

Section 4

Helps

Concordance

A concordance is more than an index, with additional material such as commentary, definitions and topical cross-indexing which makes producing one a labor-intensive process even when assisted by computers.

In the precomputing era, search technology was unavailable, and a concordance offered readers of long works such as the Bible something comparable to search results for every word that they would have been likely to search for. Today, the ability to combine the result of queries concerning multiple terms (such as searching for words near other words) has reduced interest in concordance publishing. In addition, mathematical techniques such as latent semantic indexing have been proposed as a means of automatically identifying linguistic information based on word context.

A bilingual concordance is a concordance based on aligned parallel text.

A topical concordance is a list of subjects that a book covers (usually The Bible), with the immediate context of the coverage of those subjects. Unlike a traditional concordance, the indexed word does not have to appear in the verse. The best-known topical concordance is Nave's Topical Bible.

The first Bible concordance was compiled for the Vulgate Bible by Hugh of St Cher (d.1262), who employed 500 friars to assist him. In 1448, Rabbi Mordecai Nathan completed a concordance to the Hebrew Bible. It took him ten years. A concordance to the Greek New Testament was published in 1599 by Henry Stephens, and the Septuagint was done a couple of years later by Conrad Kircher in 1602. The first concordance to the English Bible was published in 1550 by Mr Marbeck. According to Cruden, it did not employ the verse numbers devised by Robert Stephens in 1545, but "the pretty large concordance" of Mr Cotton did. Then followed Cruden's Concordance and Strong's Concordance.

Bible Dictionary (top 3)

1. Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary - 7200 entries, 500 color photographs, charts, 75 color maps
2. Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary - 000's of entries and a helpful topical index
3. Anchor Bible Dictionary - Used by advanced students, considered a mainstay for biblical scholars

Bible Atlas (top 3)

1. The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World- expensive but widely considered the best of the best
2. The New Moody Atlas of the Bible
3. Atlas of the Bible (Zondervan/Rasmussen and Harper Collins/Pritchard)

Commentaries

Top 10 Commentaries for Studying the Bible

The Geneva Study Bible, 1560 Facsimile

Ok, it isn't exactly a commentary series, but it is a commentary "on the fly", giving special insight on each passage from the some of the greatest theologians alive during the era of the Protestant Reformation. This important translation and resource is not only considered to be the first English Study Bible, it also owns many other "firsts". It was the first mass-produced English Bible making it affordable to the general public; it was the first to include numbered verses to each chapter of scripture for easy reference; the first to use a more readable font; and, here's the kicker, it was the first complete Bible to be translated into English from the original Hebrew and Greek texts. Nice work.

Matthew Henry's Commentary

It feels like a devotional but is so solid theologically it functions as a commentary. This is a great resource to seek direction on a difficult passage, to get some background and gain valuable insight.

Thru the Bible Commentary, J. Vernon McGee

Here is a man who taught through the bible for more than 40 years, with no agenda other than to uncover the truth and help people understand God's amazing story of redemption. This systematic study journeys through every page

of scripture in words that are easily understood and without compromise to the core of biblical truths.

Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

In comparing with the top contenders of other exegetical works in its ilk, the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament is the winning choice for students, teachers, and pastors. The work includes the input of diverse scholarship for valuable comparison and challenge. You'll be able to preview the broad overview then quickly step into a comprehensive examination. It is not only popularly known as being research intensive but also well organized and easy to read

Calvin's Commentaries

Too many times the important works of Calvin are thrown out with the bathwater over sore feelings left from debates of Augustine vs. Pelagian/Calvin vs. Arminius, feuding since the 17th century. But keep in mind that even Arminius recommended the works of Calvin. And for those of us who can't wholly adopt the "tulip" of his 5 points, don't worry, you won't be assaulted by this debate in his commentaries. He is thorough in his knowledge of scriptures and applies careful exegesis for verse by verse commentary. His commentary is a classic.

Expositor's Bible Commentary Set

78 contributing authors form this 12-volume commentary series. It not only includes the standard commentary with introduction, outline and bibliography, but also has an area for more technical notes. The transliteration and translation will help with the technical if you are not a Greek or Hebrew scholar.

Treasury of David, Charles H. Spurgeon

This is a must-have commentary series for your theological library. Whether read through devotionally or used as a reference, this valuable work will minister to your soul and add insight into the beauty of the Psalms.

Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament

Franze Delitzsch (1813-1890) was a professor of Old Testament at the University of Leipzig and Johann Carl Freidrich Keil (1807-1888) was the professor of Biblical Exegesis and Oriental Languages at the University of Dorpat. Together

these two scholars contribute to one of the most popular works on the Old Testament available.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old and New Testament

All the original languages are transliterated for you in this 2-volume set and include an introduction, outline and commentary as well as bibliography for each book of the Bible. There are a great deal of visuals for greater clarity and numerous cross-references to support the wise practice of comparing scripture with scripture in understanding the text.

New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition

If you want a commentary that is concise, you can't beat this single-volume commentary. There is a wealth of contextual information included for each of the 66 books of the Bible, including discussions on authorship, dates, historical setting, etc. I appreciate that this commentary has a profound respect for the inerrancy of scripture. A great start if you do not already own a strong one-volume commentary on the entire bible.