

## STEP Bible

**STEP Bible. Cambridge, UK: Tyndale House, 2018. <http://www.stepbible.org>. Accessed 22 January 2018.**

---

STEP Bible exemplifies its name: Scripture Tools for Every Person. It is an amazing free online resource containing Bibles and commentaries. Tyndale House provides oversight of STEP Bible, with Crosswire serving as a partner for software and Bible translations. STEP Bible contains the Vulgate and works with Strong's numbers. The interface is available in 93 languages and opens in the language of the computer, with translations in 280 languages.

STEP Bible is an incredible option for the study of the Bible in the majority world. Not only can users search STEP Bible online, there are several options for downloading, both for Windows and Mac OS X, and downloads can be freely given to others. Users can also share information via social media.

STEP Bible may remind users of similar, fee-based products such as BibleWorks, Accordance (from Oaktree Software) or Logos (developed by Faithlife Corporation).<sup>1</sup> Among STEP Bible's fee-based competitors, Accordance and Logos offer free versions — Accordance Lite and Logos Basic — as well as other purchase and search options. Accordance, BibleWorks, Logos, and STEP Bible all aid those doing exegetical work, and each has some special features. Similar to STEP Bible, Accordance contains commentaries. BibleWorks, Logos, and STEP Bible all offer a concordance tool. Accordance is distinct in that it provides an interactive 3D map, visual exporting options, preaching and study aids, note-taking features and a citation tool. Logos incorporates media, confessional documents, and systematic theologies, as well as a Sermon Editor with the ability to create slides. STEP Bible could be enhanced by offering some of these tools, especially the citation feature.

More overlap exists between BibleWorks and STEP Bible with regard to search features and content. Both tools allow users to search by verse, word, and phrase, examining parallel versions. Both BibleWorks and STEP Bible offer dictionaries and lexicons, and both BibleWorks and STEP Bible offer approximately fifty different English-language translations of the Bible, with both including the following translations: ESV, NIV, and KJV. However, STEP Bible does not offer the NRSV nor RSV translations. BibleWorks contains over 200 Bible translations, making its content more robust than STEP Bible.

Finding desired content in both BibleWorks and STEP Bible varies. The search capabilities of BibleWorks 8 appear more sophisticated, but STEP Bible's uncluttered screen enhances its learning curve; BibleWorks has a very busy screen, and it is not always clear what the boxes and icons mean, making the learning curve steeper.<sup>2</sup> To assist users, both BibleWorks and STEP Bible provide YouTube training videos, with BibleWorks even having its own channel. In addition to YouTube videos, STEP Bible offers PowerPoint slides in both English and Spanish, as well as an extensive help section containing screenshots.

Even though STEP Bible may not be as robust as other Bible software products, its search features are still impressive. Similar to other Bible software products, users can search multiple Bible translations simultaneously. Moreover, suggestions appear as the search is being constructed. The interface allows for an interleaved search, which acts as a parallel Bible of sorts, displaying verse by verse. The interlinear function of some translations allows users to compare Bibles word-by-word. Some versions also offer grammar color coding. Users can search in other languages too, for example Greek. By hovering over a word, users see how many times the word appears in the chapter; the dictionary displays by clicking on the word and a definition and the original word in Hebrew or Greek also display. The original word displays in both Latin and non-Latin characters. Additionally, search features are not limited to one verse or passage; users can search for

---

<sup>1</sup> See BibleWorks, <http://www.bibleworks.com/>; Accordance, <https://www.accordancebible.com/>; and Logos, <https://www.logos.com/>.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that the most current version of BibleWorks is 10; however, for this review, the author explored version 8.

multiple books of the Bible in a single search. In addition to viewing how many times a word appears in a specific book of the Bible, users can see how many times the word appears in the New Testament or the Old Testament. An advanced text search allows users to search within surrounding verses. Not only can users search for Bible passages, they can look for people too. STEP Bible also has a bookmark feature that allows users to see their previous searches, and users can pin things to read later.

Despite STEP Bible's many strengths, there are some areas needing improvement. As noted previously, including a built-in citation tool would enhance STEP Bible, as would phone apps, which are in progress. Once the transliteration help page is complete, users will have more search guidance available.

The strengths of STEP Bible far outweigh its weaknesses. The cost, resources, ease of use, and search capabilities of this tool make it a viable alternative to Accordance, BibleWorks, and Logos. STEP Bible is clearly worth mentioning to seminary faculty and students, local clergy, and alumni.

Elizabeth Young Miller  
Moravian College and Theological Seminary  
Reeves Library  
Bethlehem, PA