

***BibleWorks 8: Software for Biblical Exegesis and Research***

Norfolk, VA: BibleWorks LLC, © 1992-2008.  
\$349.00.

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**Introduction**

In this day of technology I'm woefully behind the times. I'm probably the only guy I know under the age of 35 who doesn't own an iPod and I'm one of the few who doesn't own a Blackberry or some kind of cell phone with a touch-screen. I suppose it can all be chalked up to my aversion to change. When I find something I like, I stick with it, that is, until I'm forced to change. I stuck with audio cassettes long after compact discs came out, VHS well into the DVD period and now DVDs when Blu-Rays are all the rage. My point is this: I'm not a technophile. I can type, Google stuff, and burn the occasional song to a CD but that's about it. So I've said all this to say that for as much as BibleWorks 8 (hereafter BW8) can do, I'll never know the half of it, but I'll certainly enjoy trying to figure it all out.

For years I used the free Bible software e-Sword and it suited my purposes just fine. It functioned as an exhaustive concordance that I could search quickly and cut and paste Bible verses from. All of the extras were nice, but ultimately wasted on me. So why upgrade to BW8 you ask? Well, for starters I heard from everyone with a PC that BW is simply unparalleled in terms of power, speed, and functionality. Having tried out a couple of other programs I can now confirm this.

**Installation**

I chose to do a custom install for BW8 and it was definitely the right move. The simple fact is that I have no use for most of the foreign language Bibles so I went with the basics: Hebrew, Greek, and English (of which there is over 30 translations), as well as Latin and Spanish. One thing I noticed after the initial install was that I had forgotten to install the Latin resources. I was worried I'd have to uninstall everything and start all over but then it hit me: just do another custom install! So I loaded disk 1 (of 5) and clicked the 'modify' option, added the Latin package

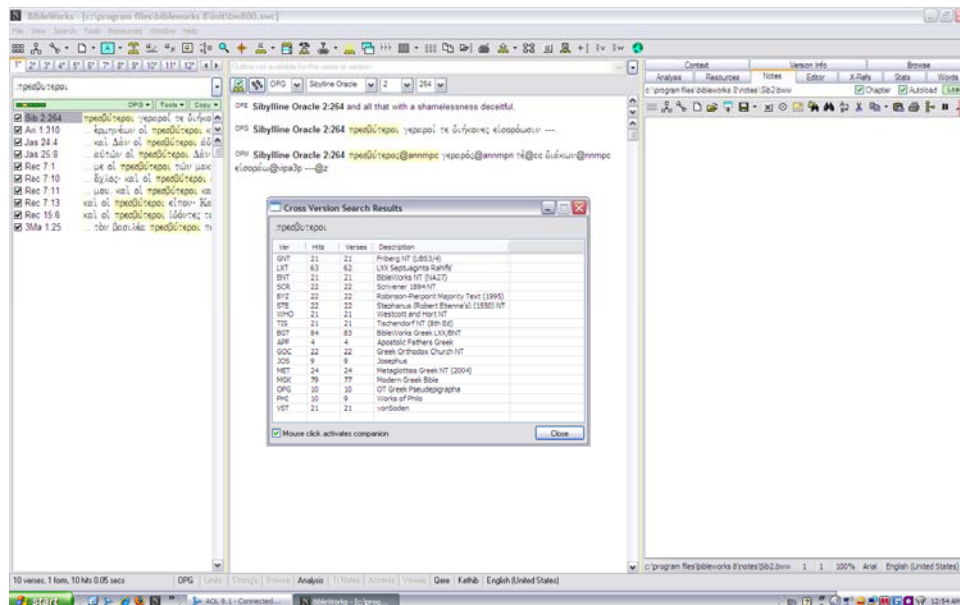
and it was all good. Now I have access to a variety of Vulgates and the Latin portions of the Apostolic Fathers. The process was easy and it assures me that should I ever want to add some of the foreign language Bibles which range from German to Italian to Korean and just about everything in between, it will be painless.

## Features

There are so many features in this program that I think it would be nearly impossible to make use of them all, especially for someone such as me (i.e., a technological nincompoop). There have been many that I've already discovered and a multitude that I've yet to come across or make use of. Here are some thoughts on a few of my favorites:

### Searches

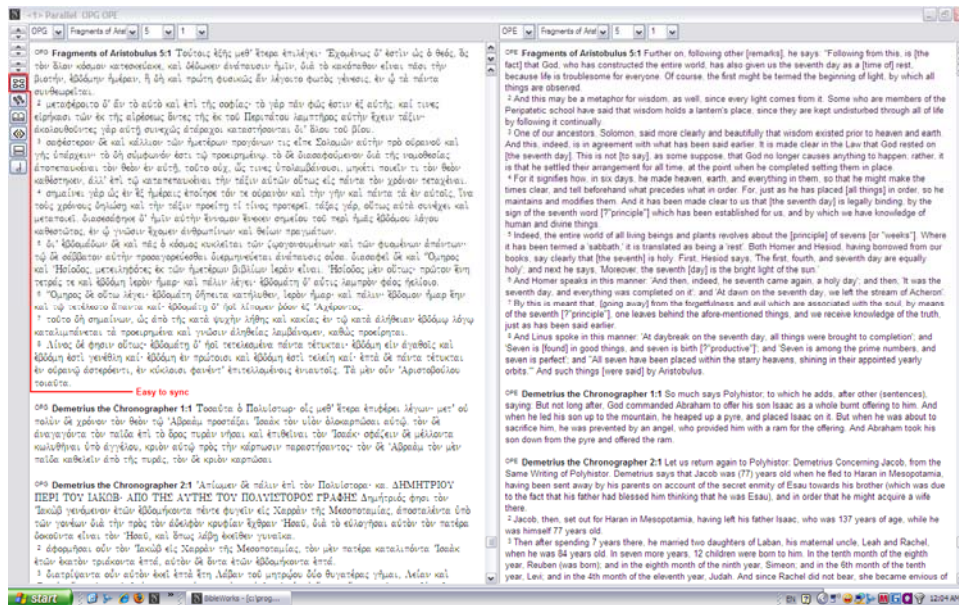
Without a doubt BW8 is the single best Bible software program for PC users in terms of performing searches. Searches are amazingly fast; it doesn't matter whether you're looking for a single word which can be found by simply double-clicking on the word in your displayed version, or you're looking for a complex phrase which you'll have to type into the command line of the first panel. Whether you're searching a single version or across multiple versions of any given resource you'll get your result in a fraction of a second. For example, when simply double-clicking the word *πρεσβύτεροι* in *Sib. Or. 2.264* (in toggle browse mode), in 0.05 seconds it returned 10 results in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha as well as hundreds of hits in the other Greek texts available on BW8. That's unbelievably quick!



You can also set the limits of your search to specific corpuses of Biblical literature, e.g., the Pauline epistles, or you can create your own unique search ranges. In addition to this you can perform graphical query searches, a function that I've yet to even begin to grasp the basics of. Nonetheless, I'm sure it's extremely helpful.

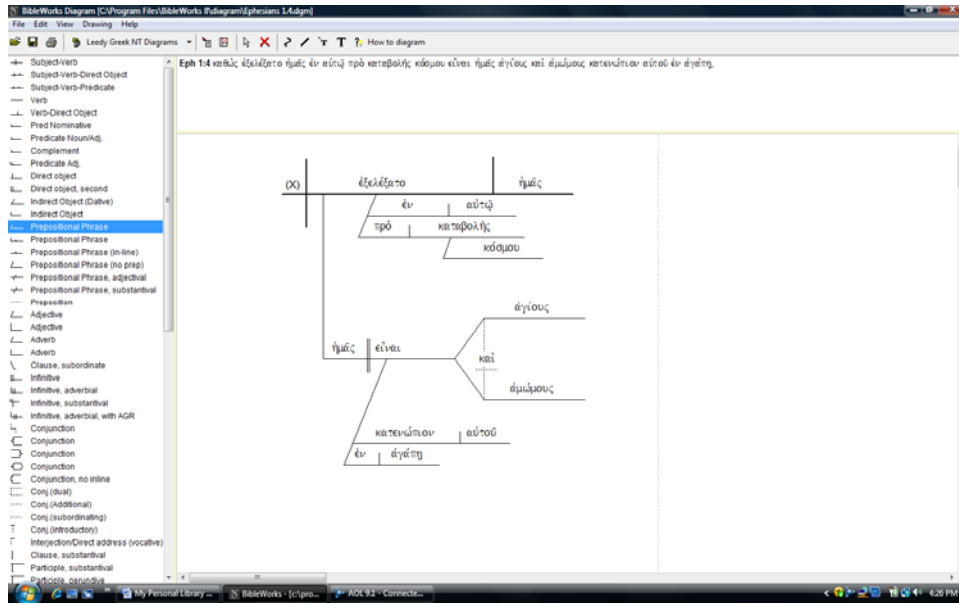
### Parallel Versions

One of my favorite features 51 is the ability to create your own parallel versions window. So for example, if I want to compare the Greek text of the Fragments of Aristobulus with the English translation then all I have to do is click the parallel versions icon, choose my versions, and presto (!), I've got the diglot (or as many glots as you prefer) of my choosing. And it's also easy to synchronize; all you have to do is click a single button, so as you scroll through the one text the other moves with it.

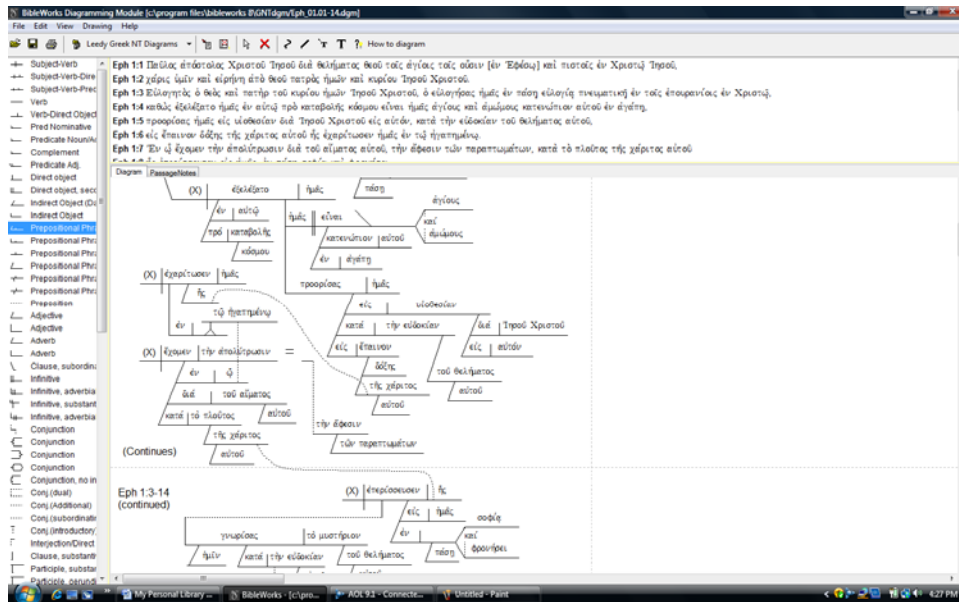


### Diagramming

I've only toyed with the diagramming feature in BW8 but I have to say that for the most part it's pretty simple to use; there's little more to do than click and drag things and set them up where you want them. I'm not accustomed to diagramming so I copied Jay E. Smith's diagram of Ephesians 1:4 (on p. 78) from his chapter "Sentence Diagramming, Clausal Layouts, and Exegetical Outlining" in *Interpreting the New Testament Text: Introduction to the Art and Science of Exegesis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006): 73-134. Here's what it looks like:



I then compared it to the Leedy Greek NT Diagram that's already included in BW8 and saw a couple of minor differences, but for the most part they look much the same:



But my main point here is that the actual process of diagramming is made very simple with BW8 and that's definitely something that I'll appreciate the more I get into diagramming.

### Ancient Texts

But as nice as quick searches, parallel versions, and diagramming are, are these features enough to justify the cost of such a program? Well, not for my purposes, but the variety of quality texts

included in the program is! BW8 comes equipped with Greek and English versions of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Josephus' complete works, Philo's complete works, and the Apostolic Fathers. There are a number of Greek New Testament texts, as well as a couple of Greek Old Testament texts (Rahlfs' Septuaginta & BibleWorks Greek LXX). The Aramaic and Hebrew (and let's not forget Syriac) texts are nothing to sneeze at either. There's a variety of Targumim, the Peshitta, various Hebrew Old Testaments and more. And finally, there are those Latin texts I mentioned earlier. But this is only where my personal use of languages ends.

### *Other Texts*

But the texts don't stop at Biblical and related literature. BW8 also comes with some great grammar resources such as Dan Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* and Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor's *Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (and much more). There's a number of good lexical aids like Louw & Nida's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. and *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. *BDAG & HALOT* can be added for a relatively nominal cost considering what the print versions go for. The Ante-Nicene Fathers as well as the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (series I & II) are included as well as Rodkinson's *Babylonian Talmud* and Philip Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*. While all of these resources are extremely useful, there are a few that I have little use for like *Nave's Topical Bible* or the *Thompson New Chain-Reference Bible*. Nonetheless, the useful far outweighs the useless.

### **Recommendation**

As I said above, BW8 is full of features that I've yet to figure out or discover, but those that I have familiarized myself with are incredibly helpful for aiding in my studies. After using this program for the last six months I wonder how I ever managed without it. I use it on a daily basis and can't see my use slowing down any time soon. I'd be hard-pressed to think of a reason not to recommend it. If you have an older version of BW then you need to upgrade a.s.a.p.! If you've got no version at all then get BW8 a.s.a.p., trust me, you won't regret it.