

BibleWorks 7: Software for Biblical Exegesis and Research. Norfolk, VA: BibleWorks, 2006, \$349.00.

For many years, the Accordance software was the gold standard for scholars and pastors working with the primary texts of biblical studies. Its main drawback was that it only worked on Macs, thus relegating the myriads of PC users to one or more of the inferior programs that were available for the Windows operating system. The release of BibleWorks 5 and 6 began to close the gap between Mac users and PC users. With the release of BibleWorks 7, however, the gap is gone, and a new standard has been set for serious students of the Scripture who use Bible software.

BibleWorks 7 has all the same great features of BibleWorks 6 but with many added improvements. As in previous versions, there is a wide range of valuable databases in the base package of BibleWorks 7. Not only does it have the standard critical texts of the New and Old Testaments (Nestle-Aland 27th and *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, respectively), but it also has several other Greek editions of the NT (including Westcott-Hort and Tischendorf) and Rahlfs' text of the Septuagint. All of these texts are fully lemmatized and parsed. Nearly every English Bible version is included in the base package of BibleWorks 7, as are Bible versions for more than twenty-six modern languages. Other important primary texts in the base package include the works of Josephus and Philo, the Aramaic Targums on the OT, the Peshitta, the Vulgate, and the Apostolic Fathers.

I recommend buying three of the add-on modules that are available: BDAG, HALOT, and the Qumran Sectarian manuscripts. BDAG and HALOT may be purchased separately for \$125 and \$159 respectively, or bundled for \$197. One must not underestimate the value of these two lexicons and the time to be saved in looking up individual words in the Greek NT and the Hebrew OT. The Qumran Sectarian manuscripts cost \$80, and these also are a vital resource for biblical scholars.

The interface of BibleWorks 7 has been redesigned to be more user-friendly to the researcher. When researching a particular topic, one usually moves from searching, to browsing, to analysis of particular words or phrases. The new interface is laid out in this order (search-browse-analysis) so that reading and analyzing search results is more intuitive. Of course, this latest version retains the powerful search capacities of previous versions, including a graphic interface for morphologically and syntactically complex searches.

Some software programs require additional fees for adding on new Bible versions, but BibleWorks 7 includes everything one needs in its base package for a mere \$349. Even if one does not purchase the three add-ons (which I highly recommend), the base package has much to offer. The wide variety and quality of these resources make BibleWorks 7 a great value.

The breadth and focus of its databases, the new user interface, and the value of its base package make BibleWorks 7 the new gold standard of Bible software. Seminary and Bible college students, professors, and pastors would all benefit from this powerful tool.

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