Digital Evangelism with e-Sword (Part 3)

Michael L White - mlwhite@parsonplace.com

In the July issue of CCMAG, I discussed the value of using e-Sword's Graphics Viewer for supplementing your weekly Sunday School or Bible Study lessons. If you missed it, you can read the archived issue at community.ccmag.com in the "Digital Evangelism Community" at your leisure, although you'll need to be a subscriber to the community, of course.

In this issue I'll discuss the value of using e-Sword's Dictionaries and Commentaries for sermons, Sunday School classes, Bible Studies, and practically any other type of Biblical instruction. You can download all of these from the Download menu in e-Sword. I recommend you get them all so that you'll have them for handy reference when you need them.

One of my favorite dictionaries has long been *Smith's Bible Dictionary* (I had also owned a copy in print at one time early in my ministry), because it provides a wealth of information about people, places, objects, and cultural insights in the Bible. It is very reliable for finding little-known details about all kinds of things, such as this little tidbit of infor-

mation I discovered when I looked up the name of Isaiah: "Rabbinical tradition says that Isaiah, when 90 years old, was sawn asunder in the trunk of a carob tree by order of Manasseh, to which, it is supposed, that reference is made in Hebrews 11:37." That is an intriguing bit of knowledge, don't you think?

Nevertheless, while I still value Smith's Bible Dictionary, I have come to have a great appreciation for both *Easton's Bible Dictionary* and *Fausset's Bible Dictionary* as well. All three of these are available for free in e-Sword. Until I found Easton and Fausset among e-Sword's download options, I must confess that I was unfamiliar with both of them. Now, I use all three of these dictionaries

when researching a topic.

Speaking of researching and looking up names, another of my favorite dictionaries available in e-Sword is *Hitchcock's Bible Names*, though I sometimes disagree with the wording of Hitchcock's definitions, based on other insights I've received from other sources, as well as my own personal understanding of certain Hebrew words. I must hasten to add that I am by no means a Hebrew or Greek scholar, however. I find this reference most helpful when I want to know the literal meaning of a Bible name, such as Daniel (which means "God my Judge," though I would suggest "God is My Judge") and Eleazar (which means "Help of God," but I think "God is My Helper" fits well, too) and Isaiah (which means "the Salvation of the Lord" though I personally think "the Salvation of Yah" or even "Yah's Salvation" is more accurate). Interestingly, the names of Joshua and Jesus also mean the same as Isaiah.

Due to the fact that Jewish tradition prohibits the uttering of God's personal name, partly because they think it is too holy to pronounce and partly because the precise pronunciation is uncertain, they substitute "Adonai" when reading it, which is translated as "LORD" in English. Most translators suggest either Jehovah or Yahweh for God's personal name, but after reviewing H1961 and H1933 in both Strong's and the NASB's concordances, I think Yahavah (literally, "I am the breathing or living One") could also be a possibility. In fact, I think English translators, starting with some of the earliest translations (such as the Bishops, Geneva, and King James Bibles), did us a great disservice when they took this tradition one step further by actually changing the word for God's name in the text to "the LORD," a practice which is perpetuated by most English

translators of the Bible to this day. At least the Jewish scribes continued to write the name of God onto each new scroll of Scripture, though they refused to pronounce it out loud. Indeed, in both writing and speech they usually refer to God as HaShem (literally, "The Name"), even rather than use the generic name "GOD" (Elohim in Hebrew). The argument, whether Hebrew or Christian, that the personal name of God is too holy to pronounce just doesn't square-up with God's willingness to give His personal Name when Moses asked for it (Exodus 3:13-14) and when He commanded the people

of Israel to swear by His name (Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20). If God didn't want to reveal His name to Moses, He could have said what the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?" (Judges 13:18 NKJV). A similar event occurred a few hundred years earlier when Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the LORD at Peniel (Genesis 32:29-30).

While we are to guard our use of God's personal name to insure we don't profane it (i.e., use it wrongly, as we are commanded in Exodus 20:7), we are certainly free to call on God by His personal name in prayer or to refer to Him by His personal name in conversation with others or in writing. It actually seems contradictory to me (and even hypocritical) to give people names that include the personal name of God (such as Isaiah, Joshua, Hosea – which are all variants of "Yah's Salvation") and to shout, "Hallelujah!" (which is derived from the Hebrew – "Halal Yah" – for "Praise Yah!" and yet still claim that we can't speak the name of God out loud. See Psalm 135:3 as just one example and compare it with both the *Complete Jewish Bible* and *Young's Literal Translation* to see what I mean. Compare Psalm 68:4 and Isaiah 12:2, 26:4, and 38:11 in the *New King James Bible* with the *Complete Jewish Bible*, Young's Literal Translation, and the *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* just for the fun of it to see how it reads in each of these versions. You see how much knowledge of God and the things of God you can gain from a simple reading of these dictionaries and various Bible translations, and I haven't even begun to talk about the benefit of the commentaries e-Sword has to offer!

Speaking of commentaries in e-Sword, my all-time favorite is Matthew Henry. Whenever I come across something in the Scripture that is unclear or even baffling to me, I usually head straight for Matthew Henry to see what revelation God gave to that great man of faith. One such instance that stands out in my memory is a passage I wrestled with for a while. It is found in Isaiah 7:1-16, and I was specifically baffled as to how verse 16 could refer to the Messiah (Jesus), as it seems to do, when the prophesied calamity upon Syria and Ephraim refers to a time in the more immediate future for King Ahaz, before Jesus would even be born. Furthermore, I notice that even the New King James translators appear to have misinterpreted this verse by capitalizing the word "Child," which they mean to refer to Christ. Nevertheless, Matthew Henry clarifies this

passage most insightfully in his Isaiah 7:10-16 commentary where he explains in point IV.2 that "the child" refers to Isaiah's own son in his arms, whom God directed him in Isaiah 7:3 to take with him to prophesy to King Ahaz. John Wesley came to this same conclusion in his commentary, though we may never know whether he learned it from reading Matthew Henry or someone else or whether the Holy Spirit revealed it to him as He had revealed it to Matthew Henry.

One of the truly excellent features about using e-Sword is that when you are reading a Bible passage, all you have to do is click on a particular verse which you want to review in the commentaries and it will be synchronized in every commentary you have installed in e-Sword. Simply switch to the commentaries workspace by using the Ctrl+F3 keyboard combo and then click on the tab of the commentary you wish to read. The same is true when you click on one of the *Strong's Concordance* numbers. Just click on the Strong's reference number you wish to review, switch to the dictionaries workspace by using the Ctrl+F4 keyboard combo, and then click on the Strong tab to view the Hebrew or Greek word in question. You can use this same synchronization feature with the dictionaries workspace by clicking once on a specific word in a Bible passage and having it display in each of your installed dictionaries where it is found. This is a real time saver.

There's so much more to share about using e-Sword's dictionaries and commentaries components, but I'll leave it to you to discover the rest. After all, I don't want to spoil all of your fun!

In my next and final article in this series, I will discuss using e-Sword's Reference Library component. Just like the Editors, the Graphics Viewer, and the Commentaries and Dictionaries components, this tool can also greatly enhance your knowledge and understanding of practically any topic. Don't miss it!

Michael L. White is the founder and Managing Editor of Parson Place Press, an independent Christian publishing house in Mobile, Alabama. His book Digital Evangelism: You Can Do It, Too! (Parson Place Press, 2011) is available wherever books are sold. Visit his Website at books.parsonplace.com *for a list of his other books and articles.*