

JOURNAL-ARTICLE PAPER BIBLICAL STUDIES

Intro

* Your assignment is to write a paper similar to an academic *journal article*. (Academic journals include *WTJ*, *JETS*, *NTS*, etc.)

* BS profs expect serious, “real” papers. (Not all seminary courses are designed for these “real” papers; however, in BS,)

* If you have never read a journal article, don’t expect to be good at writing one on your first try. (If you have never seen a football game,)

Content

* A *thesis statement* is a must somewhere in the introduction.

* Your paper must be trying to prove a point (thesis). This keeps you on track and enables the reader to read critically.

* A thesis statement should not simply state the obvious or be so overly broad that it is unprovable in an article. Usually, a thesis is one logical-step from the surface facts (a student must “theologize”).

* E.g., “Paul’s logic for connecting greed to idolatry is as follows: . . .
“In 1 Peter, “salvation” always has eschatological overtones.”
“The creation wording in Psalms 104 and 148 both use mountains to show God’s attribute of x.”
“The central point of the David and Goliath narrative is x w/in the book of 1-2 Chronicles.”
“Dunn’s view of justification is misguided b/c he does not deal w/ important Pastoral Epistle passages.”

* Somewhere in the paper, usually in the introduction, state the current scholarly view of your topic. On many topics, the current view might be two or three main views.

* Must “theologize” (relates to having a point).

* Yes, need factoid level, but make an implication (theologize level).

* When giving the “context” of the pericope within the text of the paper, keep the information relevant to the thesis. Otherwise, put in footnotes.

* Sources.

* Especially for BS papers, include both critical and conservative sources/views.

* Include numerous serious commentaries.

* Include several BT/R-H books.

* Include at least one journal article. Commentaries will usually give you several options of journal articles. (Even if the journal article is not directly related to your thesis, that is OK.)

* Encyclopedias. E.g., *NIDOTTE*, *ABD*, *ISBE*. Useful for sources.

* Multi-authored books. Articles on one topic brought together in book form.

* ST books. Even though this is not the focus of the papers, at RTS we assume you aware of any relevant ST implications.

Three types of Footnotes

(1) Gives biblio for a direct quote in the text.

(2) Backs-up statement in the text. Usually has multiple authors.

(3) Interesting rambling about a topic that is not directly germane to the thesis.

* Showoff footnotes.

* Many times a large footnote is used to show the reader that the writer is aware of all the options relative to a particular point, including a few scholars referenced for each option. Usually at the beginning of the paper, one of these footnotes is used relative to the thesis.

Form

* Your paper is to look like an article in a journal. Hence, do not include table of contents or bibliographies. (Kruger may require bibliographies.)

* Papers are to conform to general *JBL* or *JETS* standards, *especially* the footnote examples and abbreviations. Use *The SBL Handbook of Style* or use *JETS* standards (http://www.etsjets.org/JETS_Instructions)

* In the *SBL* and *JETS* standards are many rules that relate to the *submitting* of an article for purposes of allowing the editor room for comments; e.g., extra wide margins. Do not follow these rules. Basically use *SBL* or *JETS* standard abbreviations and footnote examples. *At a*

minimum, here are the following format requirements:

- * Text: typed, double spaced, 12 point font, 1" margins, quotes over 4 lines are to be single spaced.
 - * Footnotes (not endnotes): single spaced (OK if double); use font and format that is default w/ your computer program.
 - * Follow footnote examples for commas, italics, etc.
 - * Use standard abbreviation of Bible books, standard references, journals, etc.
- * Cara suggests to go look at any *JBL* or *WTJ* or *JETS* article.

Misc

- * Ameba of research.
- * Start paper early; increases “fun” of scholarship and reduces anxiety.
- * Audience of paper.
 - * The paper is written for an evangelical prof. Hence, ...
 - * Assume conservative view of critical issues. Do not have to prove that Paul wrote the Pastorals, although a footnote acknowledging that you are aware that some do not agree is warranted.
 - * Do not have to explain what an objective genitive is. Just state whether the construction is an objective genitive.
- * Academic Formality for writing style.
 - * Use *formal* grammar and writing style.
 - * Do not use “big,” “neat,” etc. (Cara does allow a few well-placed jokes.)
- * Grading.
 - * Cara starts w/ a “D-” and hopes your paper goes up from there.
 - * It is obvious to the Bible profs that the a student’s papers significantly improve through seminary; however, each paper is graded on the same scale.
- * Purpose of RTS-C having serious papers.
 - * This is a *master’s* degree.
 - * Writing a serious paper significantly enhances a student’s understanding of topic.

* Logical development toward a thesis aids one in developing logical (understandable) sermons.

* Theologizing is very important! Forcing a student to theologize at the level of the biblical text aids him in theologizing for application in a sermon.

* Minister needs formal writing skills and occasionally needs to have formal footnoting (presbytery paper).

* Student needs to know about high-level scholarship b/c he will be *secondarily* interacting w/ it the rest of his life, e.g., commentaries.

* Academic respectability. RTS-C is Reformed!

* Reputation to outsiders is important.

* The reality and a student's own perception of his degree are important.

* These relate to many things including: quality of student leaving, potential students, profs who want to teach at RTS, ability of the student to grow theologically in the future, healthy sense of boasting to yourself about your degree, student future jobs based on reputation of RTS-C, etc.