click in the Analysis window and you can either customize the view or copy the contents among other things.

In the Analysis Window there are a number of tabs each with very



On the left is the multiple verse mode and the right is the single verse mode.



useful contents. The 2nd tab is a labeled Resources and is a summary of all the resources for the verse showing in the Browse Window. For example, with John 3:16 it lists all the words in all the Greek Lexicons that are included in BW. They are highlighted in blue. Below that, highlighted in pink, are the Grammars that have information about that verse. And below that are other references highlighted again in blue. You can view these in a single summary. Click on the entries and the Resources window opens showing that entry in the Lexicon or Dictionary.

You will notice more tabs labeled Summary, Lexicons, Grammars, References, and Options. Click the other tabs next to the summary tab and you get check boxes that let you change which resources are shown in the Summary tab.

If you have read my other reviews of Bible Study Software, you will know that I have been critical of Notes features. BW gets it right. A couple of other programs do it better, but none with the range or scope of features that BW offers. For that reason, of all the programs I have used and reviewed, I choose to keep my own study notes in BW. I use other programs in addition to BW to do digital Bible Study. I have many programs that let you keep notes, but I have found that BW Notes are simple and reliable.

They are also easy to backup and can be read in Microsoft Word or other word processors since they are basically just Rich Text Format files.

You will find the Notes feature in the Analysis Window next to the Resources tab. You can either keep chapter specific notes or verse specific notes. You can keep both, but that requires you to toggle the Chapter check box at the top of the Window or you can double click a portion of the status bar at the bottom.

The Notes window is a powerful word processor. It also lets you save notes that can later be displayed each time you open the verse or

chapter in the Browse Window and have the Notes tab displayed in the Analysis Window. There are a few features that I especially like. You can save your notes and they will be displayed regardless of which translation you are viewing. Some programs make your notes specific only to a certain translation. If you put a note on John 3:16 in the KJV it, in BW it will also

show up in the NIV. My notes are seldom translation specific. When they are, I just state it in the note itself.

BW8 lets you customize where the notes are kept. I change this so that they will show up in my Documents folder. I want to be able to quickly find them because they are stored in a directory structure that matches the books of the Bible. You will have a Gen folder for Genesis with one file for each note whether it is a chapter or a verse note.

Next to the Notes tab is the Editor tab where you can edit topical documents like sermons or devotions. They will be stored in the same place as your notes. If you want, you can also open these in a word processor. That way you can write your sermon in BW8 and then open it later in Word and format it so that it looks the way you want.

From the Notes or Editor tab, you can manipulate text and paragraphs just like a word processor. You can also insert verses with the click of a button. And you can add a hypertext link to a verse that will popup when your mouse cursor hovers of it. If you type John 3:16, then click on the Add/Modify Hyperlink Text button (a small chain link) and a dialogue box pops up to let you configure the selected text as a hyperlink to that verse. If I could improve the BW Notes and Editor features I

would make this hyperlink automatic. Other programs have the capability recognize that you are typing a verse reference and automatically turn it into a hyperlink.

Other tabs are for cross references, statistics, words lists, and context. These are useful new tools in Version 8 which help users find out information about the text or quickly looking up cross references for the given text. The second to last tab shows information about the currently selected translation.

A new feature in the Analysis Window is the last tab which gives you a second Browse Window. This way you can open two different texts in one program window. Before, you had to open a separate window via the menu. This is handy to have the main Browse Window in the Single Verse interlinear mode with this secondary Browse Window in the Multiple Verse mode showing the verse's context. And then open a "floating" notes window so you can have all three on screen at the same time. I will use this feature a lot.

Each time BibleWorks releases a new version they do something that not many other vendors do. They take many of the resources that were extra cost add-ons in the previous version and make them part of the base package in the new versions. Version 8 follows that with dozens of new resources. They also have many new optional modules that you can buy.

Unfortunately, the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. In Version 8 there are a few modules taken away, including one of my favorites, Robertson's Word Pictures. With ERMIE (see below for an explanation) I will have to link to it in another software program.

A few months ago I wrote an article wishing for a new STEP, which was a standard book format that vendors could use to distribute their books so that they could be used on other vendor's book readers. The very next month, Craig Rairdin of Laridian gave a thoughtful explanation of why this is not likely going to happen. But the next best thing is for one vendor to make their program play nice with others'. BW does that with the External Resources Manager (AKA ERMIE). ERMIE is a tool that lets you open other programs to find content related to the verse or word you have selected in BW. For example, if you own a great commentary in Logos, you could set up a link from within BW to open Logos to the verse you are studying. Other options are opening web sites or other software. This is a huge plus. I have just started learning to use this, but I plan to work with it as BW does not try to include a lot of extra commentaries.

Another new feature in Version 8 is the ability to read your text aloud if you have Vista. Choose Tools menu and then select Viewing the Text and then Read Text. A dialogue box opens. You can enter the verse or

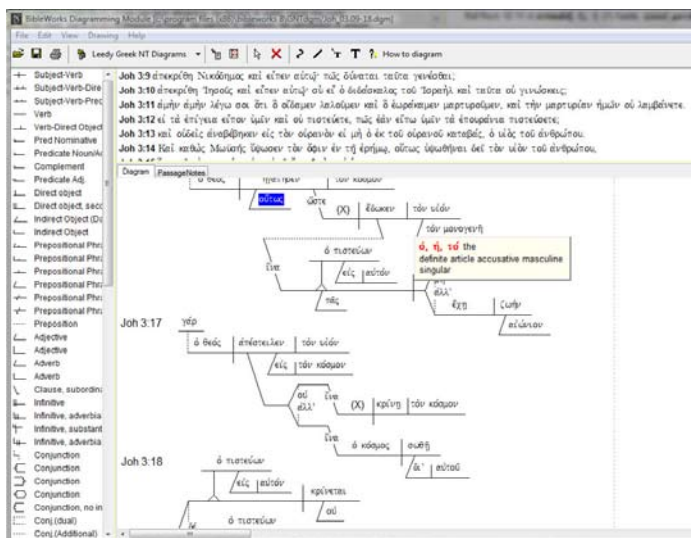
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range of verses you want read and in which translation. You can even have it read to .wav which is an audio file format that you can either burn to CD, listen to on your computer, or convert to MP3 for listening to on an MP3 player.

Two great tools to help study the text and original languages are the Vocabulary Flashcard Module and the Diagramming Tool. Diagramming is a great way to “see” the text. BW has a powerful diagramming tool. Along with it comes the Leedy Greek NT Diagrams. These are a set of diagrams of every Greek verse. You can use these as they are to study the relationships of words and phrases in a text. Sometimes this helps you find the outline of the text that you might not see when just reading in the Browse Window. But better than using the Leedy diagrams, do the work yourself. BW even teaches you how with a nice Tutorial Help file. I like to diagram my sermon text in English, but you can do it in Greek as well.

The Vocabulary Flashcard Module is what it sounds like – a digital flash card system for learning vocabulary in the original languages. It even comes with word lists from the included grammar books. If you are learning Greek or Hebrew, or just want to brush up, load it up from the Tools Menu. Go to the Language Tools menu under Tools and select it.

The module will show the word, pronounce it for you, and then show the meaning in English. To show the meaning you simply use your arrow keys or the arrow buttons on the toolbar. This module will also let you create your own verse list and record pronunciation files.

One feature I consider a must in bible study software is the ability to author your own works that will easily show up in the program when you are studying. I’ve already mentioned the notes and editor features. But BW also gives you the tools to create your own

translation or a commentary that can be displayed in the Browse Window. This is not simple but anyone can learn how using the comprehensive descriptions in the Help system.

BW maps are attractive and informative. There are plenty of other tools in BW 8 as well. If you want to see what is new, the check out the list at their home page at <http://www.bibleworks.com/content/new.html>.

The big question when discussing a Bible Software update like BW 8 is this: is it worth upgrading or not? I would say it definitely is. The new Analysis window alone makes it worthwhile. If you are trying to learn the languages then the new grammars and vocabulary module are useful as well. There are plenty of new features. Check out the link above to see if any of them would be of use to you. But the new modules listed at the above link alone will make it worth the cost. If you have version 7, it will only cost \$149 to upgrade. From version 6 the cost is \$175. If you have version 5 or earlier you will have to pay the full price of \$349. Students should look out as some campuses will have special deals available to students and faculty. That is how I got my first version. If you, like me, used the CD version, having the entire program on a single DVD is nice. You have that option with this upgrade.

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The other big question is should I pick BW over another program if I am in the market for my first professional quality Bible study program. That depends a lot on your needs. If you primarily want to read the Bible in English, have access to a lot of books like commentaries or other works unrelated to language study, then probably not. But if you are a serious student of the word and like to study the Bible in the original languages, then BW 8 is one of the best available. And with ERMIE it plays well with others. I use it along with a few other programs to do comprehensive study and writing.

My only real complaints are the requirement to activate the software, the inability of the Notes and Editor to automatically hyperlink Bible references, and the very plain looking Daily Light window. But I love the new Analysis Window and the powerful External Resources Manager or ERMIE. And one thing I have not mentioned is that BW is one of the fastest programs. It opens quickly making it great to quickly find a reference without having to have an extra system tray resource running all the time. Instead BW8 has the Popup Verse Copy window, a little window that you can use to copy text into a word processor. Find it under Tools, Importing/Exporting Information. That way you can be in your word processor and copy verses into a document without going back to BW and navigating to the reference, selecting it and then copying.

BW8 also does its searches extremely fast if they are simple. Even complex searches are pretty quick. And BibleWorks is great at searching in original languages as well as complicated or simple English language searches. I have not even mentioned all the things you can do in the Search Window. If it you get lost in the complexity of BibleWorks – and it is complex – just open the Help files or watch the Getting Started videos. BW8 has some of the best help features in the industry.

If you need further help with BibleWorks or want to discuss this review, come over to www.Christ-Tech.com, a great resource for Christian Technology on the web. We post a lot of useful information about new technology, give

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