**Topic:  Digital Bible Use in Preaching: Exploring The Benefits
and Potential Pitfalls of Using Digital Bible in Sermons**
An invited lesson delivered via Google meet by **Asaolu O. S.** (asaolu@yahoo.com)
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**Introduction**: I appreciate the invitation to contribute to the virtual Bible study group by brethren. Since the Group members do not have physical meetings, they would be familiar with electronic gadgets and e-Study resources. Hence, may appreciate digital Bibles, its benefits and potential pitfalls for preaching. It is God that gave man knowledge to carry out inventions. **We should adapt such for promoting the things of the kingdom and be discerning in so doing.** Satan always seek to pervert things and make man sin against God, we should prayerfully resist the devil.

**Daniel 12:3-4** *And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and* knowledge shall be increased.

**Ecclesiastes 2:26** *For **God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy**: but to the sinner he giveth travail...*

**2 Timothy 2:15; 4:13** *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. ...The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, **and the books, but especially the parchments***.

The scriptures like many other books now exist in digital or electronic form on various gadgets. Before delving into the topic extensively, let us first contrasts facts about eBooks and Hard-prints

**Comparison of digital books with hardcopies**

| eBooks | Hard-prints |
|---|---|
| • eBooks are usually portable, more easily sourced and cheaper to procure than Hard-prints. Thus, promotes tree conservation.<br>• eBooks do not take up much physical space like bookshelves. They are not heavy to carry.<br>• eBooks can be read on PCs, phones, tablets and other devices but over time, such may strain the eyes if the zoom and contrast are not well adjusted.<br>• eBooks are durable (provided OS or device does not crash or demand update) whereas hardcopies suffer wear and tear, fade and degrade over time. | • Hardcopies engender a tactile experience, one can mark places, hold it and feel real ownership unlike eBooks that are periodically licensed.<br>• Print books are always available and do not depend on battery life or electric power before one could access it.<br>• Hardcopies are inadvertently displayed to others as one's personal library and spur meticulous research.<br>• Often times, the information in books are quite reliable unlike things on the web since books undergo careful reviews before publishing. |

**Bible evolution** (Inspired books collection of Judeo-Christian religion).

- **Scrolls (2000 BC - 300 AD):** Original scriptures were handwritten scrolls on papyrus or parchment, painstakingly copied by scribes. [God wrote the *ten commandments* on tablets of stone]
- **Codexes (300 - 1500 AD):** Bound books replaced scrolls, written on parchment or animal skin, often decorated with intricate art.
- **Printed Bibles (1455 AD):** Johann Gutenberg's invention – the printing press transformed Bible production, making it more widely available.
- **Digital Bibles (1980s):** Computers and later mobile devices brought Bibles in electronic format, web versions from 1990s

Note that some *eBibles are available in both text and audio formats*.
Popular Bible apps include:

| PC software | Phone App | Website (any internet-enabled device) |
|---|---|---|
| <ul><li>E-Sword (Windows, Mac, Web-based)</li><li>**Theophilus** (Windows, Mac)</li><li>The Sword Project (Windows, Mac, Linux, Web-based)</li><li>Logos Bible Study (Windows, Mac, Web-based)</li><li>Bible Pro (Windows)</li></ul> | <ul><li>YouVersion Bible App (iOS, Android)</li><li>Bible Gateway (iOS, Android)</li><li>Blue Letter Bible (iOS, Android)</li><li>Logos Bible Study (iOS, Android)</li><li>Dwell Bible (iOS, Android)</li><li>Bibliapaodavida (iOS, Android)</li><li>First 5 (iOS, Android)</li></ul> | <ul><li>biblegateway.com</li><li>biblehub.com</li><li>bible.com</li><li>biblica.com</li><li>wordproject.org</li></ul> |

**eBibles relative to Hard-print**

| Benefits | Potential Pitfalls |
|---|---|
| <ul><li>*Convenient to transport* for usage once installed on device. Forgetting one's Bible or it being heavy or too big hardly arise.</li><li>*Accessible anywhere, anytime* e.g. can be taken into, accessed and used in restrictive places like parts of Northern Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, China, etc.</li><li>*Available in multiple translations and languages*, with commentaries, maps, study resources, cross-references, etc. Related resources are just a Click away.</li><li>*Allows for multimedia integration*; one can mix text with images, audio and easily present or project before a physical or remote audience.</li></ul> | <ul><li>*Less reverence* as some treat with levity, as just another app to be opened as they switch between many tabs and programs whereas more focus is applied to printed Bible.</li><li>Sometimes abandoned midway by teacher or congregants due to *distractions from message notifications* on the device.</li><li>*Over-reliance on associated commentaries* must be avoided, those notes and remarks are from uninspired writers.</li><li>*Technical failure* such as a freeze, crash or update requirement or power outage</li></ul> |

| | |
|---|---|
| • Associated online resources, studies tools and community *facilitate prompt sermon and lesson preparations.*<br>• Easy lookup of phrases via *word search* to quickly locate passages. This facilitates topical studies based on word-count and usage, etc. | may disrupt Sermon delivery or destabilize a Speaker.<br>• Incentivize Plagiarism by lazy forks who just *copy & paste scriptures and others online sermons* without giving credit.<br>• *Dampens* flipping through print Bible to locate books, and *verses memorization* which was prevalent decades ago |

**Conclusion**

Brethren should develop a positive attitude towards eBible usage. Technology evolves over time and humans no longer read/write on tablets of stone or animal skin. We now use paper, digital screens and who knows what is next?

*Old school* church members should not disdain technology while the *new school or GenZee* should not over-rely on it. We should strike a balance in how we adopt and engage with innovations, not get carried away to allow such impact us and our faith negatively. There are many Bible passages which admonish us against unpreparedness, slothfulness, stealing, disrespecting the word of God, doctrines of men, etc. Others encourage us to be vigilant, resourceful, yet be as smart as the children of this world.

> **Matthew 10:16** *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*

Given the myriad of pros and cons for digital Bibles, it would be best for one to train self in how to *effectively* use it, and advise congregants on same. Such tool should be well-tested prior to a religious service to minimize disappointment from system hitches. *A blend of physical and electronic Bibles should be available to any serious Christian or prospect in this era*.

**References**

1. The King James Bible by Thomas Nelson Publishers
2. Theophilus eBible by Ivan Jurik 2004
3. Meta AI – WhatsApp engine 2026
4. The history of the Bible - Christianity