

TYPES AND EXAMPLES OF RESOURCES

1. BIBLES.

Several versions should be available. They need not be expensive since they are mostly used for home study. The version used in class can be more expensive, but need not be. The version used in class is more useful if it has a wide margin in which to write notes.

Suggestions are KJV, NKJV, ASV, RSV, NAS. Many have the NIV, but it is not a dependable translation. It was revised in 2011 and may have been improved, but I have not researched the changes since I do not use it. Of those listed, I believe the ASV to be the most accurate. The RSV suffered from its translation of Isaiah 7:14, but it is overall a good translation. The KJV, followed by the NKJV, is based on a textual background that includes a number of passages rejected by later translations. The ability to review all of them and learn their textual support and accuracy of translation is important. For those who cannot use a critical apparatus, Bruce Metzger's *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, is a good source from which to learn why those who prepared this Greek New Testament sponsored by the United Bible Societies chose the Greek texts that were included. A good computer program will contain all of the Bible versions that you need along with good tools to learn about the original languages.

COMPUTER PROGRAMS.

The greatest downside of computer Bible programs is that it robs you of holding the book in your hands and highlighting it. However, they do provide a way to amass a large library quickly at less cost.

Programs with which I am familiar (and possess) are:

ACCORDANCE. Accordance is a choice only for Mac users. It has a good interface, is user friendly, and has a large library from which to choose. As with most Bible programs, it has a wide variety of packages from which to choose. The best choice is the Super Bundle. It includes three packages that separately would sell for \$887.00. Packaged together they sell for \$599.00. Accordance is strong on understanding the Greek and Hebrew text. It has many additional resources that can be added and always has some of them on sale. Its commentary selection is not as good as others.

BIBLE WORKS 9. Version 9 was just released. It added a number of resources and has a really fine program. It is not as user friendly as Accordance or Logos. It is at its best in working with languages. It is almost bereft of tools to use in preparing the body of a lesson. It was made only for PCs but will work with Parallels on Mac. The new release is \$359.00. It is a one-package deal.

LOGOS. Logos is designed for both Mac and PC. Like Accordance, it is packaged based, but also has a large selection of additional resources. Some (mostly old enough not to be protected by trade mark) are sold through "Community Pricing," a process through which they go to collect enough money to take the resource to contract. When it reaches that point it goes to pre-publication pricing that is still less than the final retail price. As an example, I recently purchased a 57-volume set of commentaries, *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, for \$50.00. It is now on pre-pub priced at \$199.95. Retail is listed at \$1,050.00. While I doubt that it will ever sell for that retail price, I am confident that its final cost will be more than \$50.00. Logos' packages range in price from \$149.95 to \$4,290.00. The latter is given a print equivalent of \$31,000.00. Don't take it too seriously, however, because this package, and most if not all of the others contain material that you will never use. The major purpose of some is undoubtedly to make the price look better. That said, the best package for the money in my opinion is the Scholar's Silver package. It is not cheap, costing \$999.95. Comparing it with the immediately lower package, the Scholar's Library at 629.95, it is a better deal if for no other reason than the fact that it contains both *The Pulpit Commentary* and *The New American Commentary*. The former is now at its lowest price of 179.00 and the latter is priced at \$499.95. Thus, those two alone cost more than the Scholar's Library package.

There are others available but these are the most useful of which I am aware. However, while you are saving money to purchase on of these (Logos will let you pay over time), there are some free internet sites that are available. Some are free up to a point, but charge for "premium" resources. If you "Google" "free internet Bible programs" you will get nearly 31,000,000 hits. Most of those on the first few pages are worthless and there is reason to believe that it gets no better if you traverse the entire list. The three that I found most helpful are: www.e-sword.net/, www.swordsearch.com, and www.ccel.org. The latter will sell you resources, but it will also let you read

many of the resources for free online. Swordsearch sells a program for \$60 that you need to access its free resources. You must pay for its premium resources.

1. DICTIONARIES.

The teacher needs access to a Bible Dictionary and a Webster's Dictionary (or equivalent). General Bible dictionaries include *Baker's Bible Dictionary*, *Eason Bible Dictionary*, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. All of these, plus a number of special dictionaries, are in my level of Logos. It sometimes helps to have a choice of the way the definitions are given. One may contain a great deal more than needs to be included.

2. COMPLETE CONCORDANCE.

If you have a computer program that searches for particular words you do not need this. Most, if not all computer programs have search features for words and phrases. They also have other search features that are helpful. Accordance even has a "fuzzy" search feature in you don't have the words quite right. If you need a hardback concordance, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* is probably the best known. It is also helpful in helping you to tie in to *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and the Hebrew Bible*, that will give you definitions of the meaning of the original language, the translation of which you have looked up in the concordance.

3. COMMENTARIES.

You cannot have too many commentaries. That may sound like hyperbole, and it probably is, but different commentaries provide different approaches, different applications, different interpretations, different textual sources, etc. There are three basic kinds of commentaries. One is very simple and shallow. It makes general comments, covers passages briefly, and in general skims over the top of the water. On the other end of the spectrum is the commentary that spends all of its time in the Greek and Hebrew, discusses every jot and tittle at length, is very scholarly in approach and language, never uses a common word when a "big" word will do, and in general is so technical that it would cross a Rabbi's eyes. It doesn't understand

why anybody would waste time with application. It may be of some use on occasion, but its content and approach is mostly unfit for a Bible Study class. In the middle is the commentary that explains the text, discusses the original language when it is important or makes a difference, and never leaves a passage without application. Some, such as *The NIV Application Commentary* is a good example of this type. *Word Biblical Commentary* is another example, but is not as strong on application. *The New American Commentary* falls into this category as well. Lenski's commentaries are a bit more technical than applicatory, but are good. Barclay's commentaries are sometimes technical, but are a good source for application and illustration. Some of the older commentaries should be looked at. For example, Albert Barnes commentaries on the entire Bible and *The Pulpit Commentary*. Barnes is very thorough. He is Presbyterian and will drive 100 miles out of the way to miss a body of water sufficient to immerse a man (see his comments on Acts 8). *The Pulpit Commentary* has both exegetical (setting forth the meaning of the text) and homiletical (lessons to be learned from the text) sections. These last two are the first sets of commentaries that I bought and really used. I had the GA commentaries, but they often left off where the real problems began and so were not used all that much. These commentaries are not listed to set them above others, but to illustrate the types that are available and to assist you in your search.

Brethren have written some commentaries and some of them are very good. Others are very poor. Some are wrong. Guy N. Woods has some good commentaries. McGarvey has one of the best commentaries on Acts. Homer Hailey's work is very good. Jim McGuiggan is a good expositor, though I tire from his constant attempts at humor. I am reading to learn, not to laugh. The *Gospel Advocate* has a series of commentaries that vary from the good to the completely wrong, for example Hinds work on Revelation that takes the historical approach.

Many of these commentaries are in computer programs. If they do not come in the package that you purchase, but can be purchased as stand alone items. But as discussed above, be sure to determine if you can get a larger package with these commentaries include, along with many other books, for the price that you would pay for the

commentaries alone.

4. ENCYCLOPEDIAS.

You may already have *Britannica* or some other set of encyclopedias for your children to use for schoolwork. They can be useful on occasion. However, the main encyclopedias that you will need are Bible encyclopedias. One of the oldest and perhaps the largest is *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Don't let the "new" tag fool you. My set shows a first printing of 1950 and a third printing in 1956, which is the set, I have. It is available on Logos community pricing for \$30.00 on which they claim a saving of \$469.95 under retail. Other choices are *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (4 vols.), and assorted other religious encyclopedias. For example, there is *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land*, *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling*, and *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, just to name a few.