

REVIEW OF BIBLEWORKS 9

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Why Review Bible Software?

Why should missionaries read a review of Bible software? Normally, mission journals review books but not software. The reason is simple. Missionaries need all the skills and tools pastors need *in addition to* many others that are necessary for engaging those in other cultures. They especially need a strong grasp of other languages, another culture, not to mention familiarity with various religions, historical events, and concepts like contextualization.

Unfortunately, many missionaries do not have a strong foundation in the biblical languages. Others however studied Greek and Hebrew but do not have good tools to utilize their knowledge for the sake of the people whom they serve. Accordingly, this review is especially tailored for missionaries, whether one has a strong foundation in the languages or only scant familiarity.

A Familiar Testimony

My story is similar to others who learned to use BibleWorks more than 10 years ago. I first learned about BibleWorks in seminary, where I discovered that it was the standard software used by my professors at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. It

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was an amazing friend to my friends and I for years. That is why I grieved when I had to give it up some time later when I started to use an Apple computer. At first, BibleWorks didn't work on the Mac OS. I tried using virtualization software to bridge the Mac with the PC-based *BibleWorks*. As many have learned, using programs made for PCs on a Mac is like parsing Greek verbs using Hebrew grammar rules—chaos ensues!

I was forced to use another well-known brand of Bible software. However, I was constantly disappointed with its inability to help me to carefully interact with the biblical languages. I could use it to read countless Christian books, but it was less helpful when it came to exegete the Bible itself. Everything changed with *BibleWorks 9*, when they released a fantastic Mac installer that allows the software to run seamlessly on an Apple computer. This review is a call to those who wandered away but have longed for BibleWorks' return.

How *BibleWorks 9* Helps Missionaries?

BibleWorks 9 is a powerful Bible software that provides an affordable and easy-to-understand tool for missionaries involved in diverse types of ministry. This is not a program merely for translators. It has application for anyone who teaches the Bible.

Not only will *BibleWorks* save people time, it is very user friendly. No one who interprets and teaches the Bible wants to waste time wrestling with complicated software. *BibleWorks* pays attention to the details, combining a host of small features together in way that prevents one from having to switch tabs and open new windows. I have found that because *BibleWorks* focuses on the biblical text and not a lot of other Christian books, the program runs much more efficiently than my other, more expensive software.

There are too many features to be listed in a single review. However, people can scroll their mouse directly over a word and get its morphological information. On the same screen, users can compare translations in nearly 40 different languages. I routinely use one of the multiple Chinese versions available. Missionaries regularly need to search for a word in their local language and compare a translation with the Hebrew or Greek

texts. *BibleWorks* builds in analysis windows that make it extremely efficient to study a passage opening and closing countless resource windows.

The search functionality of *BibleWorks* is superb. It does a better job than other programs in making it easy to search key grammatical constructions and various combinations of words in proximity. A graphical search engine enables the user to do detailed search across multiple languages. Users can take advantage of numerous built-in lexical and grammatical resources, including standard works like HALOT and BDAG. Need Bible dictionaries and maps? You got it. Users of course have the option to buy more advanced and specialized tools as needed.

Compared to similar Bible software, *BibleWorks* is a steal, seriously. Whereas another major program literally costs thousands of dollars, *BibleWorks* only costs a few hundred dollars. Just a few days prior to writing this review, *BibleWorks 10* was released. Brand new, it is \$389. An upgrade is merely \$189.

Why Should People Consider Using *BibleWorks*?

Many missionaries would like to more carefully study the Bible and so help local partners better understand God's Word. Often, local translations are not very good. People become confused about the meaning of the text. False teachings arise from that sort of setting. Missionaries play a key role in bringing people's attention back to the original languages, which God first used to reveal himself in Scripture.

Missionaries depend on electronic resources. In a day with Kindle, iBooks, etc., one does not need another program to store his or her Christian books. Instead, one needs a professional quality program like *BibleWorks* in order to do the rigorous study of God's word needed to glorify Him among all nations.